



BLUE MISSION BANOS

**Supporting the Mission
Ocean Lighthouse in the
Baltic and North Sea Basins**

Deliverable 2.7

**Implementation of the Lighthouse
Charter in the BANOS member states**

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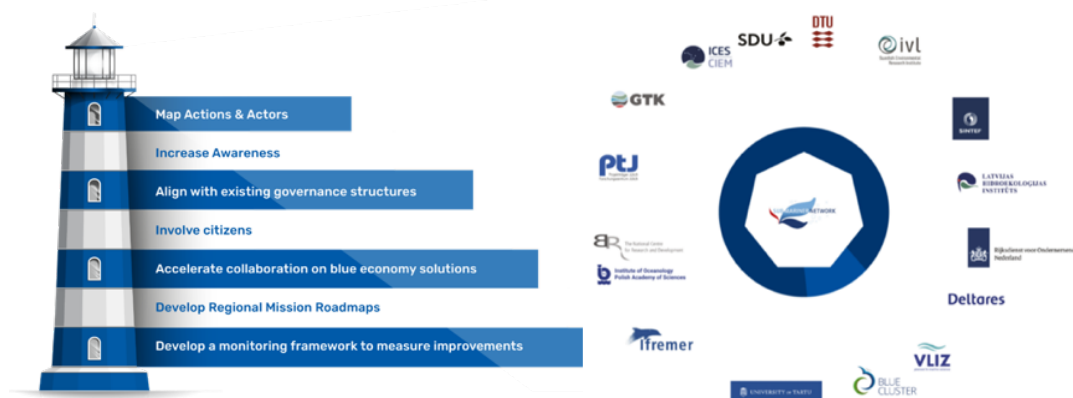
BLUEMISSIONBANOS PROJECT

BlueMissionBANOS (BMB), as a Coordination and Support Action (CSA) for the Baltic and North Sea (BANOS) Mission Ocean Lighthouse, inspires, engages, and supports stakeholders across the BANOS region in taking positive action to reach the Mission Ocean objectives. In particular, the uptake of a sustainable, carbon-neutral, and circular blue economy is facilitated by connecting national, regional, and transnational actors from politics, industry, and science, thereby creating a governance model that is conducive to innovation.

While fostering the transition towards a climate-neutral and circular sustainable blue economy, BlueMissionBANOS supports the prevention and elimination of water pollution, as well as the protection and restoration of biodiversity and marine and freshwater ecosystems. The project focuses on reducing governance fragmentation, facilitating evidence-based decision-making and fostering citizen engagement across the BANOS area. These supporting actions raise awareness, showcase opportunities, and inspire stakeholders to actively contribute to the transition and preservation of oceans, seas, and waters through 2030 and beyond.

To accelerate the transition towards an innovative and circular blue economy, in line with regions' strategic priorities, as defined by their Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3), BlueMissionBANOS facilitates synergies and matchmaking between actors working towards achieving the Mission Ocean objectives in the BANOS area. To that end, BlueMissionBANOS organised regional pilot demonstration arenas (Mission Arenas), systematically bringing together innovators, business support and training organisations, authorities and other local stakeholders from a geographically defined area to collaborate and thus accelerate the uptake of innovative solutions in support of Mission Ocean. As part of the project, BlueMissionBANOS provides a catalogue of projects, partners involved and technical expertise and solutions to foster progress, collaboration and knowledge sharing. Furthermore, BlueMissionBANOS develops a consistent monitoring framework to assess progress in achieving carbon neutrality and circularity.

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ACRONYMS

BANOS	Baltic and North Sea
BMB	BlueMissionBanos - Supporting the Mission Ocean Lighthouse in the Baltic and North Sea Basin
BMFTR	Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space
BMUKN	Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Actin, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
CSA	Coordination and Support Action
EEA	European Environmental Agency
EMFAF	European Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund
ERRIN	European Regions and Innovation Network
EUSBSR	EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
GNSBI	Greater North Sea Basin Initiative
HELCOM	Baltic Marine Environment Protection ComMission
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MarLEN	Maritime Low Emission Network
Mission	EU Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030”
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OSPAR	Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
PtJ	Project Management Juelich
RG	Reference Group
R&I	Research & Innovation
SBEP	Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership
WP	Work Package
ZEWT	Zero Emission Waterborne Transport

1 INTRODUCTION & SCOPE

The report, “*Implementation of the Lighthouse Charter in the BANOS Member States*,” aims to demonstrate how the Baltic and North Sea (BANOS) region has implemented the Mission Ocean & Waters to date at various regional scales. The Mission Charter is one indicator to visualise the state-of-the-art. This report builds on Deliverable 2.4, *Existing Governance Structures and Gap Analysis in the BANOS Area*, and examines the implementation of the Mission by member states at various regional levels. The Lighthouse Charter, expected to be drafted and adopted by member states in 2022, serves as an important, though not exclusive, indicator of progress. Its purpose is to facilitate alignment of national and regional strategies with the Mission’s objectives by identifying synergies between Smart Specialisation Strategies, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), and funding programmes such as EMFAF or other Structural Funds. The report will examine whether the expectations at the start of the Mission have now been met at the end of Phase 1 and what still needs to be done regarding policy alignment in Phase 2.

BlueMissionBANOS has supported governance processes through the early establishment of a Network of National Focal Points and through organising four regional events, the Mission Arenas. Regular exchanges within this network and among project partners have enhanced coordination, encouraged knowledge sharing, and promoted mutual learning in the ongoing implementation of the Mission across the BANOS region. The strong network of stakeholders in the BANOS region works together very effectively, and the statistics in the EU Dashboard on the Mission Charter and on the Wavelinks platform created by the Lighthouse Projects clearly show how fruitful this cooperation has been so far. Further monitoring tool by European Environment Agency: [Wise Marine: EU Mission “Restore our Oceans and Water” | Europe’s seas | WISE Marine Marine Information System for Europe](#) (Monitoring of Mission-funded projects only)

The report is structured in a way that first describes the status of implementing Mission Ocean & Waters based on statistics and the Charter pledges. It then examines implementation at various regional levels and highlights best practice examples. Finally, it describes the achievements of BlueMissionBANOS in the area of policy coherence and alignment and provides an outlook on the implementation of the Mission from 2026 onwards.

2 STATE-OF-THE-ART OF MISSION IMPLEMENTATION IN THE BANOS AREA

Mission Ocean & Waters was launched in 2021 to protect European water habitats and restore them to good ecological conditions by 2030. The focus of the Lighthouse in the BANOS region was primarily on creating a sustainable, carbon-neutral blue economy (Mission Ocean Objective 3). While fostering the transition towards the blue economy, BlueMissionBANOS has also supported the other two objectives: preventing and eliminating water pollution and protecting and restoring marine and freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity. At the start of the project, a gap analysis was carried out based on the mapping of the study published by the EC: [‘Baseline study](#)

for the implementation of the lighthouse in the Baltic and North Sea basins for the Mission 'Restore our ocean and waters by 2030'.

The report *Existing Governance Structures and Gap Analysis in the BANOS Area*, published at the beginning of 2024, examined a comprehensive literature review. It revealed that the top hindrances towards the Mission implementation are:

1. Undefined political strategies: Strategies are not coherent across government levels or industries and cannot keep up with innovations.
2. Lack of financial support: It is difficult to secure funding for sustainable development projects
3. Lack of incentives for new developing markets: Infrastructures are lacking to build out new industries, hindering demand in markets
4. Knowledge gaps: The trade-offs between ecology and industry are not well understood, despite our proximity to climate and biodiversity tipping points.

The project activities sought to remove these obstacles and pursue the goals of Mission Ocean & Waters. The successes are evident, among other things, in the pledges to the Mission Charter, as well as on Wise Marine and Wavelinks.

Mission Charter Pledges

The EU Mission Charter, focusing on restoring Oceans and Waters by 2030, provides a flexible framework for cooperation between public and private organisations, companies, civil society groups and research institutions to mobilise resources and promote joint activities. The Mission Charter aims to mobilise all stakeholders to achieve the Mission's goals, strengthening cooperation, aligning efforts, and attaining the critical mass needed for the transformational change required to restore our oceans and waters by 2030. The following key elements make up the Ocean & Waters Mission Charter:

Objectives: Protecting and restoring marine and freshwater ecosystems, eliminating pollution and promoting a sustainable blue economy.

Activities: Commitments may include research, innovation, citizen participation and investment.

Support: Signatories who submit actions can receive support in finding partners or funding to expand their projects.

Through numerous events, newsletters, and social media posts, the partners of the BlueMissionBANOS project have encouraged stakeholders in their regions to sign up for the Mission Charter and pledge their activities.

As of September 2025, the following results had been achieved for the BANOS region:

General Numbers

Total number of actions: **239**

Total budget allocated for the actions: **2,612,889,131 EUR**

Total number of unique organisations that pledged their actions: **124**

Mission Charter Actions by Type of Action and Allocated Budget

Type of action	Number of actions	Budget allocated for the actions
Research and innovation	114	371,705,509 EUR
Upscaling, deployment and replication of solutions	50	1,621,246,044 EUR
Citizen engagement, citizen-science, youth-led initiatives, communities of practice, ocean and water literacy, outreach, awareness raising and participatory approaches	36	15,400,526 EUR
Evidence-based knowledge and data and/or access provision to knowledge and data, in line with FAIR principles for the Mission Ocean and Waters Knowledge System	30	575,205,110 EUR
Education and training	9	29,331,942 EUR

Table 1: Mission Charter Actions by Type of Action and Allocated Budget

Mission Charter Actions by Objective or Enabler

Objective or Enabler	Number of actions	Budget allocated for the actions
Biodiversity	170	2,041,257,301 EUR
Carbon-neutrality and circularity	116	474,802,125 EUR
Pollution	121	1,283,578,276 EUR
Public mobilization	110	656,368,946 EUR
Data and knowledge	92	386,078,763 EUR

Table 2: Mission Charter Actions by Objective or Enabler

Mission Charter Actions by Country and Allocated Budget

Country	Number of actions	Budget allocated for the actions
Denmark	72	689,981,952 EUR
Finland	66	287,955,771 EUR
Sweden	58	656,565,903 EUR
Germany	52	1,613,688,918 EUR
Estonia	35	604,467,702 EUR
Latvia	32	171,355,719 EUR
Poland	27	140,856,597 EUR
Lithuania	23	211,887,200 EUR
Norway	18	489,186,047 EUR
France	12	38,156,327 EUR
Netherlands	12	50,873,730 EUR

Table 3: Mission Charter Actions by Country and Allocated Budget

Mission Charter Actions by Type of Organisation

Organisation type	Number of actions
Research and academia	79 (33%)
Non-governmental organization	72 (30%)
National authority	24 (10%)
Other	19 (8%)
Private enterprise	18 (8%)
City or local authority	10 (4%)
Regional authority	10 (4%)
Trade, business or professional association	5 (2%)
International/EU organization	2 (1%)

Table 4: Mission Charter Actions by Type of Organisation

Source: [Mission Ocean and Waters - European Commission](#), data processed by SUBMARINER

Approximately half of the pledges (114) were made by members of the R&I community, indicating that this is where the Mission is best known. In second place are initiatives focused on the upscaling, deployment, and replication of solutions, with 50 pledges, but with a budget of €1.6 billion, four times the amount pledged for R&I activities. Most pledges were made in Scandinavian countries, whereas Germany has pledged €1.6 billion, the most significant monetary contribution to the Mission Charter. This demonstrates a great willingness to pursue and implement the Mission and its goals.

Wise Marine

Another way to monitor the implementation of Mission Ocean is the Wise Marine platform, which is managed by the European Environmental Agency (EEA). Among other things, this platform has developed a robust monitoring system that can evaluate activities in relation to the achievement of the Mission's objectives. The data is based on projects funded by the EC as part of Mission Ocean through the Horizon Europe research framework programme. Ten projects were assessed for the BANOS region and the corresponding Mission objective for the Lighthouse:



Figure 1: Wise Marine BANOS Projects

Source: [Monitoring of the EU Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030” | EU Mission “Restore our Oceans and Water” | WISE Marine Marine Information System for Europe](#)

Wise Marine has two main areas of focus: monitoring the implementation of the MSFD and monitoring the Mission Ocean & Waters projects funded by the European Commission under Horizon Europe. This makes the platform a good complement to the Mission Implementation Platform and Wavelinks.

Wavelinks

Wavelinks is a platform developed jointly by the three Mission projects Prep4Blue, BlueMissionAA and BlueMissionBANOS. To date, a wealth of information on projects, stakeholders, engagement methods, citizen science, funding sources and solutions that contribute to the Mission objectives has been compiled. The database is regularly updated and expanded. Any user can enter information and data, which is assessed for content before being published. Several databases are being used; to date, information from 9 funding programmes is available on Wavelinks.

General numbers of data available on Wavelinks:

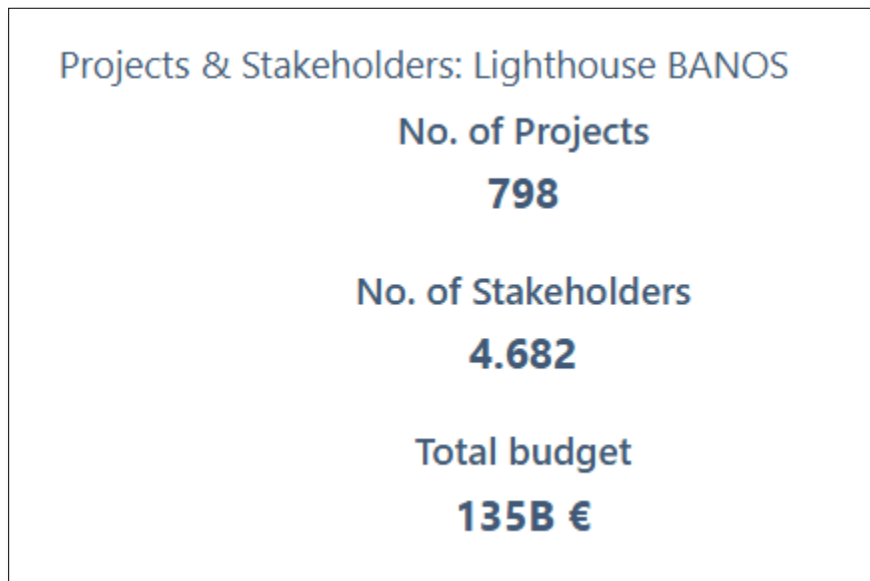


Figure 2: Wavelinks Data

Source: Wavelinks, [Wavelinks](#), 27.10.2025

Further information on Wavelinks and its services has been provided in the respective WP6 deliverables 'D6.2 Catalogue of projects' and D6.3 'Catalogue of services/know how'.

The data show that the Mission Ocean & Waters is already well-known in the BANOS region and that a large number of stakeholders, projects, and initiatives with substantial budgets are already contributing to the successful implementation of the Mission in the region. The Mission Arenas organised by BlueMissionBANOS have made a particularly significant contribution to this. The following chapter shows the extent to which the Mission has been implemented on different regional scales and describes successful individual measures and achievements.

3 MISSION IMPLEMENTATION AT REGIONAL SCALES

This chapter aims to show how Mission Ocean has been implemented at various regional levels in the BANOS region to date. Through exchanges with the BlueMissionBANOS project partners and at events beyond this, we have observed that member states or regions (sub-national) approach implementation differently, and that, from a governance perspective, there can be no one-size-fits-all solution. The Mission-oriented approach is new, and the complexity of the challenges requires interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary cooperation. This approach is intended to counteract the often siloed and fragmented administrative and institutional processes. The following section, therefore, uses specific best-practice examples to show the extent to which the BlueMissionBANOS project has contributed to implementing the Mission Ocean & Waters at the supranational, national and sub-national (regional) level.

Supranational level

The supranational level refers to both the entire BANOS region and smaller cross-border cooperation between regions. Due to the varying natural and socio-economic conditions in the regions surrounding the North Sea and Baltic Sea, we have taken these conditions into account in the four Mission Arenas. Furthermore, cooperation with regional structures, such as HELCOM, EUSBSR, and GNSBI, was initiated or consolidated. As a networking project, BlueMissionBANOS has always endeavoured not to create further structures, but to integrate its work into existing structures.

- **Foresight workshops at Mission Arenas:**

Based on a gap analysis, we worked out in the foresight workshops how the Mission Ocean & Waters can be implemented at various regional levels and developed corresponding paths and scenarios. The foresight workshops are a good example of how, at the supranational level, namely in the Mission Arenas, concepts for implementing Mission activities at the regional (sub-national) or even local level can be successful. One scenario was developed for the supranational scale. It reflects the collective ambition of aligning Mission Ocean objectives with broader EU strategies such as the Ocean Pact, MSFD, and EU Directives.

Key features include:

- Coordinated implementation of existing EU directives.
- Creation of an intermediate governance level (e.g. Nordic cooperation).
- Harmonised data collection and science-policy interfaces.
- Erasmus-style exchanges to promote governance learning across borders.

At the supranational level, success requires aligning data, scaling models of cooperation, and facilitating the implementation of existing EU directives. This scenario was grounded in the need to advance the existing EU structures while adapting to our current geopolitical realities.

Moving forward, the results of the foresight process provide a coherent direction for the next steps for the Mission Ocean. Stakeholders are not asking for more ideas, but for pathways to act on what is already known. With the Ocean Pact and the foresight-based governance scenarios as foundations, the priority must now shift toward embedding these insights into policy and programme planning. This includes clearer mandates for cross-sector task forces, funding support for digital and participatory infrastructures, and continued alignment between research, market mechanisms, and regulation. More information on the outcome of the BlueMissionBANOS foresight workshops is available in *Deliverable 2.5: Foresight report for a governance structure to ensure achievement of the Mission in the BANOS area* (Note: Soon available at the BlueMissionBANOS [website](#))

- **Collaboration with supranational structures**

The implementation of the Mission was also advanced with the help of existing supranational structures. In the BANOS region, these are primarily the HELCOM, OSPAR, EUSBSR working groups, the GNSBI, and ERRIN, which serves as a network of regions. There has been long-standing cooperation with HELCOM, for example, through the former regional research programme, BONUS, aimed at promoting the Baltic Sea environment. This made it possible, for example, to organise the 2nd Mission Arena on 25/26 April 2024 in Riga back-to-back with the 50th anniversary of HELCOM. This created synergies for both events. Cooperation between the Baltic Sea countries has a long tradition, and there is also close cooperation with the EUSBSR working groups, which address maritime issues, such as the MSP Working Group, a joint working group with the VASAB Office. To raise awareness of the Mission in the Baltic Sea region, a workshop was held as part of the 2023 EUSBSR annual event. Representatives from CBSS and UBC, who are also active in Mission Ocean & Waters and other EU Missions, were also present.

Cooperation with stakeholders in the North Sea region is different. There is no macro-regional strategy such as the EUSBSR. The recent establishment of the GNSBI is therefore very welcome. This is a cooperation platform established by nine countries bordering the North Sea (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom) and the European Union to jointly address the challenges of planning and utilising the heavily trafficked North Sea region. The main objectives of the GNSBI are (1) Coordination of maritime spatial planning, (2) Promoting a sustainable blue economy and protecting marine ecosystems, including by reducing biodiversity loss, (3) Creating a common knowledge and data platform for improved cross-border decision-making, and (4) Developing joint approaches to cross-cutting issues such as assessing cumulative environmental impacts, adapting to climate change and the long-term outlook for fisheries. Partners from the BMB are involved in the GNSBI network, which will create good synergies between Mission Ocean & Waters and the GNSBI on the topics mentioned above. More information on how BMB collaborates with existing structures in the BANOS region is described in [“Deliverable 2.1: Manual for Collaboration across the BANOS Region”](#).

- **Collaboration between BMB and EU structures:**

BMB makes a significant, concrete contribution to promoting the Mission Ocean & Waters in the BANOS region. This includes encouraging stakeholders to pledge their activities in the Mission Charter. This contributes to the visibility of successes and serves to connect stakeholders. There are regular exchanges between BMB partners, the Mission Secretariat at the EU-COM, the Mission Board and the SPC Working Group for the Ocean & Waters Mission. In this way, the BlueMissionBANOS Lighthouse undertakes important strategic work in support of the Mission's implementation.

Member states level

At the Member State level, the implementation of Mission Ocean & Waters has been advanced through several activities. These include information events to raise awareness of the Mission's objectives among stakeholders, the establishment of interdepartmental working groups and the creation of so-called "Mission Hubs". The Mission Subgroup makes a major contribution to implementing the Mission in the Member States. Regular exchanges (approximately twice a year) between the EC and representatives of the Member States have not only facilitated the exchange of information but also broken down siloed structures, particularly between ministries, through mutual learning. The Mission Arenas of BlueMissionBANOS have also contributed to the implementation of the Mission in the Member States through the targeted invitation and active participation of ministries and authorities in the Mission Arenas.

Here are a few examples from the BlueMissionBANOS member states:

- **BlueMissionBANOS National Focal Points**

BMB has partners from every country bordering the Baltic Sea and the North Sea, except Lithuania. National Focal Points have been established in 10 partner countries. These are the central points of contact at the national level for Mission Lighthouse. The National Focal Points act as interfaces between the project and Mission stakeholders at the EU, national and regional levels. They support ministries, for example, in implementing the Mission by organising workshops and providing content-related advice. The National Focal Points are well connected within their countries and support efforts to achieve coherence and alignment on marine-related issues. The National Focal Points also play a crucial role within BMB, as they bring together the relevant ministries and authorities in the Governance Reference Group to support the implementation of the Mission at a structural level. In Phase 2 of the Ocean & Waters Mission, the established Focal Points will play a key role in developing the Mission Hubs in the BANOS regions, aiming to create sustainable and effective governance. The contact of all BMB National Focal Points is available here: [Contact - Blue Mission BANOS](#)

- **Interministerial Group Germany**

In Germany, governance for implementing the five EU Missions was coordinated by the Department for International and European Affairs of the BMFTR. The structure provides for two

Federal Ministries to be responsible for the implementation of each of the Missions, depending on the topic, and to organise the corresponding steering bodies or working groups. The BMFTR and BMUKN are jointly responsible for coordinating the implementation of Mission Ocean & Waters. Because Germany faces the challenge of marine-related issues being spread across five different federal ministries, with subordinate authorities responsible for implementation, a working group has been established to improve networking and the exchange of information, and to avoid fragmentation and duplication in the future. There have been four meetings so far. PtJ, as the funding agency responsible for implementing marine and maritime research programmes, together with the National Contact Point responsible for the Mission, supports the ministries in organising the meetings. Depending on the topic, external stakeholders are also invited. All participants have received the meetings very well, and they will continue in phase 2 of the Mission, with better involvement of the Northern German regions in future.

- **Mission Hub Denmark**

A "Mission Ocean Hub" is a national or regional platform to coordinate efforts and stakeholders for the EU's Mission Ocean and Waters, which aims to restore the health of the ocean and waters. It acts as a platform for collaboration between diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, researchers, businesses, and NGOs. The aim is to align national efforts with broader European objectives for ocean health, facilitating knowledge exchange and the development of innovative solutions to challenges such as pollution and climate change. The Danish Mission Hub is an example of this, as it brings together Danish stakeholders, including regions, ministries, universities, and private foundations, to work towards the Mission's objectives. The hub facilitates collaboration, knowledge sharing, and the development of innovative solutions to address issues such as marine pollution, biodiversity loss, and climate change in Denmark. Our BMB partner Southern Denmark University (SDU) coordinates the Danish Mission Ocean Hub and will intensify its cooperation with national and regional stakeholders in the future.

- **Mission Arenas and EU-Presidency events**

The Mission Arenas are not only significant at the regional level, but also for the implementation of the Mission Ocean & Waters at the national level. During BMB, we have twice successfully combined the Mission Arenas with high-level events within the framework of EU Council presidencies. The Mission Arena in Sopot in April 2025 took place as a side event of the Polish EU Presidency. The high-level event in Denmark on Mission Ocean was an event organised specifically by the EU COM together with SDU and DTU Aqua. These high-level events at the national level gave the Mission more attention and visibility. There are plans to link events in the BANOS region to EU Council presidencies in phase 2 of the Mission as well. Further information on the Danish EU Presidency Event of the Mission Ocean & Waters is available here: [Mission Ocean Conference: Danish EU Presidency | The Event](#)

Regional level

The involvement of regions (sub-national) and municipalities has been successful to varying degrees in the BANOS Lighthouse. It is particularly difficult to involve actors outside the fields of research and innovation. Regions often lack the resources to participate in European initiatives. In some cases, funding opportunities are not well-known. As part of the Ocean & Waders Mission, calls for associated regions were published to give regions and municipalities the opportunity to actively participate in implementing the Mission. It is hoped that integration will be even better in the second phase of the Mission, which will focus on upscaling and deployment. Among other things, the open calls for the BlueActionBANOS project, which is specifically aimed at the community of practice, will make a major contribution.

Good examples from the BANOS region:

- **Blekinge – a region on a Mission**

The Blekinge region is a best practice regional example of the Mission-oriented approach and the funding provided by the EU-COM to foster regional innovation, economic growth, and wealth. Blekinge's "Mission" refers to its role as a pilot region for EU Missions, utilising its small size and supportive environment to test and develop innovative solutions for societal challenges, such as climate adaptation and ocean restoration. This approach integrates societal challenges into its Smart Specialization strategy, focusing on real-world testbeds and experimentation to foster sustainability-driven innovation. Blekinge has adopted the EU Missions method as a key part of its strategy to integrate sustainability into economic development. The region acts as a testbed for new ideas, involving local and regional stakeholders in experimenting with solutions for challenges such as climate change and ocean health. Blekinge believes that future economic growth will emerge from addressing societal issues, so it has prioritised work related to sustainability and climate change. The region's Smart Specialisation strategy explicitly includes missions, which is a unique approach in Sweden and Europe. The region uses a multidisciplinary "living lab" approach, which includes policy, technology, and social/behavioural dimensions, and reinforces it with Digital Twins to expand testing through simulation and gaming. Examples include a Mission to restore oceans and waters, and another to adapt to a changing climate, with a focus on resilience to risks such as extreme weather.

This video explains how Blekinge is using its unique advantages as a region to become a leader in innovation: [Blekinge a region on a Mission](#)

More information can be found here: [Blekinge is on a Mission - SBHSS](#)

- **Blue Cluster - Network of innovative organizations in the sustainable blue economy**

Blue Cluster is an independent and neutral partner that empowers Flemish companies to develop the next generation of offshore and marine solutions. Facilitating partnerships between businesses, research institutions, and government bodies helps create strong consortia capable of delivering impactful innovation in the blue economy. Through an accessible and extensive portfolio of networking services, Blue Cluster opens the door to new technologies, talent, and collaboration opportunities, enabling companies to explore and benefit from the rapidly evolving landscape of the innovative blue economy.

By being involved in several Mission Oceans and MSP-related projects, Blue Cluster has been able to make the connections between several basins and Member States.

A core part of Blue Cluster's mission is to identify strategic opportunities and guide project consortia from early concept to real-world implementation. This includes support for funding applications, value creation pathways, and long-term business development. At the highest level, the organisation provides strategic foresight on the major transitions and challenges shaping the future of the ocean economy—insights that directly contribute to the goals of the EU Mission Ocean, particularly those related to climate-neutrality, healthy marine ecosystems, and sustainable blue innovation.

For the period 2025–2028, Blue Cluster has defined five strategic priorities that directly reinforce the ambitions of Mission Ocean and the broader European blue policy agenda:

1. Acceleration of digitalisation and automation – advancing marine data systems, digital twins, robotics, and AI to make ocean industries smarter, safer, and more resilient.
2. Strengthening the offshore energy value chain – supporting energy transition efforts through innovation in offshore renewable energy, hybrid systems, and enabling technologies.
3. Protection of maritime infrastructure and security – enhancing maritime safety, cybersecurity, and resilience against emerging threats.
4. Sustainable coastal management and nature-based solutions (NbS) – contributing to biodiversity protection, coastal resilience, and ecosystem restoration.
5. Unlocking the commercial potential of multi-use at sea – developing integrated concepts where offshore wind, aquaculture, floating PV, logistics and nature restoration coexist, aligned with Mission Ocean's system-wide approach.

Across these priority domains, Blue Cluster acts as a catalyst and accelerator of innovation, ensuring that Flemish companies stay at the forefront of the sustainable blue economy. Through its strong innovation ecosystem, commitment to digital transformation, and focus on maritime security and ecological resilience, Blue Cluster plays a pivotal role in implementing the Mission Ocean goals and shaping a competitive, future-proof blue economy for Flanders and beyond.

More information can be found here: [Blue Cluster - Network of innovative organisations in the sustainable blue economy](#)

- **Mission Arenas**

The concept of the BMB Mission Arenas is unique: They were developed not just to hold conferences, but to give stakeholders the opportunity to actively participate in shaping the process. They are a platform where people can work, discuss and develop roadmaps. During the BMB programme, four Mission Arenas were held:

- Mission Arena 1: 14-16th November 2023, Gothenburg (SE)
- Mission Arena 2: 25-26th April 2024, Riga (LAT)
- Mission Arena 3: 27-28th November 2024, Amsterdam (NL)
- Mission Arena 4: 28-29th April 2025, Sopot (PL)

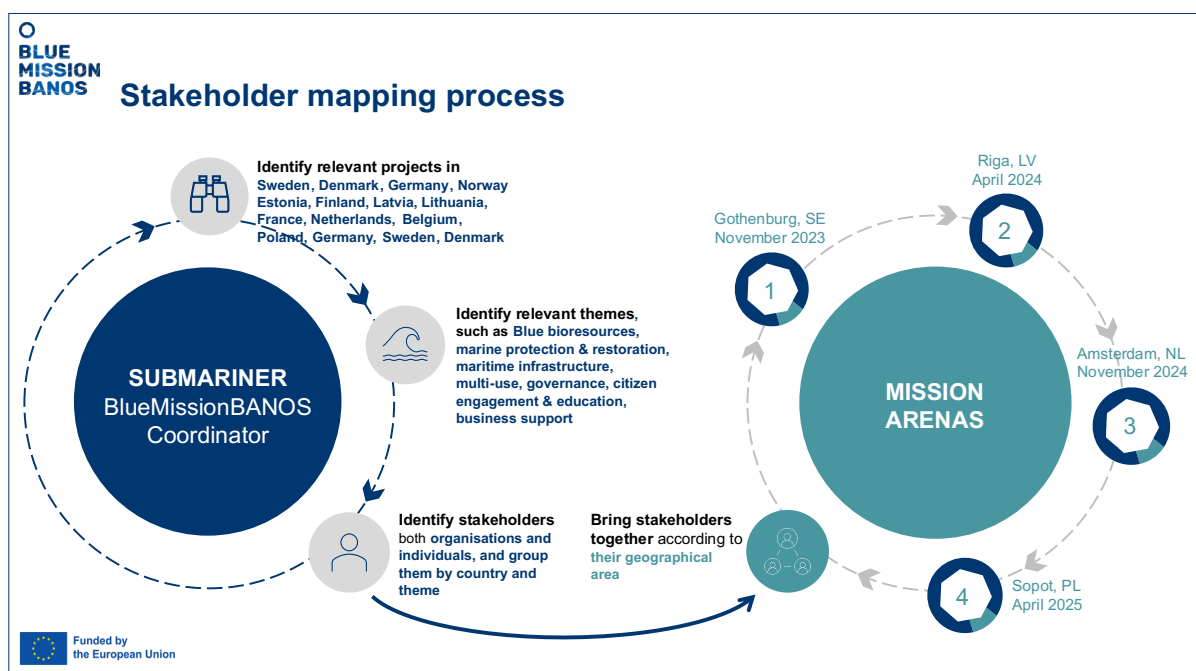


Figure 3: BMB Stakeholder Mapping Process

Financing was a challenge, but the respective Mission Arena organisers mastered it well through crowdfunding. Thanks to the financial and content-related contributions of projects (national or EU-funded), there was a strong ambition to achieve concrete results from the Mission Arenas. The regional focus enabled the development of roadmaps that are relevant to the region. Because stakeholders from science, industry, politics, and society participated in the Mission Arenas and voted on the individual measures, the roadmaps provide a good representation of what is needed to develop a sustainable blue economy in the BANOS region, based on a healthy marine ecosystem. The successful Mission Arena concept was continuously adapted during the BMB project and is set to continue in Phase 2 of the Mission, commencing in 2026.

More information on the Mission Arenas and all Roadmaps are available at the BMB website: [BlueMissionBANOS #Supporting the Mission Ocean](#)

4 ACHIEVEMENTS OF POLICY & FUNDING ALIGNMENTS

Through stakeholder analysis at the project's outset and by specifically engaging representatives from ministries, authorities, and funding bodies, BMB facilitated the potential alignment of strategies, roadmaps, and funding programmes. The Mission Arenas served as a platform for networking and exchange, as well as to support political actors in the BANOS region in accomplishing their national tasks within the framework of Mission Ocean & Waters. In the protected governance workshops, we brought together actors from various funding programmes for the first time. The funding landscape is very diverse, and if coherence and alignment are desired, networking and exchange are paramount. Creating coherence and coordination is crucial to avoid fragmentation and pool strengths and resources, ensuring the successful transition to a sustainable future in Europe. The following are examples of how BMB has supported these processes to date:

- **Collaboration with Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership (SBEP):**

The SBEP is the central funding instrument for promoting the R&I measures required for the Ocean & Waters Mission. With its areas of intervention (Digital Twins of the Ocean, Blue Economy Sectors, Managing Sea Uses, and Blue Bioresources), the SBEP is aligned with the Mission's objectives. The SBEP's activities go far beyond research funding; as a partnership, it is open to collaboration with a wide range of actors, including those outside the field of research. In a co-creative process, the SBEP has conducted two regional workshops as part of Mission Arenas, one in Amsterdam and the other in Sopot. The results are promising, as they also addressed region-specific needs for R&I activities. To date, the partnership has funded 43 projects, and a third call is currently being implemented. The Mission Arenas provided a good platform for presenting the funded projects. Joint activities such as workshops with the SBEP are also planned. More information is available here: [Homepage](#) | [Bluepartnership](#)

- **Funders Forum at Mission Arena Gothenburg 2023**

To bring together public and private funders, as well as philanthropists, the first funders forum of its kind was organised during the 1st Mission Arena in Gothenburg in November 2023. Around 25 representatives from various national and EU funding bodies met with the EU Commission in an internal meeting to discuss what is needed to achieve the Mission's objectives. The initial focus was on mutual exchange of information, as there is often little knowledge about the entire funding landscape. The creation of a joint platform for funding bodies was viewed as a positive development and could be implemented in Phase 2 of the Mission. The topic of funding, and particularly the alignment of funding instruments, will then be brought to the forefront even more.

- **Collaboration with ZEWT & MarLEN**

The SBEP is a partnership that supports Mission Ocean & Waters and its objectives with public funding. Another is ZEWT. Focused on maritime transport, this partnership also issues calls for funding based on its strategic orientation, using CSA MarLEN for this purpose. The MarLEN coordinator has been invited twice to present funding opportunities in the maritime transport sector at the Mission Arena and to network with stakeholders. Further information: [Zero Emission Waterborne Transport - waterborne.eu](#) and [MarLEN – Maritime Low Emission Network](#)

5 SUMMARY & OUTLOOK

It was very important to launch the Missions in order to address pressing social issues and support the necessary transformations in Europe. However, implementing the Ocean & Waters Mission has been challenging and ambitious due to the goals that have been set. With the structure that the EU-COM has created for the Ocean & Waters Mission (Lighthouses & Enablers), a bottom-up process has been launched, enabling all necessary stakeholders to support the implementation of the Mission's goals through their activities. Due to the complexity of the Mission and its goals, as well as the social groups required to achieve them, it took some time to raise awareness of the Mission in the communities. With the Missions being established under the Horizon Europe research framework programme, it was primarily scientific community actors who took action. Thanks to the diverse consortium in BMB (business, science, funders), many actors were involved from the outset. The Mission has been successfully publicised and implemented, particularly at the national member state level. The actors are networked, and numerous activities, as described in the previous chapters, are already contributing to the Mission.

This report assesses how EU Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030” is being implemented across the Baltic and North Sea (BANOS) region. It highlights progress in stakeholder engagement, governance alignment, and funding mobilisation through the Lighthouse Charter and related tools such as Wise Marine and Wavelinks.

Key achievements include:

- 239 Mission Charter actions pledged by 124 organisations, backed by €2.6 billion in funding—mainly from Scandinavian countries and Germany.
- Strong involvement from the research and innovation community, alongside growing participation in solution upscaling, citizen engagement, and data initiatives.
- Enhanced governance coordination through Mission Arenas, National Focal Points, and collaborations with supranational frameworks like HELCOM, EUSBSR, and GNSBI.



The report shows that while awareness and cooperation have increased significantly—especially at the national level—further work is needed in phase 2 to:

- Strengthen regional and local stakeholder involvement
- Accelerate deployment of innovative solutions
- Improve funding and policy alignment across Member States

Overall, the Mission is progressing well in BANOS, laying a strong foundation for transformative action toward a sustainable blue economy and restored marine ecosystems by 2030.