



Marine Institute's Marine Research Programme

Ocean Knowledge 2030 Research Call (2026)



Terms of Reference

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Foras na Mara
Marine Institute

OCEAN KNOWLEDGE 2030 - RESEARCH CALL 2026

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Research Programme:	Marine Institute's Marine Research Programme
Research Theme(s):	Sustainable seafood production, marine biodiversity and ecosystem management, marine governance and policy, climate transition in marine industries, citizen engagement in ocean stewardship, blue economy development.
UN Sustainable Development Goal:	14 Life Below Water, 13 Climate Action, 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, 7 Affordable and Clean Energy

BACKGROUND

[Ocean Knowledge 2030](#)¹ is Ireland's Strategy for Marine Research, Knowledge & Innovation for the period 2025-2030, which has been prepared by the Marine Institute in collaboration with government departments and agencies, including members of the Marine Research Funders' Forum. Ocean Knowledge 2030 guides the coordination at national level of marine research and innovation investments, programming and policy, helping to optimise impact, enable the sustainable use of ocean space, and develop a sustainable climate-neutral blue economy.

Ocean Knowledge 2030 aligns and integrates with a broader suite of sectoral and Research and Innovation strategies and policies at both national and EU level, and directly supports the [Impact 2030](#) action to 'position Ireland as a leader for marine research and technology.' Ocean Knowledge 2030 sets out fifty-one actions that will be reviewed/updated with the input of key stakeholders.

RATIONALE

As a part of the implementation phase of the Ocean Knowledge 2030, the Marine Institute has undertaken an exercise to prioritise the fifty-one key actions into a selection of research topics that address some of the actions in the framework. This involved a review of the actions with respect to four criteria as follows:

¹ <https://oar.marine.ie/handle/10793/1994>

- 1) Not already funded by the Marine Institute or other funders (National, EU or International).
- 2) Aligns with National Strategic Priorities.
- 3) Research is a priority or urgent.
- 4) Fits the budget and general criteria of the MI call proposed.

The total available budget for this call is €1 million. Proposals are invited under eight research topics, and each topic should be addressed as specified under one of two instruments:

1. Desk Study of 12 to 18 months duration requesting up to €150,000 in grant-aid funding
2. Medium-Scale Project of 24 to 36 months duration requesting up to €300,000 in grant-aid funding (circa €100,000 per annum).

The eight topics that have been selected for inclusion in the 2026 call are as follows:

Topic No.	Topic Title	Funding Instrument	Duration & Max Funding
1	Understanding Changing Fish Stocks in the Celtic Sea: An Ecosystem-Based Approach	Medium-Scale Project	24-36 months, up to €300,000 pro-rata
2	Greening Aquaculture: Evidence Pathways for Low-Impact, Climate-Neutral and Circular Seafood Production	Medium-Scale Project	24-36 months, up to €300,000 pro-rata
3	Sustainable Wild Seaweed Harvesting in Ireland: Evidence Needs for Licensing and Management	Desk Study	12-18 months, up to €150,000 pro-rata
4	Evaluating the impacts of the evolving marine policy landscape and changing sea uses on seafood production	Desk Study	12-18 months, up to €150,000 pro-rata
5	UN Agreement on Marine Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) – Implications and Obligations for Ireland	Desk Study	12-18 months, up to €150,000 pro-rata
6	Coastal Passenger Boat Experiences – Transition to Sustainability	Desk Study	12-18 months, up to €150,000 pro-rata

Topic No.	Topic Title	Funding Instrument	Duration & Max Funding
7	Enabling Citizen-Led Action and Citizen Science in the Marine Environment	Medium-Scale Project	24-36 months, up to €300,000 pro-rata
8	Measuring the socio-economic impacts of developing Ireland's commercial ports as hubs for business	Desk Study	12-18 months, up to €150,000 pro-rata

RESEARCH TOPICS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Understanding Changing Fish Stocks in the Celtic Sea: An Ecosystem-Based Approach (Medium-Scale Project)

In the last decade the stock size and productivity of various fish stocks in the Celtic Sea (e.g., cod, whiting, haddock, herring) have decreased, despite a general reduction in fishing pressure. This topic will examine how ecosystem interactions impact the productivity of commercial fish stocks in the Celtic Sea. Specifically, it will adopt an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM), which has long been accepted as a desirable step forward from single species assessments to manage the long-term sustainability of commercially exploited fish, moving to more holistic approaches that integrate information on internal and external ecosystem drivers.

This study will investigate specific drivers of change in the Celtic Sea and their interactions with commercially exploited fisheries resources. The study should deliver valuable information and assessment to inform the Marine Institute's role of providing science advice for sustainable fisheries and healthy ecosystems.

This research project will likely include the following steps, although encourages applicants' suggestions of alternative paths or approaches if they feel they would be more effective in approaching the research question and providing progress on identifying drivers and developing ecosystem integrated fisheries advice. Proposals are sought for a desk-based study with the following specific objectives: Key research questions to be addressed include:

- Through a literature review, identify a broad range of potential drivers of fish productivity in the Celtic Sea, compile time series data for these drivers, and identify where there are gaps in these data. Drivers could include factors such as climate and oceanographic changes, food-web alterations, primary productivity, indirect effects of other fisheries, etc.

- Use appropriate analytical or modelling approaches to explore correlations between drivers and the productivity of selected species, with a view to understanding the sensitivities to the identified factors. These could include, but are not limited to: multispecies ecosystem models (e.g., Mizer, Ecopath with Ecosim, OSMOSE, Atlantis), Models of Intermediate Complexity (MICE models), and Dynamic Structural Equation Models (DSEMs).
- Investigate the likely future trajectories of drivers and the potential impacts on Celtic Sea fish productivity.
- Provide recommendations for how this knowledge could be incorporated into existing fisheries advice and management frameworks to move towards achieving an EAFM to ensure sustainability.

2. Greening Aquaculture: Evidence pathways to Low-Impact, Climate-Neutral and Circular Seafood Production (Medium-Scale Project)

This topic will examine how Ireland's aquaculture sector can transition toward low-impact, climate-neutral, and sustainable production systems in line with national and EU policy objectives. The research will focus on identifying evidence-based pathways to support sectoral transition, improve resource efficiency, strengthen climate resilience, and inform future planning and policy decisions. The research will assess how aquaculture systems can adapt to climate-related pressures such as warming seas, ocean acidification, and extreme weather events, and examine implications for long-term resilience, spatial planning, and sector development. It will investigate emissions and resource use across aquaculture systems and value chains, while considering opportunities for circular approaches and enhanced environmental performance.

Particular emphasis will be placed on understanding how ecosystem service provision, climate benefits, and wider environmental interactions can be incorporated into planning, policy, and regulatory frameworks to support sustainable sector development.

The research will also explore strategic opportunities associated with future low-impact production systems, including non-fed species such as seaweed and bivalves, integrated multi-trophic aquaculture (IMTA), and opportunities for co-location with other offshore activities (e.g. offshore renewable energy). It will support evidence-based policy and sectoral development aligned with Ireland's climate action, biodiversity, and blue economy goals.

Key research issues include:

- How can aquaculture systems in Ireland adapt to climate change impacts (e.g. warming waters, ocean acidification, extreme events), and what are the implications for spatial planning, species selection, and long-term system resilience?
- What are the emissions, energy use, and resource footprints of aquaculture systems at a system and value-chain level, and how can these inform pathways toward low-impact and circular seafood production?
- How can evidence on ecosystem services and environmental interactions associated with aquaculture be incorporated into marine spatial planning, policy, and regulatory frameworks?
- What strategic opportunities exist for future low-impact production systems and co-location approaches within Ireland's evolving marine environment?
- Do the identified pathways result in a decrease in productivity and/or economic viability?

3. Sustainable Wild Seaweed Harvesting in Ireland: Evidence Needs for Licensing and Management (Desk Study)

This study will examine the evidence base required to support effective, transparent, and sustainable licensing and management of wild seaweed harvesting in Ireland. While previous research (including EMFF-funded studies and academic work on resource assessment and socioeconomics) has improved understanding of Ireland's seaweed resource and sector value, significant gaps remain in how evidence is generated, standardised, validated, and applied to support decision-making for wild harvesting activities.

The study will focus on the integration, accessibility, and suitability of existing ecological, economic, operational, and socio-cultural information, including potential impacts on traditional rights holders to support licensing and management decisions relating specifically to wild seaweed harvesting, recognising that evidence needs and management approaches differ significantly from those associated with seaweed aquaculture. It will identify gaps in data availability, consistency, verification, and traceability across harvesting and processing activities and assess how these limitations constrain the ability to evaluate sustainability, resource use, economic activity, cumulative environmental impacts, and broader societal considerations.

The research will also examine how monitoring approaches and decision-support frameworks can be strengthened to support adaptive, evidence-based management. International approaches to wild seaweed harvesting regulation, monitoring, and resource assessment will be reviewed to identify transferable lessons and best practice. Recognising the importance of

seaweed harvesting within Ireland's coastal communities and maritime traditions, the study should also consider cultural heritage dimensions and societal values associated with traditional harvesting rights and practices where relevant.

The study will provide actionable recommendations to strengthen the evidence base supporting licensing and management decisions for wild seaweed harvesting and improve transparency, consistency, and sustainability in future decision-making processes.

Potential research questions or issues include:

- How are existing ecological, resource, socio-economic and other relevant data currently used in wild seaweed harvesting licence applications and decision-making, and where are the principal evidence gaps or inconsistencies?
- What data collection, reporting and monitoring approaches are needed to improve transparency, traceability and evidence-based management of wild seaweed harvesting activities?
- How can sustainability considerations — including environmental impacts, cumulative effects, economic activity and cultural heritage values — be better incorporated into licensing and management processes?
- What international approaches and best practices could inform future improvements in evidence provision, monitoring and sustainable management of wild seaweed harvesting in Ireland?

4. Evaluating the impacts of the evolving marine policy landscape and changing sea uses on seafood production (Desk Study)

The marine and maritime policy landscape at both national and EU level is evolving rapidly with potential implications for blue economy sectors, the marine environment and coastal communities. In broad terms, these policy developments are designed to both respond to and facilitate new or alternative uses of maritime space whilst ensuring the protection of marine ecosystems and biodiversity. This is a complex policy domain with multiple and interacting challenges and drivers including economic and sectoral development, climate action, energy and food security, maritime safety and security, environmental protection and restoration, maritime law and ocean governance, regional development, and social cohesion and protection.

At the EU level, the EU Ocean Pact (launched in June 2026) provides an overarching policy framework to integrate European Union's policies and actions related to the marine and to create a unified and coordinated plan for managing the ocean. Measures set out in the Ocean

Pact include a revision of the EU's flagship marine environment policy, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, and the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive. Work is also progressing on the EU Ocean Act, a legislative instrument to underpin implementation of the Pact.

At national level, a number of sectoral and policy developments are likely to have substantial implications for how maritime space is used in the future and how existing or traditional uses will be impacted. Ireland's National Marine Planning Framework and Maritime Area Planning Act provide the policy and legislative framework to manage and support decision-making on the optimum use of ocean space, taking account of different sectoral interests. Notably, this includes the planned development of a substantial offshore renewable energy (ORE) industry for which Ireland has set an ambitious target to deliver 20 GW of installed offshore wind energy by 2040.

In parallel, EU & international commitments linked to marine environmental protection and restoration require the establishment of a network of MPAs protecting 30% of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) by 2030, protection of substantial maritime areas under the EU Nature Directives (Natura, Bird and Habitats) as well as further protections and restoration measures to be implemented under the EU Nature Restoration Regulation.

It is an ongoing challenge for policy makers to understand how this complex and evolving policy landscape and changing uses of maritime space will impact on specific sectors and communities and how best to manage and respond to these impacts. There is, moreover, a need, not only to identify potential impacts of marine policies and changing sea uses, but to be able to systematically evaluate these impacts to inform mitigation, adaptation and sectoral development strategies.

Seafood production, including sea fisheries and marine aquaculture, are likely to be significantly affected by these developments, potentially resulting in impacts which may be positive, negative or neutral, and including impacts on local communities and ancillary commercial activities upstream and downstream of the fishing/aquaculture activity. Evaluating the specific and cumulative impacts of planned or impending changes in sea use and the policy framework that underpins them is highly complex and difficult to isolate from other factors affecting the sector such as changes in available quota, fuel costs, and climate impacts.

This call seeks research and evidence to inform the development of appropriate methodological frameworks to evaluate and, where possible, quantify potential impacts of marine policies and changing sea uses on the seafood sector in Ireland. Proposals are sought for a desk-based study with the following specific objectives:

- Identify and characterise the full range of direct, indirect, downstream and/or secondary and cumulative impacts that key EU and national policies and associated

changes in sea use (e.g. ORE development, establishment of MPAs, measures to meet the requirements and targets of key EU marine environmental policies) may have on commercial seafood production (taking account of aquaculture and all fisheries including different fisheries segments and gear types and both Irish and non-Irish vessels) in Irish waters.

- Identify and describe the impact of policy implementation over time, including implications related to project or activity lifecycles, and targets associated with marine conservation priorities.
- Analyse socio-economic impacts of changing sea use on fishers, aquaculture operators and communities that depend on these sectors (including employment, skills, and broader social implications) and on ancillary commercial activities (both upstream and downstream).
- Provide a review of the existing methodological frameworks developed and applied in other jurisdictions (specifically including the UK) to evaluate and, where possible, quantify the impacts of new/changing sea uses on seafood production.
- Provide an assessment of best practice in other jurisdiction on existing frameworks or approaches to manage, mitigate, and monitor these impacts, including policy and regulatory approaches, mitigation measures (e.g. spatial planning, access arrangements), and monitoring frameworks for environmental and socio-economic effects.
- Assess the existing data and evidence available in an Irish context to enable a robust assessment of seafood sectoral impacts, including:
 - the modelling capacity required to support robust impact analysis
 - identification of key data gaps that may constrain such analyses.

The research funded under this call should address multiple timescales, including for example the full life-cycle of ORE developments (survey to decommissioning) and timelines to meet conservation targets.

Stelzenmüller, V. et al., 2020, Research for PECH Committee – Impact of the use of offshore wind and other marine renewables on European fisheries. European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, Brussels

5. UN Agreement on Marine Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) – Implications and Obligations for Ireland (Desk Study)

This topic will examine how Ireland can most effectively implement the Marine Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement (High Seas Treaty), with a focus on practical national readiness, coordination, and strategic engagement. A desk-based study will assess the institutional, scientific, and technical implications of the Agreement for Ireland and identify the actions to most effectively support its implementation at national and international levels.

The study will move beyond high-level analysis to identify concrete pathways for Ireland's participation in BBNJ processes, including area-based management tools (ABMTs), environmental impact assessment (EIA), marine genetic resources (MGRs), and capacity-building and technology transfer. It will also consider how Ireland's existing marine research capabilities, data systems, and international partnerships can be leveraged to support BBNJ objectives.

This topic aligns strongly with Ireland's international commitments to marine biodiversity and ocean governance and addresses an emerging policy need as the Agreement moves toward implementation. It fills a current gap in targeted research funding on high-seas governance and will provide actionable recommendations to inform national policy, research prioritisation, and international engagement within a short timeframe.

Potential research questions or issues include:

- What institutional, and coordination arrangements are appropriate for Ireland to most effectively implement the BBNJ Agreement, having due regard to existing national and EU frameworks?
- What role can Ireland play in the effective development and implementation of area-based management tools (e.g. high-seas MPAs), and what scientific data and decision-support tools are needed to support this role?
- What are the implications of BBNJ provisions for environmental impact assessment (EIA)? How can Ireland best implement these, having due regard to existing national and EU frameworks?
- What are the implications of BBNJ provisions on marine genetic resources (MGRs), including notification and reporting, data governance and benefit-sharing, and what capacity is required to support Ireland's participation? What monitoring systems, observing technologies, and data-sharing mechanisms are needed to support BBNJ implementation, and how can Ireland leverage existing national assets?

- Based on available published legislation, what are the key differences in how EU member States have implemented BBNJ provisions on MGRs, in particular, the notification and reporting requirements, and how might this affect Ireland?
- How will Ireland's BBNJ obligations intersect with national commitments under related international treaties, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Nagoya Protocol?
- What are the key strategic opportunities and implications of BBNJ for Ireland's marine research, policy, and international engagement?

6. Coastal Passenger Boat Experiences – Transition to Sustainability (Desk Study)

Tourism and recreation activities in marine and coastal waters are a vital component of the economy of peripheral coastal regions, islands and coastal communities. In 2023 marine and coastal tourism in Ireland generated an estimated turnover of €1.6bn and employed more than 21,000 people. An important aspect of this sector is the revenues generated from tourism occurring in coastal areas, as well as water-based activities also referred to as 'on-water experiences'. This includes coastal passenger boat tourism such as island tours and transportation, as well as excursions linked to coastal sightseeing and wildlife watching.

In line with Ireland's climate and environmental obligations and targets, it is imperative for this sector to progress towards a climate-neutral and sustainable business model, reducing carbon emissions and environmental impacts.

To inform policy and planning in relation to carbon reduction strategies, a sector-wide analysis is needed on the energy usage and needs associated with water and ground transportation directly linked to marine tourism activities. The study should provide a baseline analysis on the nature, scale and spatial distribution of transportation activities linked to marine and coastal tourism, and the associated energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions.

Research should assess the challenges, barriers, opportunities and benefits regarding the necessary transition to low-emission, sustainable transportation options. and propose policy options and measures to promote and underpin this transition. Specific research questions to be addressed include:

- Updated inventory of coastal passenger boats used in tourism, including spatial mapping and valuation of this activity.
- Estimated energy consumption and emissions by coastal boating activity type and region (as baseline).

- Policy roadmap with short-, medium-, and long-term interventions.
- Gap analysis of available data and monitoring frameworks.

7. Enabling Citizen-Led Action and Citizen Science in the Marine Environment (Medium-Scale Project)

This topic will examine and pilot approaches to enabling and scaling citizen-led initiatives and citizen science in Ireland's marine and coastal environment. Building on existing programmes and strategies, the project will move beyond analysis to test practical models for participation, data collection, and integration into national research and policy systems. The project will work with communities, local authorities, and relevant organisations to design, implement, and evaluate pilot initiatives that strengthen citizen engagement in marine monitoring, biodiversity protection, and climate action. It will also develop frameworks and tools to support the integration of citizen-generated data into formal scientific and policy processes. Potential research questions or issues include:

- What models of citizen science and community-led action are most effective in marine and coastal contexts in Ireland and elsewhere, and how can models from other countries/regions be adapted and scaled in Ireland to fill existing knowledge gaps?
- How can citizen-generated data be standardised, validated, and integrated into national datasets, monitoring systems and decision-making processes? What are the most efficient and effective data flows to capture and share Marine Citizen Science data to national, EU and Global data platforms.
- What barriers limit participation and long-term sustainability of citizen initiatives, and what practical interventions (e.g. training, funding, coordination mechanisms) can address these?
- What are the barriers to participation in Marine Citizen Science in underrepresented sections of society and island communities.
- Does Ireland need a Marine Citizen Science Strategy?
- Which agencies and bodies are currently supporting Marine Citizen Science in Ireland? What governance and support frameworks are needed to embed citizen participation within Ireland's marine research, policy, and management systems?
- How can Marine Citizen Science be better integrated into third-level education and research in Ireland and partnerships for the use and publication of Marine Citizen Science developed?

8. Measuring the socio-economic impacts of developing Ireland's commercial ports as hubs for business (Desk Study)

Ireland's ports system handled approximately 57 million tonnes in 2025, representing more than 90% of international trade. More than 80% of the island's maritime traffic moves through ports in Dublin, Cork, Foynes, and Belfast in N. Ireland. While Ireland's international trade is globally broad, it is dependent on a narrow infrastructure base. Ireland has direct maritime links with approximately 20 countries, but trades with almost 200. Ireland's trade-to-GDP ratio, at 246%, is among the highest in the OECD and is a clear indicator of the extent to which the Irish economy relies on maritime transport. Therefore, the future development of Irish ports is a matter of national strategic importance and needs to be addressed through the careful formulation of evidence-based policy. The proposed research serves this purpose.

The proposed research topic will examine the socio-economic impacts of expanding the range of activities carried out in Ireland's commercial ports through their development as hubs for business. Currently, commercial ports focus on traffic that emanates from international trade and tourism, the volumes of which are accurately and reliably measured by the Irish Maritime Development Office in its annual publication entitled *The Irish Maritime Transport Economist* ([here](#)).

As ports seek to grow and diversify, some will enter emerging areas such as offshore renewable energy and alternative fuels, which will require unprecedented levels of capital investment. Other ports will seek to attract new business by leveraging the advantages that proximity to a port can produce. The cases for making capital investments in ports are often built on socio-economic arguments that assume environmental, regional, and societal benefits at the level of the individual port. Such arguments overlook the network perspective and do not recognise the deleterious impacts that unbalanced development at an individual port level can have on the efficiency and competitiveness of the national ports system.

The research will be required to take a broad perspective, by examining socio-economic impacts at a national level, across all Tier 1 and Tier 2 ports. The long-term nature of investment in port infrastructure will require the research to consider a 15-year time horizon. Emphasis should be placed on the methodology for establishing socio-economic impacts of port developments and the counter-balancing effects that investment in one port may have on the competitiveness and financial performance of others.

The research should recognise the national and European policy contexts² within which port developments take place, as well as the EU funding mechanisms that support such port developments. In particular, the research should recognise the aim set out in the new

² [i] National Ports Policy, European Ports Strategy, European Maritime Industrial Strategy.

European Ports Strategy to modernize maritime hubs, shifting them from simple transport interfaces to critical multi-functional industrial engines, by:

1. Strengthening competitiveness, innovation, and digitalisation
2. Advancing energy transition, sustainability, and clean industries
3. Protecting and securing ports
4. Accessing to finance and investments
5. Developing social cohesion, skills, and quality jobs

Key research issues include:

1. How can the socio-economic impacts of the following activities be measured:
 - Port controlled businesses
 - Construction activities to expand port capacity for trade and new industries such as offshore wind
 - Ports as green energy hubs
 - New ports services such as O&M for offshore wind
 - Innovation centres for data technologies
2. What are the socio-economic impacts of the port developments outlined in the Masterplans of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 ports?
3. To what extent do these Masterplans overlap, producing cumulative capacity that will be more than total national demand?
4. What evidence exists in relation to how other comparable countries have measured the socio-economic impacts of port developments?
5. Does the evidence in relation to socio-economic impacts identify a clear investment pathway for Irish ports?

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

The following research outputs (as relevant) are expected:

- Literature reviews including industry reports as well as academic research, where appropriate
- Evidence synthesis and analysis, including identification of gaps in knowledge.
- Review of policies, policy options, and policy opportunities and supports.
- Foresight analysis.
- Proposals may also include laboratory analysis, vessel surveys, and data-based analysis or modelling experimental work.
- Peer reviewed open access journal articles and industry reports published over the period of funding.
- All data to be open access, processed and quality controlled to international standards and delivered to Marine Institute data portals and other relevant national/international data centres.
- Delivery of expert advice, data/information and policy briefings for relevant Government Departments and Agencies including Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (DCEE), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Department of Transport, BIM, Fáilte Ireland, etc.
- Production and dissemination of innovative communications products to inform policy and broader societal stakeholders on the project and on some of the key issues and research findings associated with this work (social media posts, videos, podcasts, etc.)
- Evidence of other research outputs to include conference posters and presentations, multidisciplinary activities and stakeholder engagement.

ADDITIONAL SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

Throughout the lifetime of the research projects funded, it is also anticipated that Principal Investigators will actively seek additional sources of other funding (national, European and/or international), continuing to build links with other research groups and organisations and to strengthen Ireland's research capacity and capability.

- Applicants can also apply for ship-time access via the Marine Institute's annual call.
- The successful applicant(s) should collaborate closely with key stakeholders and end users including Government Departments (DAFM, DCEE, DoT, etc.) and their Agencies (BIM, CSO, EPA, IMDO, NPWS, MARA, Met Éireann, SEAI, etc.) to provide policy advice. It is recommended that this collaboration should begin at the proposal development stage to enable co-creation of research goals that will achieve maximum uptake and impact with potential end-users. Direct engagement with the Marine Institute is also welcome.

INTENDED IMPACTS

This funding call contributes to the implementation of Ocean Knowledge 2030 by supporting research and innovation that accelerates the transition to a sustainable and climate-neutral blue economy, strengthens the knowledge base for a healthy marine environment, and enhances Ireland's societal relationship with the ocean. It is designed to guide and align investments with national and international priorities, ensure research delivers maximum value to users and stakeholders, and advance Ireland's position as a leader in marine research and technology.

The research outputs should inform evidence-based policy in the topic areas. Research should be carried out in close cooperation with relevant national policy makers across relevant Government Departments to ensure relevance and value of the work from a public policy perspective. Research and knowledge outputs should be tailored to inform and support national policy and management across a range of sectoral and legislative fields.

This funding will contribute to further developing research capacity in Ireland and should lead to enhanced visibility (through high impact peer reviewed publications and conference presentations) and contribution of Irish research to international research efforts and programmes, through greater involvement in EU research projects and international working groups (e.g. ICES, OSPAR, OECD), and through targeted and tailored communications outputs.

CALL BUDGET

The amount of funding available to the research project(s) will be up to a maximum of €1,000,000 (€1 million) for 12 to 36 months commencing in early 2027. The Marine Institute expects to fund five awards (three desk studies and two medium projects) depending on the outcome of the evaluation process, and subject to available funding.

Please refer to the Guidelines for Applicants for further details on eligibility, costs covered, etc.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND KEY DATES

Applications must be made through the Marine Institute's online research grant management system [RIMS](#) (please refer to the Guidelines for Applicants).

The Marine Institute will aim to answer any queries or provide clarifications in relation to the call and application process, and potential applicants should email funding@marine.ie to submit their queries or clarifications.

The application closing date will be **Thursday, 10th September 2026**. Applications will be reviewed by international/national experts and scored on the criteria as stated in the Guidelines for Applicants, particularly scientific excellence, impact, and strength of the proposed team.

Important Dates:

<i>Call opening:</i>	10 July 2026
<i>Closing date for applications:</i>	10 September 2026
<i>Expected announcement of results:</i>	Mid-November 2026
<i>Conclusion of Grant Agreements and First Payment:</i>	December 2026
<i>Expected start date:</i>	Early 2027

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/REFERENCE MATERIALS

- [Ocean Knowledge 2030 Ireland's Strategy for Marine Research, Knowledge and Innovation](#)
- [Impact 2030 - Ireland's Research and Innovation Strategy](#) Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (2022).
- [Ireland's Climate Action Plan](#)
- [European Green Deal](#)
- [EU Common Fisheries Policy](#)
- [National Marine Planning Framework](#)
- [Maritime Area Planning Act 2021](#)

- [ICES Working Group on Offshore Wind Development and Fisheries](#)
- [EU Nature Restoration Law](#)
- [EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030](#)
- [The European Ocean Pact](#)