

Blue Growth Accelerator Call for Expression of Interest for the establishment of a List of Experts

To assist with consultancy/expert services the implementation of vouchers granted to SMEs and Entrepreneurs-to-be for the creation of new cross-sectoral value chains and the reconfiguration of existing ones across Europe in the Blue Growth Sector



Coordinated by the NEPTUNE Consortium and co-financed by the EU's Horizon 2020 Program under Grant Agreement 691554



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Acronyms

- EC: European Commission
- EU: European Union
- ICT: Information and Communication Technologies
- IPR: Intellectual Property Rights
- SME: Small and Medium-sized Enterprise

1. NEPTUNE's Blue Growth Accelerator - Background and Context

1.1 What is NEPTUNE?

NEPTUNE, which stands for “*New cross sectorial value chains creation across Europe facilitated by clusters for SMEs's Innovation in Blue Growth*” is a 30 months project (July 2016 – December 2018) financed by the INNOSUP component of the HORIZON 2020 programme of the European Commission, with a total budget of 4,198.541 €.

The NEPTUNE Blue Growth Accelerator brings together the expertise of 6 of Europe's leading clusters, 2 Science Parks/Technology/Research Centres, 2 regional development Agencies and 2 Innovation/Cluster expert organisations from 7 European countries: France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain and Sweden.

NEPTUNE aims at developing new cross-sectoral and cross-border industrial value-chains, including in particular SMEs, to foster the development of three key aspects for the Blue Growth industries in Europe and beyond: (1) the water management in urban and rural environment, (2) the fluvial and maritime transport and port logistics; (3) and the environment and renewable marine energy. This development is based on the construction of new value chains and the reconfiguration of existing ones driven by the integration of new technologies and know-how between Water, Aerospace, ICT and Agriculture cluster actors/industries.

To reach this objective, NEPTUNE's Blue Growth Accelerator is designed around two main pillars:

- **An Open Space Platform** that aims to help SMEs, entrepreneurs-to-be and other stakeholders to identify market trends and opportunities and the emergence of Blue Growth innovative ideas and projects. The platform is complemented by tools, mixing virtual and physical approaches.
- **An Entrepreneurship and Innovation Support Toolbox** which covers a large range of measures to directly support innovation projects with a complete set of financial vouchers and support services aimed at accelerating SMEs' growth and at creating new companies in the Blue Growth sector. This call focuses on the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Support Pillar.

NEPTUNE's Blue Growth Accelerator targets to stimulate the emergence of innovative solutions to:

- Improve existing or develop new technologies, services or products.
- Improve production processes replacing or reducing the use of critical resources.
- Deploy large scale demonstrators.

More information on NEPTUNE at <http://www.neptune-project.eu>.

1.2 NEPTUNE's Entrepreneurship and Innovation voucher system

NEPTUNE's Blue Growth Accelerator, as part of its Entrepreneurship and Innovation Support Toolbox, has designed a voucher system of € 2.680.724 to increase competitiveness of European SMEs in the Blue Growth industry. The objective of the NEPTUNE voucher system is to provide SMEs technical/technological or expert services to support them on innovation, scalability, technology transfer, internationalisation, IPR issues, product demonstration, societal and legal challenges. All these services will consist of several separate vouchers depending on the SME's need.

A “Blue Growth Accelerator call for expression for interest” addressed to SMEs and Entrepreneurs-to-be will be launched in November 2016 with two cut off dates February 2017 and September 2017. SMEs beneficiaries of NEPTUNE vouchers scheme will select the technical and consultancy

providers to spend their voucher. Only the service providers that have been included in the NEPTUNE handbook will be eligible to be paid through the vouchers.

Contract for the provision of the service will be signed between the SME beneficiary of the voucher and each service provider. The “NEPTUNE Consortium” will not pay the service providers, but each SME will pay the respective service provider with their voucher provided by the “NEPTUNE consortium” in several payments based on the results achieved. A maximum amount to be funded is set according to the following voucher typology:

Voucher typology	Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)	Non-technical Barriers	Technology Development/ Transfer	Scalability and Internationalization	Incubation and Prototyping	Large scale demonstrators
Funding	Up to € 5,000	Up to € 10,000	Up to € 20,000	Up to € 20,000	Up to € 60,000	Up to € 60,000

2. Call for Expression of Interest for the establishment of a List of Experts

NEPTUNE is launching this call to identify and select technical and consultancy service providers to support SMEs, beneficiaries of NEPTUNE voucher system, to boost entrepreneurship and innovation capacity in the Blue Growth industry.

2.1 Why apply?

- To gain visibility in Europe being part of NEPTUNE cross-border and cross-sectoral consultant database.
- To be included in the referenced service providers’ handbook used by SMEs beneficiaries of NEPTUNE for the selection of experts to redeem their innovation vouchers.
- To be chosen by a SME beneficiary of NEPTUNE voucher support
- To contribute to the emergency of new cross-border and cross-sectoral value chains in the Blue Growth industry around Europe.

2.2 Actions to be supported

NEPTUNE is looking for experts (organizations or individuals) able to provide efficient support services and advices to SMEs in:

Type of service	Examples of support actions
Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitive intelligence - patents search • Infraction prevention – technological observatory of third parties’ IP • IP strategy for protection results • IP exploitation – prevent infraction of third parties
Non-technical Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address and overcome non-technical challenges (privacy, security, environment issues, final user acceptance, etc.) • Juridical services (laws, regulation, etc.) • Certification process support

Technology Development/Transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology/solutions development support for the improvement of products, services or processes • Assessment of transferability potential of technology or know how, preferably to another sector • Technical assistance to overcome technical problems for transferability • Experimental Testing and Measuring
Scalability and Internationalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance for products/services adaptation to other markets in and out Europe • Internationalization strategy for products and services • Market analysis and business model • Commercialization plan, marketing and sales • International legal consultancy • Communication services
Incubation and Prototyping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurship support by training to new business models • Accelerator/incubator services
Large scale Demonstrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical support on deployment of large scale demonstration of solutions.

2.3 NEPTUNE’s topics

The external technical and consultancy providers may be asked to provide support in one or more of the following topics and sub-topics NEPTUNE’s Blue Growth Accelerator is focused on:

Topic	Sub-topic
Water management in rural environments	Water saving and reuse in agriculture; Sustainable agriculture in water-poor rural areas; Precision farming; Smart irrigation systems; Resource recovery from waste water (energy, water, nutrients); Use and exploitation of sea products such as seaweed and algae in agriculture; Leaks and pollution monitoring and handling; Small-scale waste water treatment; Reservoirs and groundwater sustainability and management; Novel water production systems; Biological water treatment through e.g. microalgae; Off-grid drinking water production; Use of smart materials.
Water management in urban environments	Efficient (integrated) urban water resource management (IWRM); Water saving and reuse in residential areas and industry; Smart grids and connectivity in water distribution systems networks; Water saving and reuse in residential areas and industry; Resource recovery from waste water (energy, water, nutrients); Leaks and pollution monitoring and handling; Novel and eco-friendly treatment solutions for waste water; Biological water treatment through e.g. microalgae; Use of smart materials.
Port logistics	Network/Logistics; Energy saving; Layout & Organisation; Dock facilities; Waterways transport; Treatment systems; Maintenance; Supply; Security; e-services; Distributed automation.
Fluvial and maritime transport	Energy efficiency; Shape; Materials; Instrumentation; Recycling; Renewable energies; Treatment systems; Tests; Autonomous; Products & services to increase security/safety in maritime conditions; Comfort of people; Operations efficiency; Production methods; Clean Fuel (LNG equipment, Electrical equipment, Hydrogen equipment); Other naval & ports equipment; Water transportation systems (including guidance, navigation and control, path planning and collision avoidance).
Environment	Coastal hazards (floods, erosion, submersion); Water quality monitoring; Biodiversity; Sustainable coastal and submarine development and tourism; Pollution tracking; Modelling; Aquaculture; Adoption of nature-based solutions to reduce environmental impacts and climate effects; Use of satellite and in-situ data for environmental monitoring; Deep sea resources/minerals exploration, blue biotechnology.
Marine/Water renewable energy	Improvement of MREs energy output; Optimization of marine hydrokinetic energy technologies (current, tidal and water energy); Logistical and technical support to the off-shore deployment of MREs; Safety monitoring and maintenance operations for off-shore installation; Integration and connection of MRE to the main grid; Zoning, permitting and local acceptability; Numerical

2.4 Application conditions and procedure

Any public or private legal entity, including but not limited to large companies, SMEs, research and technology centres, universities, accelerators, consultancies, natural persons, established in one of the EU Member States can apply to be part of the NEPTUNE Innovation Support Service Provider's handbook.

Applicants must exercise activities with a direct relation to the services which have to be issued to the beneficiary SMEs and must provide the necessary organization, personnel and materials for the implementation of such as services.

Applicants must be current and up to date with their legal and tax obligations as established by their national legislations.

Candidates are requested to fill in the following document:

- Annexe I – Organisation/individual profile and expertise: document presenting the candidate and its services towards potential customers. This form is divided into two parts. Information of Part A will be published in the NEPTUNE handbook and disseminated via the NEPTUNE project website and communication channels. Part B data will be used for evaluation purposes.
- Supporting documents to justify:
 - experience of at least 3 years in relation to the activities the candidate might be asked to assist (please refer to the list of vouchers and the services you expressed your ability to provide in Annex I)
 - good skills in English (written and spoken)
- Annexe II - Declaration of Honour signed by the legal representative
- A.zip package containing logos and any visual identity material the candidate is willing to publish alongside its organisation/individual profile.

Expression of interest shall be submitted in English.

Candidates must submit the requested documents in .pdf format and.zip package to callforexpert@neptune-project.eu with the subject: "NEPTUNE – CEI List of Experts".

"NEPTUNE's Call for Expression of Interest for the establishment of a List of Experts" will be kept open until the 15th of September 2017 and the database will be continuously updated with new technical and consultancy providers. The selection will be made on a regular basis starting from December 2016.

2.5 Selection criteria

The NEPTUNE consortium will analyse the information presented and will choose those providers which comply with the prerequisites.

Experts will be selected on the basis of:

- Professional experience of at least 3 years in in relation to activities in which they might be asked to assist. Please refer to the list of vouchers and the services you expressed your ability to provide in Annex I
- Very good skills in English (written and spoken).

The NEPTUNE project reserves the right to request any additional documentary evidence if it deems necessary in order to verify applicants' skills and knowledge and any potential conflict of interest.

The NEPTUNE project reserves the right to reject any application that fails to comply with the specification of this Call.

3. Confidentiality and data protection

In the performance of their tasks, the experts selected by the SMEs shall demonstrate appropriate ethical conduct and must respect the confidentiality of the information and documents to which they will have access.

The personal data collected will be processed in accordance with Regulation (EC) N° 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data.

4. Disclaimer

The selection and the publication in the handbook will not constitute a binding element towards any of the NEPTUNE project partners generating any kind of obligations towards the experts and consultants.

The issue of the aforementioned services will be contracted by the designated service beneficiaries, who may decide from the list of accredited service providers with whom they would like to formalize a contract.

NEPTUNE will not be responsible to any person in relation to any inaccuracy, error, omission or misleading statements contained in the Information.

NEPTUNE shall not be liable to any person for any damages, losses, costs, liabilities or expenses of any kind which it may suffer as a consequence of relying upon such information.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to inform of any changes to their details which would result in a change to their original application. NEPTUNE will not be responsible to any person in relation to any failure to inform any person of inaccuracy, error, omission or misleading statement contained in such information of which it becomes aware after the date of release of that information.

5. Contacts

For further information on the call you may contact:

callforexpert@neptune-project.eu