

3rd CALL FOR PROPOSALS

MeerWissen - African-German Partners for Ocean Knowledge

This is an open call to support partnership projects through the [MeerWissen Initiative](#). With this call, MeerWissen seeks to support partnership projects that contribute to strengthening the knowledge base for marine and coastal Nature-based Solutions (NbS) in Africa. This call has been developed as a contribution to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021 – 2030 (‘the Ocean Decade’). Successful projects will be endorsed as Decade Actions and formally recognised as part of the Ocean Decade.

This call explicitly supports a two-phased approach by funding a Co-design phase prior to implementation of the joint research project. This implies also a two-stage application process. You can apply by submitting a proposal to meerwissen@giz.de using the templates provided on the [website](#): application template, budget template, eligibility check and confirmation of cooperation by 31 December 2021. Funding is expected to commence in June 2022.

Table of Contents

1. Background and rationale.....	2
2. Objectives	4
a. Strengthening of marine NbS.....	4
b. Co-design and partnerships of equals.....	5
c. Capacity Development.....	5
d. Science-Policy	5
e. Data, Innovation and Technology	5
3. Eligibility	5
a. Eligible organisations, partnerships and projects	5
b. Eligible countries.....	7
4. Your proposal.....	7
5. Evaluation criteria.....	7
a. Required criteria:	8
b. Desirable criteria:.....	9
6. Application & selection procedure, administration, budget.....	9
a. Application & selection procedure	9
b. Administration	11
c. Budget ceiling and funding duration	12
7. Contact.....	12

1. Background and rationale

1.1. About MeerWissen

Given the growing pressure on our ocean, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has increased its activities to ensure that future generations will be able to benefit from healthy marine and coastal ecosystems. Acknowledging the importance of science and policy working more closely together, the MeerWissen initiative was launched in 2018 as part of BMZ's [Ten-point Plan of Action for Marine Conservation and Sustainable Fisheries](#). Achieving the ambitious targets of the 2030 Agenda - including Sustainable Development Goal 14 ("Life below water") - requires enhanced global partnerships that bring together multiple actors to mobilize all available resources and capacities. A close collaboration with marine research is key to provide decision-makers at both policy and management level with up-to-date and accurate science-based information to effectively protect and manage marine resources. However, this information and data is often unavailable, inaccessible, or outdated. MeerWissen has been developed against this background and addresses the challenge of lacking data and limited science to policy transfer with a particular focus on African countries. To this end MeerWissen supports partnership projects between African and German research and scientific organisations.

MeerWissen seeks to support partnership projects that aim to improve the conditions for knowledge- and science-based policymaking for the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean in selected African countries by...



Learn more at www.meerwissen.org.

1.2. A contribution to the Ocean Decade

The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (the Ocean Decade) is calling for a transformation in the research process. Born out of the recognition that more needs to be done to reverse the cycle of decline in ocean health, the decade strives to create improved conditions for a sustainable development of the ocean, seas, and coasts. Given current trends in climate change and biodiversity loss, the decade provides an outstanding opportunity to create a new foundation, across the science-policy interface, with the goal to strengthen the management of our ocean and coasts for the benefit of humanity. The Ocean Decade provides a convening framework for scientists and stakeholders from diverse sectors to co-design and co-deliver the scientific knowledge and the partnerships needed to accelerate advances in ocean science. They will be essential to achieve a better understanding of the ocean system and to deliver science-based solutions to achieve the 2030 Agenda...The Ocean Decade has a focus on inclusive and transformative science and aims to ensure that no one is left behind. Africa is a priority for the Ocean Decade and support will be provided to African partners to ensure full and active engagement in the Decade.

To achieve the Ocean Decade vision, a wide range of partners will implement endorsed Decade Actions in the form of programmes, projects or activities over the next ten years. Proponents of endorsed Decade Actions will have the opportunity to join a highly visible, shared, global effort that builds on decades of achievement in ocean science. There will be opportunities to create new collaborations across disciplines, geographies and generations, as well as opportunities to access new sources of support. Decade Actions will be identified through periodic Calls that will be launched by the Decade Coordination Unit of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO), the United Nations agency mandated with coordination of the Decade.

This call has been developed as a contribution by the MeerWissen Initiative to the Ocean Decade and it forms part of the Ocean Decade's Call for Decade Actions No. 02/2021. Evaluation of applications to this call will involve the Decade Coordination Unit and will simultaneously evaluate the eligibility of the selected research projects to be endorsed as official Decade Actions. Proponents of endorsed Decade Actions will be able to use the Ocean Decade logo in their communications and awareness raising activities in accordance with Decade Brand Guidelines. Proponents will become members of the Ocean Decade Global Stakeholder Forum, including thematic and geographical Communities of Practice. Once endorsed, Proponents of Decade Actions will be asked to provide simple annual reporting on the progress of their Action.

More information on the Ocean Decade and the Call for Decade Actions No. 02/2021 can be found [here](#).

1.3. The thematic focus of this call: Nature-based Solutions

Coastal ecosystems, such as coral reefs, mangrove forests and seagrass beds play an important role for coastal populations and communities by offering a variety of ecosystem services. Besides protecting the coast from strong waves and storm surges and preventing erosion, they provide food, income and are of important cultural value for many coastal communities. As so called 'blue carbon' ecosystems, mangroves and seagrass beds also act as effective CO₂ sinks sequestering and storing carbon.

Nature-based Solutions (NbS) is an umbrella concept introduced specifically to promote nature as a tool to help address societal challenges like food security, climate change or disaster risk management whilst at the same time benefiting biodiversity. Since the term NbS is still relatively new, a lot of discussions surround the terminology, its definition, and its utility. However, in recent years a growing body of literature on conceptual framing, guidance for application and scientific analysis has built up. NbS also increasingly feature in international and national policies and programmes such as the Paris Agreement to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and related Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), and the Sendai Framework on disaster risk reduction. Whether under the term Nature-based Solutions or the term Ecosystem-based Approaches, inclusion of the notion in the draft text for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) to the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) is currently being negotiated. BMZ's engagement regarding marine NbS – through this call and other projects – focuses on the conservation, sustainable management and restoration of natural and modified marine and coastal ecosystems as a solution for societal challenges.

This call, as well as the MeerWissen Initiative, refer to the IUCN definition of NbS as:

“Actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits”.

2. Objectives

a. Strengthening of marine NbS

The objective of this call for proposals is to improve the knowledge base for marine- and coastal NbS and to facilitate their use and uptake in national strategies and action plans.

MeerWissen seeks to support partnership projects that contribute to inter alia:

- Understanding marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystems and their functioning in NbS
- Measuring, assessing and evaluating NbS and how (connected) coastal ecosystems can serve as a solution to local societal challenges
- Observing and understanding causalities between different coastal and marine ecosystems and their role as potential NbS
- Predicting the potential impacts of NbS in different sectors on local communities and socio-ecological systems
- Up-taking of scientific findings into political processes, such as national strategies, implementation plans, or adaptation strategies

Marine NbS should be explored in the context of the societal challenge they are intended to address. Therefore, embedding the proposed project idea into an overall societal context is of particular importance. The following questions may serve as guidance when developing research ideas:

- How does the conservation/restoration and sustainable management of coastal- and marine ecosystems contribute to solving specific societal challenges in coastal areas along African coasts?
- What are obstacles / deterrents to implement conservation/restoration measures for natural and modified coastal/marine ecosystems and how can those be overcome?
- What added value does the conservation and restoration of coastal ecosystems offer if considered as marine NbS and how can it be measured?
- Coastal ecosystems like mangrove forests, seagrass beds, and coral reefs contribute significantly to biodiversity and food security by serving as habitats and nurseries for many marine animals and plant species. What interdependencies exist between the different ecosystems in terms of their functioning in marine NbS?
- How can the scientific debate on climate topics in the context of marine NbS contribute to a comprehensive knowledge base for decision makers, both with regards to adaptation and mitigation and their significance to changing conditions along African coasts?

Concepts should focus on applied science and transdisciplinary research for sustainable development and follow a 'transformative research' agenda. They should be driven by and contribute to solving urging local challenges.

b. Co-design and partnerships of equals

MeerWissen seeks to support partnerships of equals. All partners' active commitment is a prerequisite for participation in the MeerWissen funding programme. The strong partnership is achieved through a Co-design approach to ensure that project partners are working at eye level, jointly setting priorities and that outcomes meet local needs and can be used by all partners as well as decision-makers. Within the dedicated Co-design phase prior to implementation, project partners should address at least these four themes: common vision and shared understanding, stakeholder engagement, project and partnership management and sustainability.

Guidance documents with details about Co-design will be made available on the [MeerWissen website](#). Please consult them for further information and inspiration.

c. Capacity Development

Projects build capacities on the institutional and individual level among their partners and non-scientific actors through specific measures. From the starting point of developing a cooperation of equals, capacity development should take place for all project partners, depending on their respective needs and potentials.

d. Science-Policy

Designing, planning, implementing and up-scaling actions to protect, sustainably manage or restore natural or modified ecosystems typically implies political and administrative processes that involve a broad range of stakeholders with differing interests and beliefs. Scientific evidence plays a key role in such processes of negotiating and identifying the best solutions and potential trade-offs between conflicting goals of NbS. It is thus essential that results and knowledge generated through MeerWissen projects can be used by and translated into evidence-based political decision-making for coastal development planning.

e. Data, Innovation and Technology

Projects contribute to improved access to data and information, to an enhanced data basis and/or promote the harmonization of data to support knowledge-based decision-making. This objective is not only highly relevant for generating the data basis needed for informed decision-making, but also for advancing data management practices through mutual learning of all project partners involved. However, sustainability of any measure to improve data and information must be planned and implemented in such a manner that progress or maintenance continues even after the project ends. Furthermore, MeerWissen aims at fostering innovative ideas for the use of digital solutions or/and promoting the transfer and use of technology in marine science in African countries.

3. Eligibility

a. Eligible organisations, partnerships and projects

MeerWissen supports partnerships of **at least one African and one German academic institution** based on a jointly submitted proposal. It is required that one of the two academic partner organisations submits the application and acts as coordinator of the Co-design phase.

We welcome the African partner to take the lead as most Co-design activities are expected take place in the African partner country.

For the Co-design phase the coordinating partner will receive funding for the joint implementation of activities involving the other partner(s). For the full two-year project implementation phase up to three partner organisations will each receive funding to implement the work packages assigned to them in the joint full proposal to be submitted three months before the Co-design phase ends. In detail:

Partnership projects eligible for funding under this Call for Proposals follow a two-staged approach based on the following conditions and modalities:

1. Co-design phase

- Duration: flexible between 6-9 months beginning June 2022, depending on the status of the partnership, the project and planned activities
- Budget: flexible, depending on planned activities (approx. 50.000 – 80.000 EUR as a rough guide, see below for overall budget ceiling)
- Funding modality: Provision of only one grant to the academic partner organisation that acts as coordinator of the jointly implemented Co-design phase. All expenditures (including travel costs of other partners) are to be covered by this grant and to be administered by its recipient.
 - Eligible expenditure includes staff costs incurred by the grant recipient for coordination of the Co-design phase and administration of the grant.
 - Forwarding of funds is excluded.
- In-kind contributions: All partners contribute in-kind staff time for implementation of Co-design activities.
- Three months prior to the end of the Co-design phase, project partners submit a joint, co-designed full proposal for implementation of a two-year partnership project to the MeerWissen Secretariat for approval prior to the release of funds for the full implementation phase. At this second stage the applicants are not competing with each other.
- During the remainder of the Co-design phase until full implementation commences (roughly three months, since full proposal is due three months prior to Co-design ending), project partners jointly reflect, evaluate, document and share experiences and results of the Co-design phase in the form of a report and additional knowledge products such as a web-story, video clip or other.

2. Full implementation of the two-year partnership project

- Duration: two years, beginning after the Co-design phase ends (latest March 2023 until Feb. 2025).
- Budget: flexible, depending on planned activities and overall budget ceiling of 360.000 EUR (for both Co-design and implementation phase).
- Contractual arrangement: Based on a joint, co-designed full project proposal to be submitted by the Co-design coordinator three months before the end of the Co-design phase, **up to three grants** will be provided for the main project partners. The proposal details individual work packages and budgets assigned to each partner. Decision-making in the joint project is governed by an MoU (or similar) between partners which will be submitted with the full project proposal.
- As forwarding of funds to additional partners entails increased administrative complexity for the forwarding partner, it will only be considered in well-justified exceptional cases.
- All partners commit to regular exchanges and joint reviews of project progress together with their co-submitting partners, as well as regularly involving the

secretariat of the MeerWissen Initiative for broader knowledge exchange and results monitoring.

In this Call for Proposals, MeerWissen will fund a maximum of one project per German partner institution.

The academic partner organisations may invite locally active NGOs whose core mission and activities are in the field of research as partner in their partnership projects.

Commercial and legal eligibility

All **partner institutions receiving funds** will be given an individual grant agreement by GIZ. In order to receive funding, these organisations must fulfil **legal and commercial eligibility requirements**. Please see the checklist for details.

- Contracting African partner institutions must be legal entities and have public-benefit or non-profit status.
- Contracting German partner institutions with head office in Germany must be governed by German public law or must have a public benefit status.

Grant agreements with recipients based in Germany are ruled by German grant-making law, i.e. the „*Vorläufige Verwaltungsvorschriften*“ (VV) of § 44 BHO and the „*ANBest-P*“ (*Allgemeine Nebenbestimmungen für Zuwendungen zur Projektförderung*)

b. Eligible countries

MeerWissen supports partnership projects in the following African coastal states that are partner countries of German development cooperation:

Algeria, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Madagascar, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, and Tunisia.

The coastal area of West Sahara is excluded from MeerWissen project activities.

4. Your proposal

Your proposal consists of

- a) A **concept** and rough budget outline for a joint two-year scientific cooperation project (see application template Part A).
- b) A **detailed proposal** and a detailed budget for a 6-9 month Co-design phase preceding implementation of the two-year project (see application template Part B and separate budget template)

5. Evaluation criteria

Proposals will be evaluated and selected according to the quality with which the following criteria are addressed:

a. Required criteria:

1. Thematic focus of this call and political and social relevance

- Projects address questions based on a concrete need for policy development in the field of marine and coastal Nature-based Solutions (NbS) in the regional/national context jointly identified among partners.
- Projects explicitly identify their contribution to the SDGs.

2. Contribution to the overarching objectives of the MeerWissen Initiative and the UN Ocean Decade

a. **Access to data and information:** Projects contribute to improved access to data and information, to an enhanced data basis and/or promote the harmonization of data to support knowledge-based decision-making.

b. **Dialogue and Transfer at the science-policy interface:**

i. **Participation of decision-makers:** Projects propose a methodologically sound, strategic approach to interaction with decision-makers, primarily policymakers, but also marine resource managers or the private sector.

ii. **Dissemination of results:** Projects include clear and precise procedures to disseminate results for further use by policy and practice, especially to decision-makers and non-scientific target audiences (such as local populations), creating user-oriented knowledge products.

c. **Contribution to Ocean Decade Action Framework:** Contribute to fulfilling one or more of the Ocean Decade Challenges and one or more of the Ocean Decade objectives and accelerate the generation or use of knowledge and understanding of the ocean including knowledge that will contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and complementary policy frameworks and initiatives.

d. **Capacity Development:** Projects build capacities on the institutional and individual level among their partners and non-scientific actors through specific measures.

3. Reflection of partnership of equals

- Project concepts reflect a joint commitment and equality of partners, e.g. through shared responsibilities in project management, joint decision-making, distribution of budget, joint participation in planned publications and products, in-kind contribution of staff time during the Co-design phase.

4. Gender and generational equality

- Projects pursue diversity in their teams and foster gender and generational equality in project steering and project activities.

5. Plausibility of project logic

- Concepts describe a clear strategy for achieving the projects' stated objectives. Measures, activities, and outputs are linked to project outcomes and objectives in a coherent way (relates primarily to Part A of application template).

6. Quality of proposal for Co-design phase

- The proposal should detail how the partners plan on utilizing the time and budget in order to undertake an effective co-design of their projects adjusted to the specific

developmental stage and needs of the partnership as well as to the needs and capabilities of other stakeholders. At a minimum, proposals:

- Set out a clear roadmap for how to arrive at a joint full proposal for implementation, co-designed by academic and non-academic partners and stakeholders. Where relevant this should include collaboration with and engagement with indigenous and local knowledge holders.
- Reflect an understanding and utilization of the Co-design guidance document of the MeerWissen Initiative.
- Explore creative ideas and make concrete suggestions for reflecting, documenting, and sharing lessons learned from the Co-design phase that will be provided to the MeerWissen Secretariat and can be used and distributed.

7. Sustainability of project impacts and outputs: Securing results and products beyond project duration at partner institutions in Africa.

b. Desirable criteria:

- **Building long-term partnerships:** Projects build upon and/or contribute to a long-term partnership between the organisations involved.
- **Synergies with existing initiatives:** Projects show concrete potential for achieving synergies with relevant German development cooperation programs (such as MeerWissen, the Blue Action Fund or bilateral projects), existing activities of the bilateral scientific-technological cooperation, or other relevant programs.
- **Innovation and digitalization:** Projects follow an approach that is particularly innovative, fostering new technologies and digital solutions.
- **Use of already existing research:** Projects build upon already existing research in the thematic field.

6. Application & selection procedure, administration, budget

a. Application & selection procedure

The application procedure consists of two stages. First stage: **proposals for funding the 6-9 months Co-design phase** will be selected based on both the concept for the joint two-year partnership project (Part A) and the detailed proposal for a Co-design phase (Part B). Second stage: **proposals for funding the two-year partnership project implementation phase** will be approved based on the successful completion of the Co-design phase and the quality of the full project proposal that is to be submitted three months before the Co-design phase ends (template will be provided).

Only applications that meet the basic eligibility criteria (see 3.) will be assessed. Such proposals will then be evaluated along the criteria described above (see 5.) by the secretariat of the initiative (managed by GIZ) with the support of external, international experts as well as representatives of the Decade Coordination Unit. Shortlisted projects will be asked to submit supporting documents to prove their partners' legal and commercial eligibility in accordance with the checklist and will then be tabled to BMZ for selection by end of February 2022. Applicants will be notified of the result and selected projects might be asked to adjust their proposals and budget in preparation of the Grant Agreement by end of March 2022. Funding is expected to start in June 2022.

The MeerWissen Secretariat will organise a **Co-design Workshop in June 2022** to provide a platform for partnership building and mutual exchange of ideas with the other projects at the beginning of their respective Co-design processes. All partner organisations are expected to participate in this workshop.

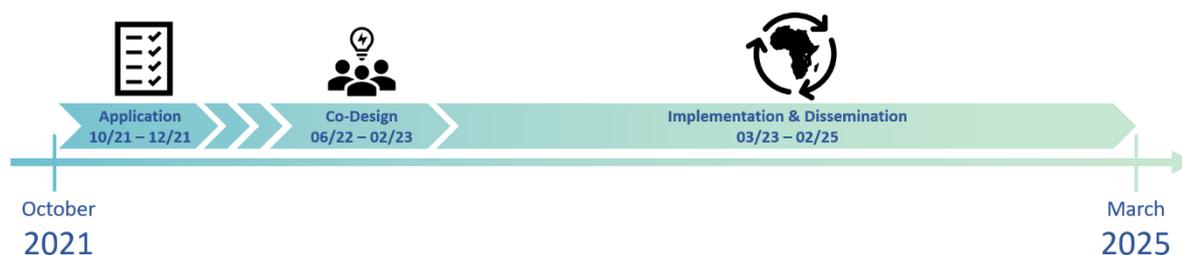
Three months prior to completion of the Co-design phase the joint, co-designed full proposal for the implementation of the two-year partnership project is to be submitted to the Secretariat. Proposals will consist of a joint general part and detailed work packages and budgets for each of the grant receiving partners (templates will be provided). Approval of funds for the implementation phase will be based on the quality of the submitted full proposal according to the same evaluation criteria (see 5) but will not be competitive. Following approval, contracting arrangements will be made with the main partners for projects to start at the latest in March 2023.

What you need to submit by 31 December 2021 to meerwissen@giz.de

Please find all templates [here](#).

- ✓ Filled out application template (Word)
- ✓ Filled out budget table for the Co-design phase (Excel)
- ✓ Filled out checklist on legal and commercial eligibility (both as Word document and a signed scanned copy) for each designated main partner, i.e. expected to receive a grant agreement for Co-design and/or full implementation and supporting documents as indicated
- ✓ Cooperation Agreement between all partners (scanned with signatures)

Envisioned timeline



Application procedure



Next steps until June 2022

WHEN	WHO	WHAT
By 31 st Dec. 2021	Applicants (1 per project) submit all documents to MeerWissen	Submit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application template - Budget table for Co-design - Checklist on commercial and legal eligibility - Confirmation of cooperation
January 2022	MeerWissen Secretariat with support of Scientific Advisors and Ocean Decade Coordination Unit	Evaluates and shortlists projects
February 2022	BMZ	Selects projects for funding
By 28 th Feb. 2022	MeerWissen Secretariat	Announces funding decision of BMZ
Until 31 st March 2022	Selected projects with support of MeerWissen Secretariat	Refine proposals and budget for Co-design phase in preparation of contracting
From 1st April 2022	GIZ Contracting department	Prepares contracts
In June 2022	MeerWissen & Projects	Commence and kick-off projects with a Co-design Workshop, as per MeerWissen tradition

b. Administration

As mentioned in 3.a., for organisations that are contracted by GIZ through a grant agreement a check on their commercial and legal eligibility needs to be performed prior to contracting. This is required to verify whether a partner fulfils the commercial and legal requirements for funding, according to German law and GIZ requirements. Please note that you will be requested to provide several supporting documents to substantiate the information you provided in the checklist. This may involve translations into English for some or parts of the documents.

Project partners should budget sufficient time and staff to be able to manage the considerable administrative tasks, which are needed both during the application process and for the successful implementation of the MeerWissen projects.

Administrative requirements during project implementation include, among others, regular progress reports (every six months) as well as annual reports to the Ocean Decade Coordination Unit, preparation (and updates) of schedule of expenditures, bi-monthly (Zuschussvertrag) or tri-monthly (Grant Agreement) proof-of-use (expenditure reports) and requests for instalments to be submitted to GIZ. Individual grant agreements might be subject to third party audits commissioned and financed by GIZ.

c. Budget ceiling and funding duration

Partnership projects may be funded with a total of up to EUR 360.000. This includes both the Co-design phase (with costs estimated at approx. 50.000 -80.000 EUR) and full implementation of the two-year projects. MeerWissen requires a solid justification of the budget. To support the above-mentioned priorities, a large part of the funds should be spent on activities regarding capacity building, outreach, networking, stakeholder involvement and knowledge transfer. Funding of staff costs should not dominate the overall budget but can be considered to a limited extent and must be well justified. Budgeting sufficient staff time for administration of the grant is recommended. To a small degree, purchases of instruments and equipment may be funded.

7. Contact

meerwissen@giz.de

Inquiries on the Ocean Decade can be sent to oceandecade@unesco.org with “MeerWissen Initiative” in the subject line.