



I3-4-SEAWEED Open Call

Annex 1 - Guidelines for Applicants

Version 2.0

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1. What is I3-4-SEAWEED?

The objective of the [I3-4-SEAWEED project](#) is to drive transformative growth in the European seaweed sector through interregional collaboration, scaling innovative business ventures and ensuring their market readiness. By uniting SMEs, research institutions, and industry clusters, the project will establish a sustainable, transnational value chain based on advanced cultivation and biotechnological applications. Through targeted investment cases in food, biofertilizers, and cosmetics, I3-4-SEAWEED will demonstrate seaweed's potential for a more sustainable future. This will be achieved through comprehensive support, including capacity building, technical assistance, and business matchmaking, along with a cascade funding program for 30 SMEs and the establishment of a transnational "Seaweed Food Innovation Network Center" to foster interregional competitiveness.

2. What is the I3-4-SEAWEED Open Call offer?

The *Open Call* is the competitive process in which eligible applicants apply to have access to the I3-4-SEAWEED programme.

Applications to the I3-4-SEAWEED Open Call will be accepted from **20 August 2025** until **22 October 2025 (17:00 CEST Brussels time)**. After the selection is completed, selected applicants will be invited to sign the sub-grant agreement and enter the **12-month I3-4-SEAWEED Programme**.

The I3-4-SEAWEED Programme ([Section 6.1](#)) is organised in 2 parallel components, running concurrently:

- [Project Implementation Framework](#)
- [Capacity Building Programme](#) (compulsory)

The Project implementation framework includes two (2) periods detailed in [Section 6.2.1](#). Each period culminates with the delivery of a progress report whose approval will lead to a payment.

The **12-month programme** will select 30 applications, each addressing one of the challenges outlined in [Section 3.2](#). Selected projects must propose innovative solutions **at a minimum of TRL 6** ([Section 3.1.3](#)) that contribute to the investment project by addressing key needs, such as filling gaps in the value chain, enabling product and process testing and optimisation, or exploring new processing technologies.

In addition to the **lump sum grant funding of EUR 60 000.00** ([Section 3.4](#)), beneficiaries will be in contact with an adviser, which will help with relevant support during project implementation.

The maximum grant amount of EUR 60 000.00 per proposal applies to all applications, i.e., regardless of whether they are submitted by an individual entity or by a consortium of two entities.

The I3-4-SEAWEED Open Call is divided in the following two strands (the challenges are described in [Section 3.2](#)):

- **Strand A - Macroalgal Production**, I3-4-SEAWEED will fund applications which focus on advancing macroalgae-based industries. Support research and innovation in macroalgal (seaweed) production targeting applications, particularly in food, cosmetics, and biofertiliser/biostimulant sectors.

(Note - While applications from other domains may be taken into account, they will receive lower prioritisation).

- **Strand B - Macroalgal Biotechnology and Downstream applications**, I3-4-SEAWEED will fund applications which focus on advancing macroalgae-based industries. Support research and innovation in macroalgal (seaweed) biotechnology and downstream applications, particularly in food, cosmetics, and biofertiliser/biostimulant sectors.

(Note - While applications from other domains may be taken into account, they will receive lower prioritisation).

Relevant links and contacts

- Project website: <https://i3-4-seaweed.eu/>
- Open call application form:
 - Strand A : <https://www.f6s.com/i3-4-seaweed-strand-a>
 - Strand B : <https://www.f6s.com/i3-4-seaweed-strand-b>
- Contact us: opencall-i3-4-seaweed@f6s.com

3. Who can apply and how?

3.1. Types of applicants

3.1.1. Eligible Applicants

The accepted applicants for the I3-4-SEAWEED Open Call are:

- Legal SME¹ entities or consortia (up to 2) of legal SME entities.
- Relevant notes:
 - A valid VAT number is required and will be verified as part of the administrative eligibility check.
 - Please consult the [EU SME Definition](#) for details on what constitutes a SME.
 - A signed version of the Declaration of Honour and the SME Declaration will be requested during the contract preparation phase, as well as the Consortium Declaration of Honour (when applicable).
- Consortium Requirements:
 - Up to 2 legal SME entities. Applications with more than 2 eligible applicants will be deemed as non-eligible.

Note: Unincorporated startups are not eligible. All entities participating in the Open Call must be registered with a verifiable VAT.

3.1.2. Eligible regions

Legal entities established in any of the following regions are eligible to participate in the I3-4-SEAWEED Open Call:

- Entities established in the regions covered by I3-4-SEAWEED consortium members.
- Entities established in European less developed regions.
- Entities established in European outermost regions.

The full list of eligible regions is available in [Section 9](#).

3.1.3. Proposal TRL requirements

Innovative solutions proposed by eligible applicants must have a minimum TRL 6² and have the ambition to facilitate demonstration and to accelerate market uptake and commercialisation by the end of the I3-4-SEAWEED programme.

3.1.4. Multiple submissions

The following rules apply:

- Applicants may apply to both strands in this Open Call.
- The I3-4-SEAWEED Open Call will accept a maximum of 1 application per applicant per strand.

¹ Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

² TRL 6 – technology demonstrated in relevant environment, TRL 7 – system prototype demonstration in operational environment, TRL 8 – system complete and qualified, TRL 9 – actual system proven in operational environment

- If an applicant submits more applications than the indicated amount, only the **first submitted** per strand (as registered on the system) will be considered.
- Please note that only the highest-ranked proposal involving the same entity will be eligible for funding. Any additional proposals that include the same entity, regardless of their evaluation score will be deemed ineligible for funding.

3.2. Types of challenges

As such, the I3-4-SEAWEED Open Call is divided in two strands:

- **Strand A - Macroalgal Production** will fund applications which focus on advancing macroalgae-based industries. Support research and innovation in macroalgal (seaweed) production targeting applications, particularly in food, cosmetics, and biofertiliser/biostimulant sectors.
- **Strand B - Macroalgal Biotechnology and Downstream applications** will fund applications which focus on advancing macroalgae-based industries. Support research and innovation in macroalgal (seaweed) biotechnology and downstream applications, particularly in food, cosmetics, and biofertiliser/biostimulant sectors.

Table 1. I3-4-SEAWEED Open Call - STRAND A & B Challenges

STRAND	Challenges
STRAND A	Algae cultivation, applications & process optimisation – Sustainable systems for increased yield, resilience, and value chain efficiency.
	Species selection – Based on biological performance and legal suitability for key markets (food, cosmetics, biostimulants/biofertilizers).
	Molecular characterisation – Tools for ensuring genotypic purity of cultivated strains.
	Production system development – Innovation in onshore/offshore cultivation and hatchery techniques.
	Post-harvest processing & quality control – Stabilisation methods and protocols ensuring traceability and safety.
	Hatchery & seeding innovations – Efficient, scalable early-stage production systems.
	Sustainability & biodiversity – Integration of IMTA and biodiversity-enhancing approaches.
	Digital monitoring tools – Sensor technologies for hatchery/offshore system control.
	Site selection tools – Frameworks for choosing optimal cultivation sites.
STRAND B	Support to analyse the (bio)-chemical properties of algal biomasses and ingredients/fractions (e.g. biochemical composition, biochemical profiling, bioactivities analyses).
	Biorefinery platform services to fractionate algal biomass into different streams and processing of extracts for biomass valorization.
	Scaling up of seaweed product production processes.
	Development of (food, feed, cosmetics, agricultural) products with seaweed as full biomass
	Application and improvement of procedures for the use of seaweeds in the industry

The challenges for financial support under the I3-4-SEAWEED Open Call must primarily involve direct investment into the development, testing, or scaling of innovative solutions **with a minimum TRL 6** ([Section 3.1.3](#)). Proposals are expected to move beyond purely analytical work and demonstrate

concrete, hands-on activities, such as piloting technologies, optimising products or processes, validating new solutions in operational environments, or addressing key gaps in the seaweed value chain. Funded activities should clearly contribute to the industry's transformation and be ambitious in scope and impact.

3.3. Types of projects

The I3-4-SEAWEED Open Call aims to fund innovative projects that will contribute to the investment project by carrying out necessary and missing tasks (e.g., to complete a specific value chain and/or to offer a specific groundwork for testing and optimising products and production processes), or for the exploration of new processing technologies (Table 2) within the scope of the Challenges ([Section 3.2](#)).

Note: The sub-criterion “relevance to I3-4-SEAWEED’s investment cases” (table 4 in [Section 4.2](#)) will have a greater weighting.

Table 2. Investment cases of the I3-4-SEAWEED Open Call

I3-4-SEAWEED Business cases: Titles & Aim	I3-4-SEAWEED Business cases descriptions
Hatchery Innovation Center for high-commercial value seaweed species & compounds <u>Aim:</u> scale up of a Hatchery Innovation Center for high commercial value seaweed species & compounds.	<p>Under the I3-4-SEAWEED project, Irish Seaweed Consultancy is creating a Hatchery Innovation Center in County Galway, supported by NIOZ – Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research. This new center focuses on growing high-value seaweed species and extracting natural compounds like pigments, which are in high demand for food, health, and cosmetic products. The goal is to develop sustainable methods that reduce the use of synthetic ingredients and support the growing blue bioeconomy.</p> <p>The center will offer specialized hatchery services, such as ready-to-deploy seaweed materials and customized cultures collected from local seaweed populations. It will also house a commercial biobank and provide space for small companies to test new seaweed-based products and ideas, helping them avoid high setup costs. By combining science, sustainability, and business support, the Hatchery Innovation Center will strengthen seaweed innovation, boost local job creation, and encourage eco-friendly aquaculture models that can be used in other coastal areas.</p>
Digital twinning for offshore aquaculture (aquaculture4.0) <u>Aim:</u> The full implementation of the Digital twinning for offshore aquaculture.	<p>One of the key business cases of the I3-4-SEAWEED project is the development of a digital twinning solution specifically designed for offshore seaweed farming, led by HAEDES. This innovative system creates a virtual model of seaweed farms, allowing producers to monitor conditions, forecast outcomes, and optimize operations in real time. It marks a major step forward for “Aquaculture 4.0,” bringing advanced digital tools into the growing offshore aquaculture sector.</p> <p>Developed in close collaboration with seaweed farmers, the digital twinning system features smart monitoring tools, flexible settings for different farm setups, and an easy-to-use interface. A pilot site will demonstrate how it can boost efficiency by over 30% in real offshore conditions. This business case shows how digital tools can make seaweed farming more sustainable, scalable, and reliable. It supports the shift to smarter, low-impact aquaculture and strengthens Europe’s blue bioeconomy.</p>
Application for the food industry (seaweed-based meat products) <u>Aim:</u> Scale up of portfolio with seaweed-based meat products.	<p>As part of the I3-4-SEAWEED project, The Seaweed Company (Netherlands) is developing innovative seaweed-based meat products that respond to the growing demand for healthier and more sustainable food. By combining traditional knowledge with cutting-edge research, the company is creating hybrid food solutions that reduce meat content while increasing nutritional value through the use of seaweed.</p> <p>This business case focuses on scaling up their product portfolio in the food industry, with a strong emphasis on high-nutrient, eco-friendly alternatives. The goal is to promote healthier diets and reduce environmental impact by offering consumers</p>

	tasty, seaweed-enriched products that support a shift toward sustainable eating habits across Europe.
Application for the food industry (seaweed-based food products) <u>Aim:</u> Formulate high-nutrient and flavourful seaweed products for diverse food applications	<p>As part of the I3-4-SEAWEED project, Revi (Belgium) is scaling up the development of high-quality, seaweed-based food products to meet growing demand for nutritious and sustainable everyday meals. Building on its strong position in the food industry, Revi is integrating seaweed into familiar product categories—such as ready meals, soups, sauces, salads, and breaded foods—making seaweed more accessible to a wider audience.</p> <p>With a skilled team of chefs and food experts, Revi is focused on delivering products that are both delicious and industrially scalable. The aim is to shift seaweed from a niche ingredient to a mainstream solution, helping modern consumers make more conscious food choices without compromising on taste. Supported by strong networks in retail and food services, this business case has high potential to bring seaweed innovation to plates across Europe.</p>
Application for the biofertilizers / biostimulants industry <u>Aim:</u> Develop sustainable and effective biofertilizers (biostimulants) harnessing the potential of seaweed extracts.	<p>As part of the I3-4-SEAWEED project, Ficosterra (Spain) is scaling up the development of seaweed-based biofertilizers and biostimulants to support more sustainable and productive farming. By combining seaweed extracts with beneficial microorganisms, Ficosterra's Maré product line helps improve crop yields, boost plant resilience, and regenerate soil health—offering farmers an eco-friendly alternative to conventional fertilizers.</p> <p>The company is also advancing a unique technology to extract natural phytohormones (auxins) from seaweed, providing a sustainable substitute for synthetic growth stimulants. With these innovative solutions, Ficosterra aims to lead the shift toward greener agriculture while contributing to a fast-growing biofertilizer market. This business case also includes piloting and demonstrating the technologies at scale, and supporting other SMEs looking to enter the biofertilizer sector with seaweed-based solutions.</p>
Application for the cosmetics industry <u>Aim:</u> scale-up and formulate seaweed-based cosmetics products focusing on hydration, anti-aging, and natural benefits.	<p>Under the scope of the I3-4-SEAWEED project, ALGAplus is developing a new cosmetic product based on certified organic macroalgae. The product will reflect the unique bioactive profile of selected seaweed species cultivated at ALGAplus facilities, aiming to deliver skin benefits. The formulation is being developed in collaboration with the University of Coimbra, combining scientific insight with high-quality, traceable marine ingredients.</p> <p>This case promotes the valorisation of natural marine resources through sustainable production, offering an environmentally responsible alternative to conventional cosmetics. By using seaweed cultivated without freshwater, arable land, or synthetic fertilizers, the product contributes to lower environmental impact and supports the blue bioeconomy. Moreover, it raises consumer awareness of ocean-based resources and encourages the use of clean, traceable, and locally produced ingredients, fostering both biodiversity preservation and local economic development.</p>
Market-entry strategy in the supply of frozen and dried seaweeds for the food industry. <u>Aim:</u> market-entry strategy in the supply of frozen and dried seaweed for the food industry.	<p>Pittman Seafoods (Belgium) is developing a market-entry strategy for the supply of frozen and dried seaweed to the food industry. With strong experience in the seafood sector, the company aims to become a key player in the emerging seaweed market by ensuring high-quality, safe, and consistent seaweed products for food manufacturers across Europe.</p> <p>This business case addresses current seaweed shortages by exploring both European and non-European sources, helping to stabilize supply chains and support the growth of the seaweed food sector. Pittman Seafoods will also guide food companies in selecting the most suitable seaweed varieties for their products, while promoting partnerships, training, and international collaboration. By setting high</p>

	standards for quality and safety, this initiative plays a key role in strengthening the European seaweed ecosystem.
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3.4. Funding conditions

Any eligible entity, applying individually or as part of a consortium, will only be considered for **funding once**.

Each application may receive a maximum grant amount of **EUR 60 000.00**. **The total amount requested must represent 100% of the project costs** (including indirect costs). All applications must include a justification of the planned expenses and resources required.

Eligible costs include personnel costs for project management, research and technical development, testing and piloting activities, and capacity building programme; communication, dissemination, and exploitation activities; travel (as required); project-specific equipment and consumables; and, costs related to IPR (such as patent filing) or regulatory compliance (if relevant to the project) provided they are directly linked to the implementation of the project.

The type of costs that may be reported include personnel costs, other direct costs, and indirect costs (7% of personnel and other direct costs). Subcontracting is eligible in this open call up to 20% of the total project budget.

Funds will be disbursed in lump sums at the beginning of the project (initial prefinancing payment) and at end of the two (2) periods and pending the achievement of agreed milestones and deliverables.

3.5. Application process

The F6S platform will be the single entry point for all applications to the I3-4-SEAWEED Open Call. Interested applicants should register at the I3-4-SEAWEED F6S page for [STRAND A](#) and [STRAND B](#). The relevant links and timings for the application process are provided in Table 3, but are subject to change.

Table 3. I3-4-SEAWEED Open Call Application Process and Timeline

Stage	Description	Timeline
Application	Fill in and submit application including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application form on F6S : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strand A : https://www.f6s.com/i3-4-seaweed-strand-a Strand B : https://www.f6s.com/i3-4-seaweed-strand-b Application technical proposal (using provided template) 	Launch date: 20 August 2025 Submission deadline: 22 October 2025 (17:00 Brussels time)
Admissibility and Eligibility check	The I3-4-SEAWEED Consortium performs internal admissibility and eligibility checks of the applications	23 October 2025 to 26 October 2025
Remote evaluation	An evaluation board reviews the received applications, scoring them based on the evaluation criteria. The experts rank the applications and select the top-ranked applications.	27 October 2025 to 12 November 2025
Announcement of the results	All applicants receive a written letter by email about approval or rejection of their application. Successful projects start the onboarding phase for the I3-4-SEAWEED Programme.	12 November 2025

The submission date for applications is final. All other dates, including those of the programme, may be subject to change.

3.6. Other application requirements and considerations

- **Submission:** Applications must be submitted via:
 - Strand A - Macroalgal Production: <https://www.f6s.com/i3-4-seaweed-strand-a/>
 - Strand B - Macroalgal Biotechnology and Downstream applications: <https://www.f6s.com/i3-4-seaweed-strand-b/>

Note: Submissions via any other means will not be accepted.

- **Complete application:** All mandatory questions must be answered and all requested documents must be uploaded. Incomplete applications will be disqualified.
- **Accept terms:** Applicants must agree to the application's terms and conditions.
- **English language:** All applications and programme communication must be in English.
- **Document format:** Unless otherwise agreed, all documents in all phases must be submitted electronically in PDF format without printing restrictions.
- **Deadline:**
 - Failure to submit the application by the submission deadline, regardless of cause (e.g., network issues, multiple browsers or windows), is not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance. It is recommended to apply well before the deadline.
 - Resubmissions are possible provided the call deadline has not passed, but are only guaranteed if requested at least 2 business days before the deadline via support@f6s.com.
 - The deadline may be extended only in case of unforeseen F6S platform technical issues. All applicants will be notified of the new deadline.
- **Review administrative documents:** Applicants are encouraged to get familiar with the documents that will be required in the contracting phase.
- **Notifications:** Applicants are encouraged to enable F6S notifications for the programme in their profile settings to ensure communications regarding their application are received.
- **Applicants list:** A full list of applicants containing their basic information will be created for statistical and transparency purposes, and shared with the European Commission.

Note: EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (e.g. entities subject to EU restrictive measures under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)²⁷ and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No 2013/C 205/0528). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

4. How will applications be evaluated and selected?

The I3-4-SEAWEED Remote evaluation and selection stage will follow a three-phase process: (1) admissibility and eligibility check; (2) remote expert evaluation; and (3) ranking and selection of applicants. The process is represented in Figure 1.

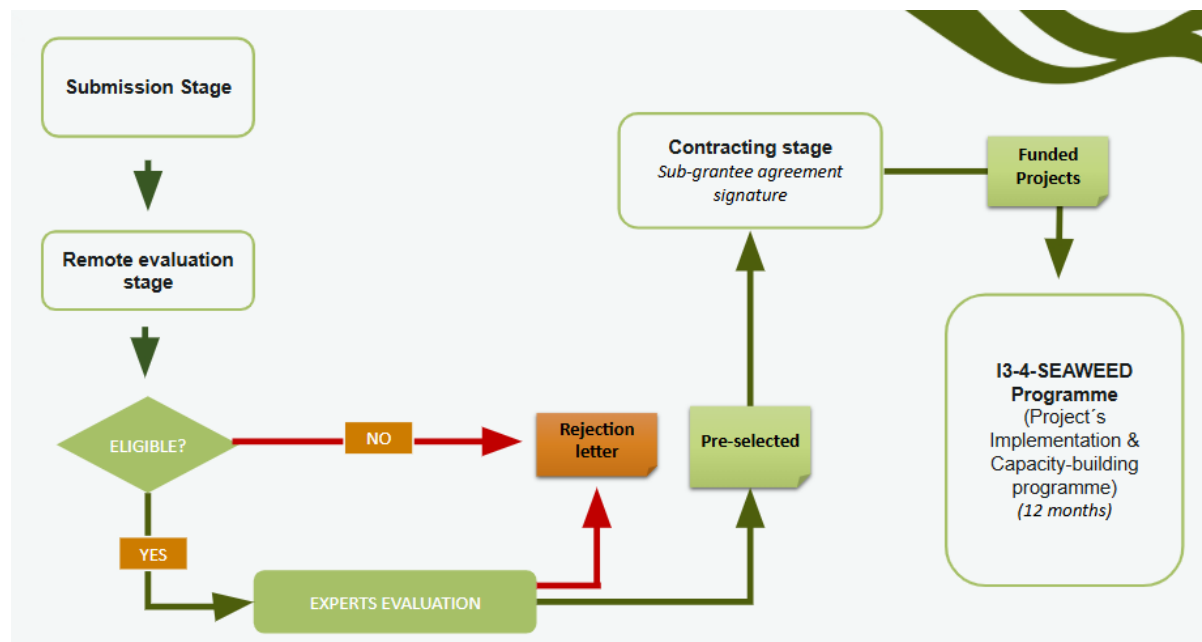


Figure 1: I3-4-SEAWEED Open Call submission and evaluation process

I3-4-SEAWEED reserves the right to request at any moment of the process additional information and/or documentation to clarify any doubts regarding the eligibility of the applicant(s) and/or the application.

4.1. Admissibility and Eligibility check

An initial admissibility and eligibility verification will be done to filter out and discard non-eligible applications. An application is only considered eligible if it meets **all the eligibility criteria and requirements** listed in [Section 3](#), related with: type of applicant(s), consortium, TRL level, regions, funding, language, documentation, among others.

The eligibility check enables the establishment of a shortlist of applications to be evaluated in the next step of the evaluation process.

Applications marked as non-eligible (for not meeting one or more of the admissibility and eligibility criteria) will receive a rejection letter with a justification.

4.2. Remote Expert evaluation

The Internal evaluation committee is a collective body composed of individual members with relevant experience in the I3-4-SEAWEED domains. The project will ensure absence of any conflicts of interest.

4.2.1. Evaluation criteria & scoring

At least two experts (Evaluation Panel) will evaluate each application and will be distributed considering their expertise, and whenever possible, avoiding applications from their regions. Table 4 indicates the I3-4-SEAWEED Open Call evaluation criteria and items to evaluate.

Table 4: I3-4-SEAWEED Open Call evaluation criteria

Criteria Name	Description
1. Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and measurable objectives and goals • High quality and innovative approach • Strong leadership and team expertise • Knowledge, technological and business expertise
2. Impact & Ambition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for significant and meaningful change in industry, community & value-chain • Ambition to create long-lasting and sustainable impact • Potential for scalability and replication in other contexts • Demonstrated commitment to achieving the intended impact • Proven track record or evidence of previous impactful outcomes • Potential for fostering positive social change or equity. • Relevance to I3-4-SEAWEED investment cases*
3. Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly defined roles and responsibilities • Analysis of the technological and implementation capacity. • Efficient allocation and utilization of resources • Details on how the proposed value proposition will be implemented/developed with I3-4-Seaweed support towards solution integration • Timely execution of project plans and timelines • Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to track progress • Balanced team with valuable women representation • Commitment to delivering on stated objectives.

* Note that this sub-criterion will have a greater weighting.

Each criterion will be scored between 1 and 5. Table 5 details the scoring rationale applied to each criterion.

Table 5: I3-4-SEAWEED Open Call scoring rationale

Score	Rationale
1 / POOR	The proposal addresses the criterion in an inadequate manner or there are significant weaknesses.
2 / FAIR	The proposal addresses the criterion broadly, but there are still several weaknesses.
3 / GOOD	The proposal addresses the criterion well, but improvements are necessary.
4 / VERY GOOD	The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but some improvements are still possible.
5 / EXCELLENT	The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

Each criterion will be divided in several sub-criteria, as indicated above (Table 4). Each sub-criterion will get a score between 1 and 5. Half point scores are not given for sub-criteria. The final score

corresponds to the sum of the average of the two experts' scores per criterion. Therefore, final scores may be decimal ranging from 3 to 15. **The sub-criterion “Relevance to I3-4-SEAWEED investment cases” will have a greater weighting (Table 4).**

The minimum threshold for each criterion will be **three (3) out of five (5)**, while the overall score threshold will be **nine (9) out of fifteen (15)**. Applications that do not meet the minimum thresholds (per criterion or overall score) will be excluded from the programme. This means that if a proposal receives less than 3 in one criterion or less than 9 overall score it is automatically rejected.

Each expert will record their individual assessment using an Individual Evaluation Report. After the individual scoring by the expert evaluation board, the Open Call Management Team will:

- Check for large differences (over 2 points per criterion) between experts.
- If differences exist, experts meet to discuss and agree on scores.
- If an agreement isn't reached, another expert may be invited to provide a third assessment.

A single Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) will be prepared by the Evaluation Panel, representing opinions and scores on which the experts agree.

Note: *If required, the I3-4-SEAWEED team reserves the right to organise interviews with selected applicants to either validate the assessment done by the experts or to clarify doubts regarding submitted proposals.*

4.3. Ranking & selection

All applications will be ranked in a single list based on their overall score, which is calculated from the sum of the average scores given by the experts. Decimals will be taken into account to ensure accurate differentiation.

In case of a tie in overall scores, the following tie-breaking criteria will be used in this order:

- Criterion (1) Impact & Ambition
- Criterion (2) Excellence
- Criterion (3) Implementation

After applying these tie-break rules, if there are still proposals in the same position, priority will be given to those with a share of women and men in their team that is closer to 50/50, following European guidelines on gender equality³.

All applicants at all stages of the evaluation will be informed about the result of their evaluation along with an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) for eligible applications only.

The top-ranked 30 projects proposals will be invited to the contract negotiation phase. Up to 3 projects per strand will be kept in a reserve list.

4.4. Appeals

Within three (3) working days of receiving (1) a rejection letter informing the application as non-eligible or (2) an ESR of non-acceptance, an applicant may submit a request for an appeal if they believe the results of the admissibility and eligibility checks have not been correctly applied, or if they feel that there has been a shortcoming in the way their application has been evaluated.

³ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffc06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-232129669>

All requests for appeal must be sent to the I3-4-SEAWEED team to opencall-i3-4-seaweed@f6s.com and must:

- Focus on aspects concerning the evaluation of the application (e.g. admissibility and/or eligibility checks, evaluation procedure, etc), not their merits.
- Clearly describe the complaint.
- Be received within the time limit (3 working days) from the reception of a rejection letter considering the application as non-eligible or the ESR information letter delivered.
- Be sent by the entities' legal representative that has also submitted the application.

Note that the evaluation is carried out by highly qualified experts. I3-4-SEAWEED will neither question nor interfere with their original evaluation. Mere repetitions of the content of the application or disagreements with the result or reasoning of the technical evaluation will not be considered.

5. What happens after selection?

Selected applicants will be invited to the contracting stage, where administrative and financial details and documents are verified and validated.

Furthermore, to carry out mandatory Know Your Customer (KYC) checks, proof of residency and proof of ID from one or more members of the organisation(s) is required.

The steps of this stage are (see Table 9 in [Section 10](#) for complementary information):

1. Inclusion of comments (if any) provided in the Evaluation Summary Report as part of the sub-grant agreement (contract).
2. Validation of the entities based on the provision of the following documentation (available at <https://i3-4-seaweed.eu/open-call/>):
 - Formal proof of the entity's legal existence and tax activity.
 - Proof of the SME status, including the SME Declaration Form (Annex 6).
 - Declaration of Honour, for all participating entities, signed by the legal representative of the entity (Annex 4).
 - Consortium Declaration of Honour, signed by the legal representative of each consortium partner (if applicable) (Annex 5)
 - Financial Information Form (Annex 7).
3. Signing of the sub-grant agreement (Annex 3) between I3-4-SEAWEED Consortium represented by its Coordinator (F6S EU Tech Innovation Network Designated Activity Company) and the Lead Beneficiary.

Additional considerations:

- A valid VAT is mandatory.
- The sub-grant agreement (contract) is final and cannot be altered.
- Electronic digital signatures are required for signed documents (unless otherwise agreed).
- Deadlines for document submission will be provided, and will normally be concluded within two weeks.
- Failure to complete the negotiation in time will result in rejection.

6. What is the I3-4-SEAWEED Programme and its requirements?

The awarded sub-granted projects will participate and benefit from the **12-month I3-4-SEAWEED Programme**. This includes an onboarding meeting, training activities, and a monitoring and control process during the project implementation.

6.1. Programme overview

The main objective of the programme is to provide sub-granted projects with value-added services, both technical and business-related, to ensure the successful development and impact of their projects. This is achieved through specialised training, group coaching, general webinars, and other resources to strengthen participants' skills and knowledge.

The programme is committed to ensuring the continuity of third-party actions through the implementation of sustainability plan activities. This involves establishing measures and actions that enable the selected sub-granted projects to continue their development and operation after the end of the initial funding phase. Through collaborations, meetings, workshops and events, an environment of cooperation and joint learning is promoted, where projects can share lessons learned, best practices and know-how.

In summary, the I3-4-SEAWEED Programme will provide:

- **Financial support:** In the form of a lump sum, to deliver the work plan proposed in the applications.
- **Technical support:** Specialised guidance and assistance to implement their solutions. This support will be provided through the Capacity Building Programme.
- **Business support:** Projects will be offered comprehensive business guidance and support services in the form of mentoring, coaching, and networking opportunities. This support will be provided through the Capacity Building Programme.

6.1.1. Project Implementation Framework

The Project Implementation Framework includes two (2) periods of six months detailed in Table 6 ([Section 6.2.1](#)). Each period culminates with the delivery of a progress report whose approval will lead to a payment of the grant.

The funding programme will follow a 12-month implementation period, with projects anticipated to commence activities around February 2026. This implementation timeframe will run simultaneously with the Capacity Building Program ([Section 6.1.2](#)), allowing for integrated development and support. Throughout the 12-month duration, project activities will be subject to ongoing assessment to ensure progress and alignment with objectives.

A mandatory study visit and an in-person workshop hosted at one of the project partner's facilities is also a key component of the programme, providing an opportunity for knowledge exchange and project collaboration. **Applicants should ensure that their proposed budgets adequately cover all costs associated with participation in this study visit.**

Note: Applicants are recommended to allocate 1 PM⁴ to the Capacity Building Programme and ensure provisions are made for the financial coverage of at least one project representative's participation in the study visit.

6.1.2. Capacity Building Programme

Funded applicants will participate in a support program that includes both inner and outer mechanisms. The inner support consists of mandatory monthly online workshops featuring business case presentations by I3-4-SEAWEED project partners, followed by Q&A. One workshop will focus specifically on investment and business support. Outer support provides voluntary access to the BlueBioMatch mentors network for expert guidance. The program also involves a phased approach, covering technology, branding & networking, market strategies, and funding & investment. **The program culminates in a final mandatory in-person workshop at a project partner's facility, where participants will pitch their case.**

Note: Participation by at least one representative of the project in the Capacity Building Programme is compulsory, and attendance will need to be reported.

6.2. Programme review

6.2.1. Review summary

Each project will go through 2 reporting periods, each one highlighting the end of a period (table 6).

Beneficiaries of the sub-granted projects are required to submit a progress report at the end of each implementation period. The progress report will serve as a tool for monitoring the performance and evaluate the project at the end of each period. The progress report will consist of a table with the achievements in that period and the corresponding description.

The submission and approval of the progress report will trigger the payment associated with each period after having verified the achievement of the milestones and deliverables set for the period. Funding will be distributed in three instalments as follows:

Table 6: I3-4-SEAWEED - Review and Payments summary

Stage	Item	Description
Initial pre-financing	Requirement	Signature of the sub-grant agreement
	Result	Payment of 40% of the maximum grant amount
	Timeline	After entry into force
Period 1	Requirement	Submission of Progress Report #1
	Result	Payment ceiling of 70% of the maximum grant amount
	Timeline	M1 - M6
Period 2	Requirement	Submission of Progress Report #2
	Result	Payment of the balance
	Timeline	M7 - M12

Reports must be submitted 7 working days after the end of each reporting period. During the reporting period, representatives of the beneficiary should be ready to present their work and answer questions.

After each successful reporting period and within 5 **working days**, the beneficiary should send the relevant payment request document.

⁴ Person-month

7. What else is important to know?

7.1. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

Solutions developed and results achieved by the third parties belong to the third parties. Applicants will remain the sole owners of their respective IPRs and retain the IPR for their solutions.

7.2. On conflicts of interest

Applicants must declare any actual and/or potential conflict of interest with the I3-4-SEAWEED during the selection process and/or during the project implementation. All cases of conflict of interest will be assessed case by case.

7.3. Ethical issues

I3-4-SEAWEED complies with the fundamental ethical issues particularly those outlined in the “European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity”.

- All applicants must submit a self-assessment ethics questionnaire, available in the Proposal Template
- If the applicant confirms the existence of potential ethical issues, they must contact the I3-4-SEAWEED Helpdesk for guidance, as required.
- The I3-4-SEAWEED will verify the declaration's consistency with the application contents and may contact applicants to resolve any ethical issues.
- Applications that fail to properly address ethical issues or inadequately deal with privacy aspects will be rejected.

7.4. Data protection

In order to process and evaluate applications, and manage project implementation, the I3-4-SEAWEED consortium will need to collect Personal and Industrial Data.

- F6S Network Ireland Limited, will act as Data Controller for data submitted through the F6S platform for these purposes. Please see our privacy policy [here](#).
- A Data Protection Officer (DPO) has been appointed by F6S generally, to ensure compliance with data protection regulations, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and that personal data is collected, processed, and stored in a secure manner.
- The F6S platform's system design and operational procedures ensure that data is managed in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). For more information, see the full text of the Regulation: <https://eur.lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj>
- Each applicant will accept the F6S terms to ensure compliance. Please refer to <https://www.f6s.com/privacy-policy> to review the F6S platform's privacy policy and data security policy.
- Apart from the F6S platform, data will also be stored in the F6S Google Drive, and in the project repository on Google Drive managed by the project coordinator F6S EU Tech Innovation Network Designated Activity Company.
- Note that the I3-4-SEAWEED consortium must retain generated data until five years after the balance of the I3-4-SEAWEED project is paid or longer if there are ongoing procedures (such as audits, investigations or litigation). In this case, the data must be kept until their conclusion.

7.5. Confidentiality

Confidentiality obligations:

- Selected applicants are required to maintain confidential any project data, documents, invoices and other materials (in any form) during the implementation of the activities and for 5 years after project completion.
- This confidentiality period can be extended by agreement with the EC and the I3-4-SEAWEED consortium.
- Information shared during the project, whether written or spoken, is only considered confidential if the I3-4-SEAWEED agrees and confirms it in writing within 15 days.
- Confidential information must only be used for project implementation, unless otherwise agreed upon.
- Any information shared during the application stage will be treated as confidential.

7.6. Promotion of the action and ensuring visibility of the EU funding

The beneficiary must promote the project, the I3-4-SEAWEED project and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in a strategic and effective manner and to highlight the financial support of the EC, including on the official third party website. The I3-4-SEAWEED Communication team will guide and support these communication activities to selected beneficiaries.

7.7. Checks and reviews

The EC may, at any time during the implementation of the sub-project and up to five years after the end of the sub-project, arrange for a check and review activity to be carried out, by external auditors, or by the EC services themselves, including the European Anti-Fraud office (OLAF). The procedure shall be deemed to be initiated on the date of receipt of the relevant letter sent by the EC.

There will be no financial checks, reviews, or audits to check costs, since beneficiaries have no obligation to document the costs incurred for the action. Checks, reviews, and audits will focus on the technical implementation of the action.

8. Relevant links and contacts

The I3-4-SEAWEED Consortium will provide information to the applicants via the F6S page, so that all information (questions and answers) are visible to all participants.

- Project website: <https://i3-4-seaweed.eu/>
- Open call application forms:
 - Strand A : <https://www.f6s.com/i3-4-seaweed-strand-a>
 - Strand B : <https://www.f6s.com/i3-4-seaweed-strand-b>
- Contact us: opencall-i3-4-seaweed@f6s.com
- Online Q&A/ discussion board:
 - Strand A : <https://www.f6s.com/i3-4-seaweed-strand-a/discuss>
 - Strand B : <https://www.f6s.com/i3-4-seaweed-strand-b/discuss>

- F6S platform support team: support@f6s.com
(For issues with the submission, resubmission, access to the platform, etc.)

9. List of Eligible Regions

Table 7. I3-4-SEAWEED Open Call | List of eligible Regions

Country		
Code	Country Name	NUTS Region Name
BE10	Belgium	Région de Bruxelles-Capitale/Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest
BE24	Belgium	Prov. Vlaams-Brabant
BE25	Belgium	Prov. West-Vlaanderen
BE34	Belgium	Prov. Luxembourg (BE)
BG31	Bulgaria	Северозападен (Severozapaden)
BG32	Bulgaria	Северен централен (Severen tsentralen)
BG33	Bulgaria	Североизточен (Severoiztochen)
BG34	Bulgaria	Югоизточен (Yugoiztochen)
BG42	Bulgaria	Южен централен (Yuzhen tsentralen)
CZ04	Czech Republic	Severozápad
CZ05	Czech Republic	Severovýchod
CZ07	Czech Republic	Střední Morava
CZ08	Czech Republic	Moravskoslezsko
DE30	Germany	Berlin
EL41	Greece	Βόρειο Αιγαίο (Voreio Aigaio)
EL43	Greece	Κρήτη (Kriti)
EL51	Greece	Ανατολική Μακεδονία, Θράκη (Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki)
EL52	Greece	Κεντρική Μακεδονία (Kentriki Makedonia)
EL53	Greece	Δυτική Μακεδονία (Dytiki Makedonia)
EL54	Greece	Ήπειρος (Ipeiros)
EL61	Greece	Θεσσαλία (Thessalia)
EL62	Greece	Ιόνια Νησιά (Ionia Nisia)
EL63	Greece	Δυτική Ελλάδα (Dytiki Ellada)
EL64	Greece	Στερεά Ελλάδα (Sterea Ellada)
EL65	Greece	Πελοπόννησος (Peloponnēsos)
ES41	Spain	Castilla y León
ES42	Spain	Castilla-La Mancha
ES43	Spain	Extremadura
ES61	Spain	Andalucía
ES63	Spain	Ciudad Autónoma de Ceuta
ES64	Spain	Ciudad Autónoma de Melilla
ES70	Spain	Canarias
FRY1	France	Guadeloupe
FRY2	France	Martinique
FRY3	France	Guyane
FRY4	France	La Réunion

FRY5	France	Mayotte
FRY80	France	Saint-Martin
HR03	Croatia	Jadranska Hrvatska
HR04	Croatia	Kontinentalna Hrvatska
HU12	Hungary	Pest
HU21	Hungary	Közép-Dunántúl
HU22	Hungary	Nyugat-Dunántúl
HU23	Hungary	Dél-Dunántúl
HU31	Hungary	Észak-Magyarország
HU32	Hungary	Észak-Alföld
HU33	Hungary	Dél-Alföld
IE04	Ireland	Northern and Western
IE06	Ireland	Eastern and Midland
ITF2	Italy	Molise
ITF3	Italy	Campania
ITF4	Italy	Puglia
ITF5	Italy	Basilicata
ITF6	Italy	Calabria
ITG1	Italy	Sicilia
ITG2	Italy	Sardegna
LT02	Lithuania	Vidurio ir vakarų Lietuvos regionas
LV00	Latvia	Latvija
NL32	Netherlands	Noord-Holland
NL34	Netherlands	Zeeland
PL21	Poland	Małopolskie
PL22	Poland	Śląskie
PL42	Poland	Zachodniopomorskie
PL43	Poland	Lubuskie
PL52	Poland	Opolskie
PL61	Poland	Kujawsko-pomorskie
PL62	Poland	Warmińsko-mazurskie
PL63	Poland	Pomorskie
PL71	Poland	Łódzkie
PL72	Poland	Świętokrzyskie
PL81	Poland	Lubelskie
PL82	Poland	Podkarpackie
PL84	Poland	Podlaskie
PL92	Poland	Mazowiecki regionalny
PT11	Portugal	Norte
PT15	Portugal	Algarve
PT16	Portugal	Centro (PT)

PT18	Portugal	Alentejo
PT20	Portugal	Região Autónoma dos Açores
PT30	Portugal	Região Autónoma da Madeira
RO11	Romania	Nord-Vest
RO12	Romania	Centru
RO21	Romania	Nord-Est
RO22	Romania	Sud-Est
RO31	Romania	Sud - Muntenia
RO41	Romania	Sud-Vest Oltenia
RO42	Romania	Vest
SI03	Slovenia	Vzhodna Slovenija
SK02	Slovakia	Západné Slovensko
SK03	Slovakia	Stredné Slovensko
SK04	Slovakia	Východné Slovensko

10. Relevant Open Call definitions

Table 8. Acronyms & Definitions

Acronym	Explanation/ Definition
AWU	Annual Work Unit
DPO	Data Protection Officer
DSS	Digital Signature Services
EC	European Commission
EISMEA	European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency
ESR	Evaluation Summary Report
EU	European Union
FSTP	Financial Support for Third Parties
GA	Grant Agreement
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
IP	Internet Protocol
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
KYC	Know Your Customer
MS	Member State
SME	Small and Medium Sized Enterprise
OC	Open Call
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
PIC	Participant identification Code
R&D	Research and Development
RTO	Research and Training Organisation
SME	Small and medium-size enterprises
TRL	Technology Readiness Level
VAT	Value Added Tax

Table 9. Terms & Definitions

Term	Definition
Applicant(s)	The legal entity or group of legal entities that intend(s) to submit or that submitted an application to the Open Call.
Application Eligibility Criteria	Criteria used to assess if an application can be considered for the open call. Possible values (Yes/No).
Application Eligible or Non-Eligible	Application that is or is not compliant with eligibility criteria.
Application Timestamp	Timestamp of the final submission of an application. If the application is reopened and resubmitted the last date will be considered.
Financial Info Form	Form where the beneficiary provides information of the bank account to which payments will be made during the project implementation.
Beneficiary or 3rd Party	An entity or a consortium that submitted an application to the open call that was accepted to be funded, and have signed, or are in the process of signing, a sub-grant agreement.
Consortium	Set of legal entities that are cumulatively responsible to implement the project as defined in the Grant Agreement signed with the European Commission.
Consortium Declaration of Honour	Declaration where the applicants/ beneficiaries, participating as a consortium, declare they accept all conditions of the open call, acceleration process & programme; and agree - if applicable - on budget share. One CDoH is required for each sub-granted project.
Contract Deadline	Date and time until when the selected entities need to provide contractual information.
Declaration of Honour (DoH)	Declaration where the applicant/ beneficiary declares they accept all conditions of the open call, acceleration process & programme. One DoH is required for each applicant/ beneficiary.
F6S Application Form	Application form available in F6S Platform.
F6S Platform	Platform provided by F6S.
FSTP	Financial support to third parties. Payments made to entities that are not members of the consortium.
FSTP – Lump Sum	Payment made to the third party based on the achievement of a milestone.
Internal evaluation committee	Group of appropriately qualified persons of the consortium partners that are assigned the responsibility of performing evaluations or reviews at any stage of the open call implementation or programme.
Adviser	Person from the consortium that works closely with the beneficiary to foster communication with the consortium and assess progress of the project. The adviser may be part of an evaluation committee.
Open Call	Competitive process to access a Programme.
Open Call and Programme deadlines	The project has planned the programme carefully, but unexpected things can happen. The application deadline is fixed, and will only change if something unforeseen occurs. Other dates, including of the programme, are flexible and may be adjusted as needed, and communicated to all applicants.
Open Call close date	Date and time when applications close.
Open Call selection prioritisation	Rules used to order applications.
Proof of Bank Account Information	The account where the funds will be transferred will be indicated via a specific form signed by the entity, individuals, and the bank owners. The holder of the account will be the entity/ individual. Provided using Annex 7.
Proof of Legal Existence	Company/ organisation register, official journal or other official document per country showing the name of the organisation, the legal address and registration number and

Term	Definition
	a copy of a document proving VAT registration (in case the VAT number does not show on the registration extract or its equivalent).
Proof of SME Status	<p>Proof of the SME condition is required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the applicant has been fully validated as an SME on the Beneficiary Register of the EC Participant Portal, the PIC number must be provided. • Provision of the signed (with a valid e-signature) SME Declaration (Annex 6): in the event the beneficiary declares being non-autonomous, the balance sheet and profit and loss account (with annexes) for the last period for upstream and downstream organisations is required. A Status Information Form may be requested, which includes the headcount (AWU), balance, profit & loss accounts of the latest closed financial year and the relation, upstream and downstream, of any linked or partner company. • Supporting documents: In cases where either the number of employees or the ownership is not clearly identified: any other supporting documents which demonstrate headcount and ownership such as payroll details, annual reports, national regional, association records, etc.
Score, Expert	<p>Unless otherwise stated, experts will rank each criterion with marks between 1 and 5. Half point scores are not given. Score values will indicate the following assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1: Very poor. The criterion is addressed in an unsatisfactory manner. • 2: Poor. There are serious inherent weaknesses. • 3: Good. While the application broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses that would need correcting. • 4: Very Good. The application addresses the criterion well, although certain improvements are possible. • 5: Excellent. The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.
Reserve List	Eligible applications that were not selected for funding which can be invited in case selected applications do not provide contractual data.
Schedule for payments to Beneficiaries	<p>All payments to beneficiaries are dependent on the successful review of deliverables/ reports at the end of each phase, and reception by the consortium of the corresponding payment request.</p> <p>All payments will be made with undue delay preferably no later than 30 calendar days after the reception of the financial statement.</p>
Score, Per Committee	When the evaluation is made by a committee, the average score of each criterion can be decimal.
Selected application	Application that was selected to participate in the Open Call Implementation.
SME	An incorporated enterprise that complies with the rules defined by the European Commission to be qualified as an SME ⁵
SME – Autonomous Enterprise	An autonomous enterprise is not a partner with or linked to another enterprise
SME – Linked Enterprise	Linked enterprises are those that form a group through the direct or indirect control of the majority of voting rights of an enterprise by another or through the ability to exercise a dominant influence on an enterprise.
SME – Partner Enterprise	The enterprise holds a minimum of 25% (Capital or voting rights in another enterprise, or 25% (Capital or voting rights) are owned by another enterprise.
SME Declaration Form	Declaration where the SME status is assessed.
Sub-grant Agreement	Signed between the Project Consortium, represented by its Coordinator and the beneficiary. The sub-grant agreement will also include the comments (if any) of the application's ESR to the work plan.

⁵ https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/sme-fundamentals/sme-definition_en