



ProBleu

**Promoting ocean and water literacy
in school communities**

Call HORIZON-MISS-2022-OCEAN-01

Call for Proposals



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**Innovate
UK**

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1. Introduction and background

This is a call for proposals under the [ProBleu](#) project - *Promoting ocean and water literacy in school communities*, funded by the European Union within the Horizon Europe Programme. The central theme of ProBleu is the restoration of our ocean and waters, by promoting education and the close connection between humans and the environment among children and youth.

This call for proposals describes the conditions of the ProBleu funding support scheme for students and school projects addressing education for blue sustainability and the protection of marine and freshwater ecosystems.

Why is there a ProBleu support scheme for schools?

The ProBleu funding support scheme presented in this call encourages the growth of the Network of European Blue Schools (NEBS) and contributes to the EU mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030" by supporting schools' innovative projects.

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

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

2. Objectives, Activities and Topics

2.1. What types of projects can be supported?

The ProBleu funding scheme aims to support primary and secondary schools to mobilise and engage with children, youth, and the school community in the education for blue sustainability and the protection of marine and freshwater ecosystems.

ProBleu invites schools to propose **projects** that contribute to:

- Develop and implement ideas that contribute to achieving **the objectives of the Mission "Restore our ocean and waters by 2030"**;
- Enlarge and strengthen the **NEBS**, contributing to the work of the EU4Ocean Coalition;
- Engage students, youth, teachers, school leaders and the wider school community in the pursuit of **ocean and water literacy and sustainability**.

2.2. *Who can apply? Who can be involved in the projects?*

This call is directed at **primary and secondary-level schools (including vocational schools)¹ of the EU-27 Member States and the third countries associated with Horizon Europe** (see the list of eligible countries in section 4 of this call for proposals).

ProBleu grants will be formally awarded to schools as legal entities (and not to teachers or students individually). However, it is expected that students, teachers, school leaders and eventually other stakeholders also actively participate in the preparation of the applications.

The school projects should foster the engagement of different stakeholders in the Blue Sustainability topics. When preparing a project, applicant schools are encouraged to:

- Include **collaboration among various stakeholders** inside and outside the school community: teachers, parents, ocean professionals (for example researchers, marine scientists), NGOs, visitor centres, maritime companies, authorities (including municipalities), the wider community (civil society);
- Search for **collaborative approaches with other schools**, teachers and students (during and after the grant period). We encourage **twinning among schools from different locations**;
- Ensure equal opportunities for participants **with fewer opportunities** (please see in the annex the list of potential barriers associated with a situation of “fewer opportunities”).

2.3. *Which topics should school projects address?*

The calls will support school projects covering a wide variety of topics within the theme of Blue Sustainability. Each project must fall into one of the following lots:

- **Lot 1: Ocean/marine projects**
- **Lot 2: Freshwater projects**

If the activities of your project fall in both lots, please choose the lot that you consider more representative of the proposed activities.

Each project must address **at least 1 and at most 3 topics listed in the table below**. If the activities of your project address more than 3 topics, please choose the 3 topics that are more directly addressed by the proposed activities. Please note that your proposal does not have to match the examples provided!

	Topics	Examples of Blue School Projects
1	The European Ocean Coalition (EU4Ocean)	An art exhibition promoting EU4Ocean
2	Open access data on water	The use of open-access scientific data sets (provided by ProBleu); sharing environmental measurements in our open-access platforms.

¹ Schools providing up to providing up to ISCED level 3, commonly designated as upper secondary education. See a more detailed explanation here:
https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/Table_III_Qualifications.pdf

3	Protected waters	Measuring pollution indicators such as nutrients using reagents (e.g. using FreshWater Watch kits), to collect data relating to SDG6, to investigate water quality
4	Using ecosystem-based services and nature-based solutions to protect the coast and seas	An arts performance on how to use nature-based solutions to protect the coast
5	De-damming European rivers	Researching the economic costs and effects of de-damming local rivers
6	Phasing out destructive fishing practices, e.g. bottom trawling	Debate the ethical implications of phasing out bottom trawling on the environment and society
7	Removing single-use plastic	Comparing new and historical citizen-science data-sets on plastic pollution
8	Reduce pesticides	Analyse the impact of reduced pesticide usage on local waters using, for example, FreshWater Watch kits
9	Reduce micro pollution	Use a machine learning model to detect micropollutants from satellite imagery
10	Reduce underwater noise pollution	Develop an educational campaign through multimedia presentations and brochures to raise awareness about the harmful effects of underwater noise pollution
11	Reduce CO2 emissions from the shipping sector	Use mathematical optimization models to optimise shipping routes and vessel speeds to minimise fuel consumption and reduce CO2 emissions
12	Promoting renewable ocean energy	Compose a musical performance that highlights the harmony between renewable ocean energy technologies and environmental sustainability
13	Eat less fish, more algae	Present a philosophical inquiry into the ethics and ecological implications of shifting our dietary preferences from fish to sustainably cultivated algae
14	Create blue biotechnology	Design biometric tracking devices that can be used with aquatic exercises to promote ocean conservation awareness and individual fitness through ocean-related activities
15	Carbon neutral marinas	Design energy-efficient and sustainable marina infrastructure, such as floating solar panels and wave energy converters
16	Ocean and water governance	Examine the ethical and moral dimensions of ocean and water governance through the lens of religious teachings and values
17	Biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction	Analyse the scientific implications and ecological significance of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction treaty

2.4. What types of activities can be included in the projects?

Your project may include the following types of activities:

- **Activities to apply for or renew the accreditation as a member of the NEBS:** if the applicant school is not a member of the NEBS, it is a compulsory requirement to become a member of this Network until the project conclusion; if the applicant school is a member of the NEBS and aims to renew the accreditation, it is a compulsory requirement to become a member of this Network until the project conclusion. Activities to apply for the accreditation can be funded under this call.
- **Organisation or participation in events and activities with student involvement (inside and outside the school premises):** workshops, meetings, conferences, training, field trips, exhibitions, local expeditions, technical trips, virtual educational activities, boat activities, virtual laboratories, laboratory trips, museum trips, technical field trips. Applicants are encouraged to design Open Schooling activities in collaboration with the local community and with external stakeholders.
- **Development of in-classroom lessons and exercises** to promote ocean and water literacy. These lessons and exercises shall cover more than one school subject. Applicants are encouraged to design Open Schooling activities in collaboration with the local community and with external stakeholders.
- **Development of practical lessons and exercises** to promote ocean/marine and water literacy outside the classroom using citizen-science methodologies. Projects are encouraged to cover more than one school subject. Applicants are encouraged to design Open Schooling activities in collaboration with the local community and with external stakeholders.
- **Research-based activities**, including e.g. laboratory testing and analysis of results. Applicants are encouraged to design Open Schooling activities in collaboration with the local community and with external stakeholders.
- **Communication, promotion and engagement activities:** activities for promoting the learnings and results at the school level and within the wider community. Applicants are encouraged to promote the project impacts as widely as possible.
- **Organisation or participation in competitions:** Competitions among students to promote their ocean and water literacy. These competitions can be used to stimulate collaborative and group work in the same classroom, at the school level and between schools (through twinning). Applicants are encouraged to design Open Schooling activities in collaboration with the local community and with external stakeholders.
- **Twinning:** Activities linking a school with other schools (twinning). Applicants are encouraged to design Open Schooling activities in collaboration with the local community and with external stakeholders.
- **Other Open Schooling activities:** Other activities promoting collaboration with the local community and with external stakeholders.

The projects can also carry out activities using teaching support for ocean and water learning provided by ProBleu: this provides educators with tools and interfaces to translate scientific data into a better understanding of the freshwater and ocean/marine environments and into teaching

materials, with core elements provided to inspire co-creation within the network. For the first call, we invite educators to co-design these materials with us. Examples are creating maps of ocean change (temperature, acidity, currents, etc) derived from scientific models, explaining how we observe water on Earth from satellites, and running simulations of aquatic food webs.

2.5. What is the duration of the projects?

The maximum duration of each project in this call is **11 (eleven) months** and the minimum duration is **3 (three) months**.

3. Timetable and budget

3.1. When can my school apply? When will projects start?

The indicative schedule for the different stages of the procedure is as follows:

What?	Timing
Call opening	17/11/2023
Deadline for submission	19/01/2024 17:00 CET (Central European time)
Evaluation	22/01/2024 to 22/03/2024
Announcement of results	23/03/2024
Contract signature	30/03/2024
Project start date	01/04/2024

3.2. How much funding is available to support the school projects?

The overall available budget for this call is € 80,000 (eighty thousand euros). In this call, a 30% minimum rule will apply in terms of the proportion of the budget for each lot and type of school:

- At least 30% of the budget of the call will be allocated to ocean/marine projects (Lot 1).
- At least 30% of the budget of the call will be allocated to freshwater projects (Lot 2).
- At least 30% of the budget of the call will be allocated to projects for primary schools.
- At least 30% of the budget of the call will be allocated to projects for secondary schools.

For more details on the financial provisions please see **section 5** of this call for proposals.

4. Eligibility conditions

4.1. What are the minimum conditions to participate?

Eligible applicants (schools): For this call, “applicant” is a school that applies for financial support. To be eligible, proposals must be presented by a single applicant (school) meeting **all the requirements of the table below**:

REQUIREMENT	DESCRIPTION
Type of organisation and Geographic location	<p>The applicant is a primary or secondary school (including vocational schools) providing up to ISCED level 3 and legally established in an EU-27 Member State or a third country associated with Horizon Europe.</p> <p><u>Eligible countries:</u> Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Faroe Islands, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Cyprus, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Serbia, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom.</p>
Relation with the Network of European Blue Schools (NEBS)	<p>The applicant is a member of the NEBS at the time of application and aims to renew its accreditation.</p> <p>If the applicant <u>is not</u> a member of the NEBS, one of the following options must be valid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) The applicant initiated the accreditation process to the NEBS at the time of application; OR B) The application describes how the applicant intends to meet the prerequisites to become an accredited member of the NEBS by the time of the completion of the project. <p>Note: As part of the process, we will support your school in becoming a Blue School and part of the NEBS. More info here.</p> <p>Submission deadlines for accreditation in the NEBS (new or renew):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submissions for the 1st semester between 15 October and 1 December; applications are reviewed in December. • Submissions for the 2nd semester between 15 January and 30 May; applications are reviewed in June.
Restrictive measures	<p>The applicant is not subject to EU restrictive measures under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) or Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)</p>
Declaration of Honour	<p>The applicant submits a Declaration of Honour according to the template provided and duly signed by the legal representative.</p>

Eligible applications

Applications must be submitted electronically via the [ProBleu website](#) and follow the instructions provided in section 9 of this document: How to submit an application. Each applicant can only submit one application under this call.

A total of 4 ProBleu calls will be organised until 2025. Applicants (schools) who are not funded are eligible to apply for the other calls. Applicants (schools) who receive funding are not eligible to apply in later calls.

Eligible activities: Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2.4. above.

Exclusion

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

- is in an exclusion situation established in the terms of the Declaration of Honour; or
- has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure has failed to supply that information; or
- was previously involved in the preparation of documents used in the award procedure which entails a breach of the principle of equal treatment, including distortion of competition, that cannot be remedied otherwise.

5. Financial Provisions

What type of expenses can be supported in my school project? How will the payments work?

Form of the grant and budget categories

Applicants shall propose a budget based on a **simplified estimation of costs** that summarises the direct costs associated with the school project proposed. The grant takes the form of a lump sum grant in one of the following categories:

- For small-scale projects: up to €2 500
- For medium-scale projects: up to €5 000
- For large-scale projects: up to €10 000

Note: The scale of the project is not necessarily connected to its duration but to the lump sum category, i.e. for example a large-scale project does not need to have a duration of 11 months.

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

CATEGORY OF COST	EXAMPLES
Travel, accommodation and subsistence	Travel, accommodation and subsistence for students and/or teachers to visit exhibitions, museums, laboratories, research centres or other venues justified within the project activities.
Purchase and renting of equipment	Purchase or renting of lab equipment, photographic equipment, specialised software, and equipment for the development of resources.
Other goods, works or services	Purchase of consumables and supplies for the development of project activities. Promotion, dissemination, publications. Registration in conferences, training, or other events. Membership to other initiatives, such as GLOBE.

Subcontracting	Fees for external services, e.g. experts/professionals to give workshops at the school as part of the project activities or to support the development of specific project activities. Translation services (including translation of in-classroom and practical lessons and exercises developed or any other ProBleu resources).
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The following types of costs are NOT eligible:

- Personnel costs: human resources working for the applicant organisation.
- Purchase or renting of real estate, construction works.

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

The grant takes the form of a lump sum grant linked to the completion of work. This means that beneficiaries (schools) will receive the full lump sum approved and set out in the Contract when the activities defined in the contract are completed. Thus, they will not be calculated based on the costs actually incurred.

Payment arrangements and conditions

The schedule for grant payment is as follows:

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

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

6. Quality & merit evaluation - award Criteria

How will my project application be evaluated?

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

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

1. Quality of the project and outcomes (maximum 35 points; threshold: 20 points)

CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
Topics addressed	- The project addresses one or more topics stated in the call. The topic(s) are adequately addressed.
Type of activities and expected outcomes	- The type of activities planned are suitable to achieve the objectives of the project. - The expected outcomes contribute to meet the objectives of the project and of the call.
Quality and feasibility of the work plan	- The work plan is feasible, realistic and adequate to the size and complexity of the project.
Features of the outputs	- The project will produce outputs in open editable formats (highly recommended; applicants should justify when this is not possible). - The outputs, particularly the developed teaching material, will be published in English and at least one local language (if applicable).
Links to the school curricula and school activities	- The planned activities can be integrated into the school curricula and school activities, i.e. will add new resources to existing curricula and/or introduce new topics.

2. Engagement and impact (maximum 35 points; threshold: 20 points)

CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
Involvement of students	- Number/proportion of students to be directly involved in the activities of the project (i.e. actively contributing for the project implementation) considering the size of the school community. - Number/proportion of students indirectly involved in the activities of the project (i.e. attending events about the project) considering the size of the school community.
Involvement of the wider school community	The project involves the wider school community. For example: families, other students, teachers, companies, public authorities, NGOs, etc.
Accessibility and inclusion	- The project grants equal access to its activities for all students. - The project includes specific measures to grant access to students (or other targets) with fewer opportunities (see annex).
Exploitation/reproducibility of outcomes	- The results or activities will be incorporated in the curriculum or plan of activities of the school partially or totally. - The project will produce clear outputs and teaching material reproducible by other schools in the future. - There are clear plans to expand the use of the outputs to other schools or other contexts.

3. Criteria defined by Horizon Europe (maximum 30 points; threshold: 18 points)

CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
Mission objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The project contributes to the implementation of the Mission objectives and targets. These objectives and targets are described in the call for proposals, as they correspond to the “topics to be addressed by projects”.- The project includes the development and implementation of innovative solutions and products contributing to the Mission’s objectives.
Cooperation/ Twinning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The project entails a proposal for cooperation and/or twinning with other schools, in particular with the NEBS and those aspiring to become accredited members of the NEBS.
Commitment to a Climate Pact Pledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The project entails a commitment to a Climate Pact Pledge leading to decarbonisation or at least carbon neutrality of the project and of the proposed school activities.
Innovation and Open Schooling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The project entails strong and innovative ocean and/or water literacy activities aimed at students, teachers and parents of the school(s).- The project promotes methodologies of Open Schooling, engaging with the community.

7. Visibility

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

8. Processing of Personal Data

To respond to a call for proposals, personal data (such as name, e-mail address, and address) must be recorded and processed. Such information will be handled under [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016](#) on the protection of natural people concerning the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested that are required to evaluate the application following the call for proposal will be processed solely for that purpose by the consortium.

9. How to Submit an Application

Project applications must be submitted by **19 January 2024 at 17:00 CET** (Central European Time), by completing the application online [Available on the ProBleu website](#).

Each applicant can only submit one application.

A project application is composed of the following elements (compulsory):

- **Online application form:** Information about the school, summary of the project, checklist;
- **Project description:** PDF form to be completed using the template provided on the ProBleu website with the description of the project. The project description must be attached to the online application form and comply with the limits of characters indicated in the form.
- **Declaration of Honour:** according to the template provided on the ProBleu website (to be attached to the online application form).

Language of the Application:

All parts of the application have to be submitted **in English**. **Projects will not be judged on writing quality, but the objectives and activities must be clearly stated.**

The online application form and the project description template contain a translation function to translate text into more than 100 languages. Applicants may prepare the application in their own language, but the information on both the online application form and the Project Description Form has to be submitted in English.

Applicant schools are strongly advised to **submit their proposals well in advance** to ensure they won't be affected by potential internet/other technical issues close to the deadline. Late applications will not be evaluated. Once the proposal is submitted, you will receive a confirmation e-mail. If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your proposal has NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the submission system, you should notify us via helpdesk@probleu.school, explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the proposal (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

Need help?

If you have doubts about the application process, please check the **FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)** on the ProBleu website.

If you still have questions, you can send an e-mail to probleucall@probleu.school before 15 January 2024. We cannot guarantee that emails will be answered after this date.

Annex 1 – Participants with fewer opportunities

List of potential barriers that may configure a situation of “fewer opportunities” (adapted from the [Erasmus+ Guide 2023](#)):

- **Disabilities:** This includes physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder someone’s full and effective participation in society on the same footing as others.
- **Health problems:** Barriers may result from health issues including severe illnesses, chronic diseases, or any other physical or mental health-related situation that prevents from participating in the programme.
- **Barriers linked to education and training systems:** Individuals struggling to perform in education and training systems for various reasons, early school-leavers, NEETs (people not in education, employment or training) and low-skilled adults may face barriers. Although other factors may play a role, these educational difficulties mostly result from an educational system which creates structural limitations and/or does not fully take into account the individual’s particular needs.
- **Cultural differences:** Cultural differences may represent significant barriers to learning in general, all the more for people with a migrant or refugee background (especially newly-arrived migrants), people belonging to a national or ethnic minority, sign language users, people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion difficulties, etc. Being exposed to foreign languages and cultural differences may limit the benefits of participation and even prevent potential participants from applying for support.
- **Social barriers:** Social adjustment difficulties such as limited social competences, anti-social or high-risk behaviours, (former) offenders, (former) drug or alcohol abusers, or social marginalisation may represent a barrier. Other social barriers can stem from family circumstances, for instance being the first in the family to access higher education or being a parent (especially a single parent), a caregiver, a breadwinner or an orphan, or having lived or currently living in institutional care.
- **Economic barriers:** Economic disadvantages like a low standard of living, low income, learners who need to work to support themselves, dependence on the social welfare system, long-term unemployment, precarious situations or poverty, being homeless, in debt or with financial problems, etc., may represent a barrier.
- **Barriers linked to discrimination:** discriminations linked to gender, age, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, or intersectional factors (a combination of two or several of the mentioned discrimination barriers).
- **Geographical barriers:** Living in remote or rural areas, on small islands or in peripheral/outermost regions, in urban suburbs, in less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities) or less developed areas in third countries, etc., may constitute a barrier.