Submission by Cyprus and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

Nicosia, 30/01/2026

Subject: 2026 Forum of the Standing Committee on Finance on financing climate action in water systems and the ocean

Summary/Key messages:

- **Water systems and the ocean are critical to climate action**, delivering major mitigation and adaptation benefits, supporting biodiversity, livelihoods, and multiple SDGs.
- **Ocean- and water-related climate actions are increasingly included in NDCs**, but many commitments are conditional, underscoring the urgent need for accessible, scaled-up, and fit-for-purpose climate finance.
- **Science, data, and innovation are key enablers of effective finance**, supporting evidence-based decision-making, de-risking investments, and improving transparency, monitoring, and impact reporting. **Climate finance for water and the ocean is fragmented and poorly tracked**, limiting visibility, coherence, and impact; the Forum should improve categorization, tracking, and comparability of finance flows across sectors and instruments.
- **Existing climate finance institutions should be better adapted**, rather than creating new ones, to enable and scale ocean- and water-based actions, including through improved modalities, access, and enabling environments.
- **Inclusive, country-driven, and locally grounded approaches are essential**, ensuring enhanced access to finance and meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, youth, and small-scale economic actors.
- **Stronger alignment across climate, biodiversity, and sustainable development finance** (UNFCCC, SDGs, GBF, BBNJ, IMO) can unlock synergies and translate political ambition into bankable investments.
- **Nature-based solutions and ocean-based mitigation often face high upfront costs and risks**, particularly in developing countries, requiring concessional finance, blended finance, risk-mitigation tools, and long-term funding horizons.
- **The 2026 SCF Forum is a timely opportunity** to address barriers, share best practices and case studies, strengthen cooperation among finance and sector actors, and advance scalable solutions for financing climate action in water systems and the ocean.

We look forward to engaging on the topic of the 2026 Forum of the Standing Committee on Finance on financing climate action in water systems and the ocean and appreciate the opportunity to provide input towards the preparation of co-facilitators on the outline of the programme:

A. *Evidence and information relevant to the possible sub-themes identified by the co-facilitators to further explore and develop the programme of the Forum;*
B. *Examples and case studies related to financing climate action in water systems and the ocean;*
C. *Possible additional sub-themes for the co-facilitators to consider in the programme.*

The submission will treat point *A* and *C* together in the below table under the first section (Section I), followed by examples and case studies reflecting on point *B* in the second section (Section II). Finally, the EU and its 27 Member States provide input on the format of and matters relating to inclusivity within the next Forum as input to the SCF co-facilitators in the organization of the Forum (Section III).

Introduction

On oceans

The ocean covers more than 70% of the surface of the planet, forms 95% of the biosphere, and provides significant benefits to the global community, including coastal protection, food, employment, trade, recreation and cultural well-being. The ocean also plays an important role in the weather systems on earth and takes up large amounts of CO_2 from the atmosphere and 90% of the excess heat of the earth system. Whilst endangering the vital ecosystem services from the ocean to humanity, this also has a direct effect on the climate, with more frequent and more intense hurricanes and cyclones, changed rainfall and monsoon patterns, and sea level rise due to thermal expansion.

The ocean is also increasingly recognised as providing opportunities for solutions in the fight against climate change, with huge co-benefits towards

ecosystem services. Ocean-based mitigation options with an ecosystem-based approach and a precautionary principle, including off-shore renewable energy, decarbonization of shipping, conservation and restoration of marine ecosystems, including mangroves and salt marches, and sustainable fisheries, have the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to the achievement of the temperature goal of the Paris Agreement. Ambitious and robust ocean-based adaptation, including through nature-based solutions like the protection and the restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems, has benefits for sustainable development, and reduces the escalating costs and risks of delayed action. It should be noted that this was also recognised in the GST decision, particularly in:

- Para 35. *Invites* Parties to preserve and restore oceans and coastal ecosystems and scale up, as appropriate, ocean-based mitigation action
- Para 56. Notes that ecosystem-based approaches, including ocean-based adaptation and resilience measures, as well as in mountain regions, can reduce a range of climate change risks and provide multiple co-benefits

As a result of this GST decision, according to the NDC synthesis report of 18 November 2025, 92% of coastal and island nations included ocean-based climate action in their new NDC, representing an increase from 62% in 2015 and 73% in 2022. However, a substantial proportion of these actions are conditional, highlighting the need for attention and discussion within climate finance tracks.

Therefore, effective climate action in water systems and the ocean is crucial, adding its share towards global emission reductions and significantly reducing the risks and impacts of climate change, while contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals more widely.

The Informal Summary Report of the 2025 Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue recognizes that ocean-based actions remain underfunded in existing climate finance streams, despite their crucial role in both adaptation and mitigation.

The UNOC3 political declaration recognises that SDG 14 is one of the least funded SDGs and that accelerating ocean action globally requires significant and accessible finance and the fulfilment of existing commitments and obligations under relevant intergovernmental agreements.

The EU encourages this Forum to deliver on the Glasgow mandate particularly paragraph 60 which *Invites the relevant work programmes and constituted bodies under the UNFCCC to consider how to integrate and strengthen ocean-based action in their existing mandates and workplans and to report on these activities within the existing reporting processes, as appropriate*.

On water systems

Water and sanitation are a human right (SDG6). Water is important for the functioning of ecosystems, it works as a source of wellbeing and prosperity, and it is the spring of inspiration for new innovations and businesses. Key elements of sustainable and inclusive water management at the global level are improved water governance, integrated water resource management, better mainstreaming of water in other global processes, climate adaptation, access to drinking water and sanitation for all, and an improved source-to-sea approach[1].

There's an urgent need to restore and protect the water cycle as the foundation of our water supply, as a basis for healthy ecosystems and as a way to ensure greater resilience against climate-related occurrences of water extremes such as floods and droughts and rising temperatures of freshwater and marine water, including coastal and transitional waters. Incorporation of climate change scenarios into long-term water planning and infrastructure development, in line with IPCC assessments[2].

[1] Restore our Ocean and Waters - Research and innovation
[2] Restore our Ocean and Waters - Research and innovation

Water resilience plays an important role in climate adaptation, including through nature-based solutions and technical solutions, sustainable water management, and resilient infrastructure[3].

a. Mapping of climate finance for water systems and the ocean

Ocean-related climate activities are often spread across multiple thematic areas and fragmented. This fragmentation makes it challenging to track, assess and scale ocean climate finance, and may limit the visibility of ocean priorities and opportunities within existing financial flows. A clear overview of ocean climate finance would bring the attention of the separate sectors to the larger picture and highlight opportunities for co-benefits and what is already being done. This in turn could foster synergies and cooperation between sectors that worked in isolation.

The 2026 SCF Forum should discuss ways to track and consistently categorize ocean-climate interventions within existing climate finance flows, and to create an overview of the climate finance landscape for water systems and the ocean, including how climate related support for water and ocean is distributed, between mitigation, adaptation and cross cutting projects, between different sectors, and other relevant categorizations, while also elaborating on how financing and other means of implementation positively impact accelerated climate action and resilience.

In addition, it would be useful if the Forum allows for an exchange of views on the share of climate finance for water systems and the ocean compared to other sectors, as well as a discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of various kinds of finance instruments, such as public-private partnerships, traditional finance, innovative finance and impact investments, as well as the long- or short-term nature of projects and programmes and their potential consequences.

[3] Restore our Ocean and Waters - Research and innovation

Further, it would be useful to gather a comprehensive overview of the climate finance figures currently going towards water systems and the ocean. All sources of finance should be included in such overview, including but not limited to public and private, national and international as well as new and innovative sources of finance. Such figures would ease the comparability with the share of climate finance going towards other sectors.

In addition, and in acknowledging that finance is a mean to an end rather than the end itself, it is considered of high importance to explore more qualitative elements pertaining to how finance is disbursed. As an example, collecting data on project versus programme approaches and whether long-term and sustainable objectives (e.g. on biodiversity, water supply and social effects) are adequately accounted for or whether short-term perspectives are deployed with potential negative side effects on the long term.

b. Climate finance for water systems and the ocean-within existing climate-finance institutions and instruments

Improve modalities within existing climate finance institutions and instruments

Rather than creating parallel structures, existing financial structures must be better configured and create modalities for ocean-based actions so that ocean-based actions are eligible for funding.

Greater clarity on existing financing pathways for ocean-climate action and existing opportunities can provide the necessary support for countries to translate the ocean-related conditional parts of their NDCs and NAPs into implementable projects and programs.

According to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES, Transformative Change Assessment), transformative change strategies include transforming dominant economic and financial paradigms so that they prioritize nature and social equity over private interests.

Improve access to finance within existing climate finance institutions and instruments

Furthermore, there is a need to improve enabling environments for mobilizing resources for implementing action at the local, national and international level. Building on that, the importance of strengthening access to resources from a wide variety of sources, including finance, capacity building and technology development and transfer, is crucial for the implementation of sustainable solutions.

The Forum should exchange views on successful initiatives and incentives.

Moreover, the Forum should help discussions on how to invest in research and technology to innovate ocean and water management and to enhance sustainability.

Identify barriers to access climate finance for water systems and the ocean

The Forum should identify barriers to access climate finance for water systems and the ocean and exchange views on concrete suggestions on how to overcome them.

The findings of the IPBES (NEXUS assessment) that urgent action to transform values and structures and address the dominance of a narrow set of interests within economic and financial systems can enable increased investments for biodiversity, food, water and climate, should be discussed here.

c. Climate finance for water systems and the ocean in other processes

Greater alignment between several finance instruments, such as climate finance, biodiversity finance, and finance for sustainable development objectives, could help to translate political ambition into implementable, bankable investments.

The Forum should also help in assessing how to scale-up the multiple adaptation and mitigation co-benefits potential offered by promoting synergies among the UNFCCC, other UN conventions and relevant frameworks such as the SDGs.

The Forum should consider the response options identified in IPBES Nexus Assessment (Food, Water, Health, Biodiversity and Climate) and explore how such nexus approaches can be promoted.

The 2026 SCF Forum presents a timely opportunity to advance this agenda in a structured, evidence-based manner.

Funding within BBNJ

Within the preparatory committee of the BBNJ process, the financial mechanism is being fine-tuned. This financial mechanism would help to enable States Parties to implement the obligations of the Treaty, many of which directly or indirectly contribute to achieving objectives within the UNFCCC realm, as well. The BBNJ financial mechanism consists of three pillars: a Voluntary Trust Fund for the participation of representatives of developing countries to the meetings of the Treaty; the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund and the Special Fund. The latter two will be most relevant to this discussion. The Preparatory Commission in charge of preparing the first BBNJ Conference of the Parties is preparing a draft decision, to be adopted by the CoP, on establishing a process for operationalizing the Special Fund. The GEF, at this moment, already has an International Waters focal area which aims "to support transboundary cooperation in shared marine and freshwater ecosystems". It is the world's largest funding mechanism for multi-country collaboration on freshwater and the ocean, with GEF recipient countries and non-recipient countries working together on this critical issue." Independently from BBNJ, GEF also has a focal area on Sustaining Biodiversity in Landscapes and Seascapes, SIDS and Freshwater ecosystems.

Funding within International Maritime Organization (IMO) net zero framework

The IMO Net Zero Fund, a planned financial instrument under the IMO's proposed Net-Zero Framework, would support innovation and clean-fuel infrastructure for international shipping, providing opportunities to developing countries to apply for funding related to decarbonization of shipping.

Global ocean conferences such as Our Ocean Conferences and UN Ocean Conferences are critical platforms for mobilizing ocean finance with a specific focus on climate and biodiversity.

d. Finding solutions for specific difficulties of ocean-based climate actions

Many ocean-climate interventions—such as coastal adaptation, nature-based solutions, and offshore renewable energy—are characterized by high upfront costs, perceived risk, and continued reliance on grant finance. Coastal adaptation and resilience of investments, including conservation and restoration of mangroves and reefs, and resilient infrastructure, remain heavily grant-dependent, with limited access to concessional and risk-mitigating instruments. Capital-intensive mitigation opportunities, such as offshore renewable energy, face high upfront costs and perceived risk, particularly in developing country contexts. These characteristics point to the relevance of concessional finance, risk-mitigation instruments, blended finance, and technical assistance in supporting implementation, particularly in developing country contexts. These characteristics and solutions should be discussed.

Strengthen accessibility of Ocean-climate finance for all

Discussions on ocean-climate finance have highlighted the importance of approaches that support direct access, simplified procedures, and inclusive participation, including for Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, youth, and small-scale ocean-dependent economic actors.

e. Implementation within the NCQG

The EU would encourage a discussion on how best to maximize the possible impact of the implementation of the NCQG-decision to the benefit of water systems and the ocean, tying together the barriers experienced in accessing or mobilizing finance for the implementation of these actions locally, nationally and internationally. Such discussions could identify key qualitative components as well as identify key stakeholders for a diverse set of actions, initiatives and policies that could contribute to the mobilization of finance at scale, which is accessible, affordable and fit for purpose for different contexts.

Section I. Evidence and information relevant to the possible sub-themes identified by the co-facilitators to further explore and develop the programme of the Forum

The EU and its 27 Member States consider the Forums of the Standing Committee on Finance to be key in informing climate finance policy and initiatives on the key issues at stake within a given sector. In addition, the forums can be instrumental in bringing together expertise from both sector and financial actors – public and private – with a view to enhance common understanding of barriers and opportunities alike. While specific sectoral challenges can be important for tackling specific barriers within the sector, we do believe that the Forums need to maintain an overall focus on finance, including on access, enabling conditions, climate plans, financial instruments, channels and actors etc. Thus, the EU's input as indicated in the below, indicative sub-themes should be read considering this approach to the role of the Forums.

Indicative sub-themes	
Potential sub-theme	**Evidence and information**
Key enablers and opportunities for financing climate	A clear overview of existing ocean climate finance modalities would bring the attention to opportunities and co-benefits.

mitigation, adaptation, and resilience in support of climate action in water systems and the ocean.	Water and ocean issues sit at the intersection of multiple global agendas, including climate (Paris Agreement), biodiversity (Kunming-Montreal GBF) and SDGs (6, 13, 14). This offers opportunities, as well as practical challenges, related to financing. Policy certainty remains a crucial element for climate and biodiversity finance. The need for strengthened relevant policy, legal and institutional frameworks continues. For water and ocean enablers this includes legal transparency on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM); Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) as well as Marine Spatial Planning (MSP). Climate finance requires the interaction of different finance actors and capital. Opportunities to work with blended finance and risk-sharing instruments also exist in the climate-water-ocean nexus. A crucial step is the need to make the use of public funds more strategic and effective. This requires more orchestrated and synergized finance ecosystems in the climate-water-ocean nexus, and the rekindling of isolated funding streams Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and resilience investments (whether public and/or private) take longer to show results on the ground. Creating long-term, predictable finance and funding for resilience rather than short project or investment cycles would enable a greater certainty and reduce risks. Data is a key enabler as finance relies on evidence. Provision and strengthening of climate and ocean data systems, MRV frameworks, digital tools for water management and early warning as well as transparent impact reporting are key.
Role of different finance actors to enhance scale and impact.	Greater alignment between several finance instruments, such as climate finance, biodiversity finance, and finance for sustainable development objectives, could foster synergies and cooperation between sectors that worked heretofore in isolation. For example, in Papua New Guinea, as part of the Global Fund for Coral Reef **(GFCR),** UNDP and UNCDF have partnered with a local financial institution to catalyse investment in reef-positive businesses in PNG with a

	focus on women entrepreneurs. UNCDF has provided 70% risk coverage to the bank through a guarantee facility, allowing women-led reef-positive MSMEs to gain access to financing. The programme also includes an investment readiness component, further developing the investment pipeline.
Strategies for integrating water and ocean financing into national and sectoral policies, NDCs, NAPs and investment plans.	Improving the tracking of ocean-related finance flows can help to ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation of ocean measures in the NDCs. For example, The **GFCR** Programme in Papua New Guinea has developed a Blue Economy Roadmap focusing on sustainable ocean resource management to protect coral reefs, mangroves and seagrasses, while fostering blue enterprises, improved marine governance, and boosting sustainable tourism. This initiative aims to integrate blue economy principles into national policy as well as create investment opportunities for the sector. Another example: **PROBLUE** focuses on both climate adaptation and mitigation, such as in Bangladesh, where it supports marine spatial planning readiness with disaster risk and climate adaptation. In Mozambique, **PROBLUE** has recently approved funding for integrating blue carbon into NDCs, thus ingraining climate mitigation into national strategy
Inclusive financing to ensure equitable participation and benefits for women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities.	Approaches that support direct access, simplified procedures, and inclusive participation, including for Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, youth, and small-scale ocean-dependent economic actors are of key importance. For example, through Blue Alliance, **GFCR** supports community-driven, income-generating, reef-positive activities in Pemba, Tanzania. The goal is to foster women and youth as entrepreneurs, workers, and value-chain actors in reef-positive businesses, such as sea cucumber aquaculture.
Country-driven approaches and lessons learned in designing, implementing, and financing locally and	Support a strong science-policy interface to provide timely, credible and salient scientific and socioeconomic information to inform policies and actions. The UNOC3 political declaration notes the opportunity to promote the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of the ocean by engaging decision-makers and fostering scientific inclusiveness through scientific research, and

regionally tailored projects.	also note the proposal for an International Platform for Ocean Sustainability. For example, in Derawan, Indonesia, **GFCR** operationalises a sub-national "service agency" through the BLUD model, enabling MPAs to function with greater flexibility, thus building upon Indonesian decentralised governance. A pilot innovative revenue scheme is also being tested in Raja Ampat and would allow to enhance financial strength and reduce dependence on donors and public budgets for MPA management. The approach delivers a key lesson: sustainable ocean finance succeeds when built into local public administration structures, rather than externally delivered and administered
Integrating science, data, and innovation to inform investments.	Ocean science and sustained observation systems are critical for proven and emerging ocean–climate solutions. Investments should be informed by the best available science, the ecosystem-based approach and the precautionary principle. This sub-theme should be informed by case studies on de-risking strategies and address challenges in discouraging private sector engagement. Ocean energy could be good example. A practical example: **GFCR** works with the Wildlife Conservation Society to expand the MERMAID platform and include financial and socio-economic indicators, in addition to existing environmental indicators. MERMAID supports structured collection and management of coral reef monitoring data, thus allowing programmes to demonstrate trends, target interventions, and strengthen performance reporting. GFCR investments are informed according to collected data, ensuring a high probability of outcome realization, and building trust with decision-makers. Further, in Namibia, **BAF** supports the development and implementation of a management framework for the Namibian Islands Marine Protected Area (NIMPA). A consortium consisting of multiple local NGOs is working jointly with the Namibian government to develop a science-based framework, thus allowing informed investment and effective decision-making.
Relevant fiscal instruments and policy coherence.	A relevant example comes from the GFCR again. Securing funds for coral reef conservation while relieving debt pressure: those were the goals achieved

	in the $35 million debt-for-nature swap contracted between the governments of Indonesia and the USA, facilitated by Conservation International and The Nature Conservancy, and with financial support from **GFCR**. Over a multi-year period, Indonesia will reduce debt payments to the USA and direct freed resources to protecting and restoring key coral reef ecosystems in areas such as the Bird's Head, Lesser Sunda, and Banda seascapes. The swap supports high coral biodiversity and local communities in the Coral Triangle.
Simplifying access to finance.	**GFCR** supports the Livelihood Fund in Micronesia. The programme offers simplified access to finance and channels smaller-ticket support to community enterprises and reef-dependent livelihoods. The Fund achieves lowered transaction costs and enables access to finance to local actors.
Innovative financial instruments.	Encourage participation of practitioners from finance that have experience in the ocean domain. This will help identify challenges and possible solutions. For example, in the Philippines, **GFCR** supports the design of parametric insurance to protect MPAs and reef-positive businesses from losses linked to extreme weather events. Predefined triggers enable rapid payouts and recovery actions, reducing business down time while maintaining conservation efforts
International cooperation and partnerships.	Global ocean conferences such as Our Ocean Conferences and UN Ocean Conferences are critical platforms for mobilizing ocean finance with specific focus on climate and biodiversity. For example, **GFCR** partners with the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) to harmonise priorities and action agendas, and monitor norms. The partnerships strengthen comparability of evidence and help country programmes plug into shared learning, methodologies, and global visibility.
Capacity-building.	Few practical capacity building examples: In the Mesoamerican Reef, GFCR supports MAR+Invest. The programme offers structured capacity-building for reef-positive enterprises and local actors, thus providing technical support to strengthen business models, improving investment readiness, and developing regionally tailored solutions across coastal communities.

	In Mozambique, where climate hazards are a high risk for the Maputo Environmental Protection Area, the **BAF**-supported project implements an ecosystem approach to adaptation and disaster risk reduction, focusing on awareness, and preventative and restorative measures. It integrates capacity-building for local communities, to aid them in conducting restoration activities

- **Section II. <u>Examples and case-studies related to financing climate action in water systems and the ocean</u>**

- On ocean science, data and observation, the EU funds the Copernicus Marine Service, Digital Twin for Ocean and European Marine Observation and Data Network which supports the measurement of the impacts of climate change on the ocean and provide free and open marine data. Regarding the need for a better ocean and science policy interface, the EU funds the International Platform for Ocean Sustainability, run by the Ocean Sustainability Foundation.
- Synergies with the BBNJ Agreement: The EU has launched the Global Ocean Programme (GOP), which is a €40 million initiative (2024–2027) to help partner states to implement and benefit from the BBNJ Agreement. It aims at enhancing partner countries capacities to implement and benefit from the BBNJ Agreement and other agreements and processes - legal, institutional, and scientific - related to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ).
- **The Ocean Pact**[4] is a comprehensive strategy to better protect the ocean, promote a thriving blue economy and support the well-being of people living in coastal areas.
- **The EU Water Resilience Strategy**[5] sets out a pathway to make Europe water resilient, firmly rooted in the 2050 vision put forward by the EU at the 2023 UN Water Conference for a water resilient EU, providing water security for all. This entails the protection and restoration of aquatic

[4] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0281
[5] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0280

ecosystems, and a fair balance between water supply and water demand responding to current needs, including the realization of the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, without compromising the rights of future generations.

- **The EU Mission** (Restore our Ocean and Waters)[6] is targeted to implement the relevant strategies through research and innovation, public engagement, and targeted blue investments.

Other examples from EU Member States

- **Accelerating the Restoration of Seagrass Meadows in the Mediterranean area through Innovative ecosystem-service based Solutions**

The Interreg Euro-MED ARTEMIS project partners aim to develop solutions for restoring and conserving seagrass meadows in the Mediterranean. This endeavour involves collaboration with multidisciplinary experts from five European countries to achieve the project goals within the projected timeline.

The main objective of the ARTEMIS project is to restore and conserve seagrass meadows in the Mediterranean region. This goal is pursued by developing and implementing innovative restoration protocols and integrating ecosystem service values into financial and policy frameworks. By fostering transnational cooperation and engaging multiple Mediterranean stakeholders, ARTEMIS seeks to ensure the sustainable management of seagrass habitats.

ARTEMIS aims to restore these meadows by incorporating the financial and societal benefits of seagrass ecosystems into public and private policies and investments. It uses advanced restoration techniques and innovative Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes.

https://artemis.interreg-euro-med.eu/

[6] Restore our Ocean and Waters - Research and innovation

- **Integrated, innovative and participative management of the Natura 2000 Network in the Spanish marine environment**

The LIFE INTEMARES project Integrated, innovative and participative management of the Natura 2000 Network in the Spanish marine environment is one of the largest marine conservation projects in Europe. The project aims to lay the foundations for achieving an efficiently managed network of Natura 2000 marine areas, with the real and effective participation of the sectors involved, and research as basic tools for decision-making.
The project's broad programme of actions is structured in five blocks: research, conservation, monitoring and surveillance, governance and capacity building, as well as communication, environmental awareness and environmental education.

In addition to its own actions, it draws on the results and synergies of other initiatives financed through various funds, such as the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the Biodiversity Foundation's own funds, funds from the Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan (PRTR)-Next Generation EU, as well as complementary sources of funding included in the Prioritized Action Framework (PAF).

https://intemares.es/en/

- **Guidelines for the management of Mediterranean wetlands**

The LIFE Wetlands4Climate project seeks to establish guidelines for the management of Mediterranean wetlands to foster their capacity as carbon sinks while maintaining their ecological integrity and function so they can continue to provide all the services of a healthy ecosystem.

This study seeks to demonstrate that this habitat – one of the most sensitive and threatened in the European Union – can be managed in a way that generates multiple partnerships and opportunities for socioeconomic development in the rural environment.

LIFE Wetlands4Climate is supported by the European Commission through the LIFE financing instrument. The project is coordinated by Fundación Global Nature, while Agencia EFE, Fundació València Clima i Energia and

Instituto Cavanilles de Biodiversidad y Biología Evolutiva (Universitat de València) are partners in the initiative.

https://fundacionglobalnature.org/wetlands4climate/en/inicio-english/

- **Habitat restoration and integrated management in the Ebro delta to improve biodiversity protection and climate resilience**

The Ebro Delta implemented two LIFE projects between 2009 and 2018 to address wetland deterioration, sea level rise, and subsidence. DELTA-LAGOON focused on lagoon habitat restoration and hydrological connectivity. EBRO-ADMICLIM adopted an integrated approach for managing water, sediment and habitats, also including mitigation goals.

The main institutional stakeholders (Government of Spain and Government of Catalonia) were partners of the DELTA-LAGOON project, which was formally supported by the city councils of the two towns where the lagoons are located (Amposta and Sant Jaume d'Enveja). Other stakeholders were informed and consulted during several meetings.

Stakeholder participation was a key component of the following EBRO-ADMICLIM project. It involved different stakeholder groups, including representatives of the rice sector, irrigation communities (these communities are among the main stakeholders of the delta and were involved as project partners) and NGO's. Thus, the development of the Climate Action Plan for the Ebro Delta was a participative process supporting the establishment of guidelines and identification of measures with a high consensus.

The total cost for the implementation of the DELTA-LAGOON project was 3.054.703 € (EU LIFE funding was 1.490.084 €). The main benefits brought by the project intervention are the restoration of wildlife habitats (62 ha of new habitats), the recovery of some protected species and the increased resilience of the lagoons and marshes against sea level rise. Economic benefits included the creation of jobs for the execution of the project and for the new visitor centre built in the Tancada lagoon. No monetary valuation of the benefits was carried out.

The total cost for the implementation of the EBRO-ADMICLIM project was 2,260,960.00 € (EU LIFE funding was 1,124,341.00 €). The main benefits of the project include: the testing of reuse of sediment of different origin, the implementation of agronomic practices reducing GHG emissions in the rice sector, the elaboration of sediment transport guidelines and the development of a sediment transport model (developed by the Universidad de Córdoba). The injection of sediments in the Ebro River and canals of the delta served as example for follow-up activities aiming to improve sediment input: a sediment by-pass at Riba-roja reservoir is currently planned.

https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/metadata/case-studies/habitat-restoration-and-management-in-the-ebro-delta-coastal-lagoons?set_language=en

- **Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR)**

The Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR) is supported by EU Member States Germany and France and strengthens the resilience of coral reef ecosystems, local communities, and economies, following an ecosystem-based approach reinforcing resilience to climate change impacts. The UN Grant Fund focuses on technical assistance, pipeline building, and de-risking finance, while the Equity Fund invests in larger-scale businesses in shared reef-positive sectors to leverage private capital at scale.

GFCR will continue focusing on 'coral refugia', critical coral habitats more resilient to climate change, by financing projects focusing on coral reef protection and restoration. Its strategy is based on expanding sustainable finance solutions, growing ocean-positive businesses, fostering national investment ecosystems, creating a knowledge, learning, and impact cycle, and mainstreaming sustainable ocean finance and policy.

- **Save Our Mangroves Now!**

To improve the protection of mangroves and their habitats, Germany (BMZ) has joined forces with the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in the initiative "Save Our Mangroves Now!".

Partners work together to reverse the decline of mangrove habitats in the Western Indian Ocean and across the globe in an effort to restore biodiversity, protect livelihoods and mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis. Through the initiatives, partners supported the development and launch of the Global Mangrove Breakthrough announced at UNFCCC COP27 in Egypt in November 2022. They also supported inclusion of mangroves in the NDCs of Madagascar, Tanzania, Kenya, and Mozambique, and the development of ambitious international targets for mangrove restoration.

- **Blue Action Fund (BAF)**

The Blue Action Fund is a multilateral ocean conservation fund promoting marine conservation and sustainable livelihoods in coastal communities. Supported by multiple EU Member States (Germany, Norway, Ireland, France and Sweden), it allocates grants to local NGOs to safeguard marine ecosystems and improve climate resilience. The Fund plays a vital role in terms of direct access to finance as well as capacity development by channelling funds to climate vulnerable coastal communities.

The Blue Action Fund brought together experts, grantees and stakeholders from their dedicated 'EbA in the Western Indian Ocean' funding window to explore climate adaptation challenges and share practical solutions for effective implementation.

The **Blue Action Fund (BAF)** partners with regional organisations, such as MarViva, Fondo Accion, or Wildtrust, which work closely with IP&LC.

BAF, through Oikos and its partners, supports the creation of an Indigenous People-led Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measure (OECM) in the Honduran Cays. Local Miskito communities will be supported in securing their rights to at least 17 Cays through a land-titling process. The project will help Honduras fulfil its biodiversity conservation commitments by promoting a shared management model that centres Indigenous governance.

At iSimangaliso MPA in South Africa, **BAF** supported the creation of five Community Resource Hubs, offering indigenous knowledge sharing

workshops to communicate the value of marine ecosystems and advocate for global conservation targets.

In Tanzania, **BAF** supports the restoration and rehabilitation of climate-relevant coastal ecosystems, including 150 ha of mangrove forest, supporting both climate mitigation and coastal resilience. The project involves local communities in identifying and establishing sustainable management actions supporting climate resilient ecosystems

- **PROBLUE**

The European Commission and several EU member states (Germany, Sweden, Ireland, France, Denmark) support PROBLUE, a World Bank-administered multi-donor trust fund, in its goal of achieving a sustainable and integrated development of marine and coastal resources in a healthy ocean. In 2025, the trust fund approved $47 million in funding, with 96% of proposals including climate-specific data and analytics.

For the future, PROBLUE will continue including climate change as part of coastal and marine resilience programs. Its investments are guided by Country Climate Development Reports which support the integration of climate-resilient blue economy development into country strategies and future lending opportunities.

- **WASAG**

The Global Framework for Action to Cope with Water Scarcity in Agriculture in the Context of Climate Change, better known as the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) has been designed to bring together key players across the globe and from different sectors to tackle the collective challenge of improving water usage in agriculture to ensure food security for all.

It is a partnership hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and consists of governments and intergovernmental agencies, Member Nations, United Nations (UN) agencies (other than FAO),

other UN bodies, international financial institutions (IFIs), academia and research institutions; civil society organizations (including non-governmental organizations [NGOs]), and private sector organizations encompassing social enterprises, trade associations and foundations.

Collaboration is fostered among WASAG's partners for the development and deployment of policies, strategies and programmes, so that the capacity of countries to improve and adapt agricultural systems is enhanced in conditions of increasing water scarcity and a changing climate, using the combined expertise and resources of the partners.

Section III. Organization of the 2026 Forum

The EU and its 27 Member States appreciate previous efforts to ensure inclusivity of the annual SCF Forums, and underlines that an inclusive organization with participation of a wide range of stakeholders fosters a more lively, inclusive and relevant conversation.

For the organization of the 2026 Forum, we encourage proactive outreach to academia, private sector, civil society representatives and relevant organizations to ensure knowledge of the upcoming Forum. Further, we encourage that the agenda for the meeting contains hybrid formats with opportunity for smaller-group discussions, panels and expert presentations to allow an informed discussion amongst participants bringing in each their specific knowledge. Equitable representation in speaker roles should – as always – be a core principle.

Further, as many financial institutions and stakeholders are already undertaking efforts to integrate water systems and the ocean into their strategies and operations, we suggest the Forum to invite institutions such as the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism, the World Bank or other multilateral development banks and climate funds to present how water systems and the ocean considerations are taken on board and executed within their operations.

Moreover, we would like to underscore that the key opportunity for exchange the Forum offers, should not be limited to Parties but also involve

Constituted Bodies, Financial Entities and other institutions and actors under the Convention and the Paris Agreement. It should also include relevant international organizations, other UN conventions and agencies and non-Party stakeholders, such as academia, knowledge institutions, civil society organizations, including farmers and the private sector. Adopting an inclusive approach will bring about a broadly informed discussion. The EU suggests to live stream and record the Forum, in order for actors outside to benefit from the discussions and results.

Acknowledging the special roles to play for both the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism as well as the multilateral development banks in the implementation of climate action in agriculture and food systems, it is encouraged to ensure participation from these stakeholders, including in panels as applicable.

Specific suggestions:

- The EU would suggest inviting as speaker the European Investment Bank which supports a wide range of blue economy projects, from low-carbon solutions to coastal climate resilience, ocean conservation to research and innovation. The EIB invested EUR 10.6 bn in sustainable blue economy operations between 2020 and 2024, leveraging EUR 43 bn.
- On ocean science, data and observation, the EU could present the Copernicus Marine Service, Digital Twin for Ocean and European Marine Observation and Data Network which supports the measurement of the impacts of climate change on the ocean and provide free and open marine data. Regarding the need for a better ocean and science policy interface, a presentation on the International Platform for Ocean Sustainability, run by the Ocean Sustainability Foundation could be foreseen.
- The EU could present its Copernicus Marine Service, Digital Twin for Ocean and European Marine Observation and Data Network which supports the measurement of the impacts of climate change on the ocean and provide free and open marine data.

- Referring to the example cited above, the EU would suggest inviting IUCN in charge of the GOP Technical Assistance Facility as a speaker.