



Blue Capacity Micro-grants Program

The Program, coordinated by [Blue Logistical Solutions](#), aims to empower early-career ocean professionals (ECOPs) who are citizens or residents of Indian Ocean nations by supporting activities and small-scale projects that strengthen capacity, expand professional networks, increase ocean literacy, and contribute to sustainable ocean initiatives and the growth of the Blue Economy across the region.

Each micro-grant typically provides **up to \$1,000 USD (or equivalent)** to support approved activities. Funding may be provided as a direct payment for an upcoming expense or as a retrospective reimbursement for an expense incurrent prior to grant conferral, depending on project needs.

Calls for applications are announced periodically. Deadlines and submission details will be published through the **Blue Capacity** [website](#), [LinkedIn](#) Page, and [Instagram](#) account.

This document outlines the eligibility criteria for applicants and proposed activities, application procedure, selection process, and reporting requirements for successful applicants. It also provides guidance for applicants where appropriate.

Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible for funding, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- **Professional Stage:**
Applicants must identify as an **Early Career Ocean Professional (ECOP)** — defined as individuals who are **within six (6) years of completing their highest degree**, working, studying, or volunteering in a marine, coastal, or ocean-related field.
- **Geographic Scope:**
Applicants must be citizens of, based in, or demonstrate a strong professional or academic connection to an [Indian Ocean Rim Association \(IORA\) Member State](#).
- **Project Relevance:**
Proposed activities must align with a **'Blue Economy'** theme, and clearly demonstrate benefits to ocean sustainability, research, or community capacity building.
- **Individual Applicants:**
Grants are awarded to individuals rather than to institutions. The recipient is responsible for the financial management, reporting, and acquittal of the funded activity.

To check your eligibility, use our [Eligibility Checker](#) tool.



Eligible Activities

Blue Capacity micro-grants may support:

- **Technical or professional skill development** such as training, workshops, or conference attendance.
- **Research operational activities**, such as fieldwork logistics and coordination.
- **Purchase of essential tools or equipment** for research or project delivery.
- **Networking or collaborative projects or initiatives** that strengthen regional partnerships, support knowledge exchange, and foster cooperation among ECOPs.
- **Science communication or outreach efforts**, such as community engagement or educational initiatives, promoting ocean literacy or awareness and action for marine and coastal sustainability.

Where necessary for project completion, travel costs (airfares, accommodation, visa expenses, ground transportation) and event registration fees may be supported.

Ineligible Activities

Blue Capacity micro-grants **cannot** be used for:

- Salaries, tuition fees for academic degrees, or personal income.
- Stipends not directly tied to the proposed activity.
- Institutional overheads or administrative costs.
- Activities already fully funded by another source.
- Projects without a clear connection to Blue Economy themes.

Application Process

Applications must be submitted through the official **Blue Capacity [online form](#)**.



Applicants should prepare:

- A brief (500 words max) project description that includes a statement of relevance to the Blue Economy in the IORA region.
- Supporting documentation:
 - Budget with quotes or cost estimates for identified expenses.
 - Letter of support from a **line manager, university supervisor, or host institution** confirming (a) their awareness and endorsement of the proposed activity, (b) the applicant's capability to complete the project or travel as planned, and (c) any in-kind or institutional support being provided (if applicable).
 - Itineraries for travel-related activities (if applicable).
 - Invoices or receipts for reimbursement requests.

Incomplete applications or those without adequate supporting documentation will not be considered.

Assessment Criteria

Applications will be reviewed by a **Blue Capacity Review Panel**, which includes members of the **Blue Capacity team, Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs), and mid- to late-career researchers from IORA nations**. All applications will be assessed on:

- **Relevance:** Alignment with Program aims and [IORA's 'Blue Economy'](#) theme.
- **Impact:** Potential to strengthen long-term professional capacity, especially that of the ECOP community, and to contribute to regional, sustainable development.
- **Feasibility:** Clarity of objectives and achievable outcomes.
- **Financial viability:** Realistic, justifiable, and cost-effective budgeting.
- **Connection:** Creativity and potential for collaboration or knowledge sharing.

Priority may be given to applicants from developing IORA Member States or those who have not previously received Blue Capacity funding.



Post-award Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants will be required to demonstrate the impact of the program and guide future funding rounds.

- Submit a **short final report** summarising activities and outputs (e.g., field trip reports, presentations, photos), and lessons learned. The report should be submitted [via email](#) within 6 months of project completion.
- Provide **receipts or proof of expenditure** (including statutory declarations) for financial acquittal.

The completion reports will be used to evaluate the Blue Capacity Micro-grants Program and to demonstrate its impact, as well as to guide future calls for applications.

Contact

For questions or additional information, please contact: **Blue Capacity Program Team.**

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