

EMB's Artist-in-Residence Programme 'EMBracing the Ocean' – Application Information

Background information

The European Marine Board (EMB) is looking for two new artists for the 2026 – 2027 edition of our 'EMBracing the Ocean' artist-in-residence programme. As we enter the sixth year of the [UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development](#), the need to connect people to our Ocean is more important than ever. The EMBracing the Ocean programme provides grants for creative individuals/groups from a wide-range of disciplines to engage in a **two-way co-creation** of artwork in collaboration with Ocean scientists. **The aims of the programme are to 1) raise societal awareness of and embrace connection to the Ocean, 2) inspire positive behaviour towards sustainability, and 3) contribute new insight and/or perspectives to science.**

The Ocean covers 70% of the surface of our planet, forms 95% of the biosphere in terms of volume and is essential for supporting life. The Ocean regulates global climate systems and has absorbed one third of excess carbon dioxide emitted into our atmosphere since the industrial revolution, as well as the majority of Earth's excess heat. It provides potential for a huge source of renewable energy, coastal protection, recreation and cultural well-being, as well as being an important source of food and medicine. These benefits that the Ocean provides are dependent on the maintenance of Ocean physical, chemical, geological and biological processes, healthy and resilient marine ecosystems, and a shift in human activities towards sustainable practices.

The Ocean is too often out of sight and out of mind, and is increasingly under threat from human activities including global population growth, pollution (including carbon dioxide, nutrients, plastics, noise), climate change, and over-fishing, causing the widespread loss and degradation of marine ecosystems and biodiversity. However, there are solutions which we must embrace and scale-up to overcome global sustainability challenges. If we wish to ensure a sustainable future for our Ocean and the benefits it provides for society, we must improve the way we interact with our Ocean. This includes the conservation and restoration of key marine ecosystems; reducing marine pollution; sustainably managing our fisheries and other resource use; and strengthening empathy towards our Ocean to ensure the effectiveness of scientific solutions.

The arts are a powerful way to impact society and drive change through conveying human values, ideas, and visions; developing social, cultural, and individual identities; offering innovative approaches to communication and dialogue around complex issues; distilling information; and producing new knowledge and insights. Like scientific research, art has the power to make the invisible visible through engaging with human senses.

A key principle of the EMBracing the Ocean programme is co-creation of work between artists and their scientific collaborators. Co-creation is the process of creating something new together while exchanging and reshaping ideas. The artists and scientists are considered equal and each benefits and learns from the process. The goal of co-created art-science projects should go beyond making complex scientific topics more accessible to the public, and also help scientists to gain new insights and/or perspectives into their work by collaborating with artists.

The EMBracing the Ocean programme is part of the EMB's contribution to the [United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development](#) (Ocean Decade, 2021-2030). The Ocean Decade is a global movement bringing together scientists, governments, business, philanthropists, non-governmental organisations and society to catalyse transformative Ocean science solutions for sustainable

development, connecting people and the Ocean. The EMBracing the Ocean programme contributes to the Ocean Decade societal challenge of ‘an inspiring and engaging Ocean’, where society understands and values the Ocean in relation to human wellbeing and sustainable development.

The EMBracing the Ocean programme additionally supports the goals of the [EU Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters](#) (Mission Ocean) to protect and restore marine ecosystems and biodiversity, prevent and eliminate pollution in our Ocean and to make the sustainable blue economy carbon-neutral and circular. Public mobilisation and engagement are key enablers of the Mission Ocean, in which art plays an important role.

Who can apply?

The programme is open to creative individuals/groups from a wide variety of artistic disciplines. Both emerging and established artists will be considered by the committee. Prior experience in co-creation with scientists and/or communities and working on Ocean/sustainability topics is desirable. Applications are welcome from across the world, and from a wide range of creative disciplines, including but not limited to:

- visual arts (e.g. drawing, painting, filmmaking, photography, sculpting, digital arts, installation art);
- literary arts (e.g. fiction, drama, poetry, storytelling);
- performing arts (e.g. dance, music, theatre); and
- traditional and indigenous arts.

Please note that proposed projects should go beyond purely dissemination or communication of knowledge, and need to be firmly based in artistic co-creation. Please see the [EMBracing the Ocean website](#) for information on past awardees and the scope of their projects for reference.

The grant

Two awardees will be selected for the 2026 – 2027 programme and each will be awarded a grant of €10,000. The grant will be paid periodically throughout the 12-month residency on completion of planned deliverables. The awardees may use the grant to cover costs according to the needs of their work (e.g. artist fees, materials, expenses, travel, promotional materials, campaigns, transport of work, compensation for scientific collaborators) and these should be outlined in the provisional budget submitted as part of the application. The residency will take place remotely, but may include visits to collaborating researchers and/or participation in events. Any potential or secured co-funding must be clearly highlighted in the application and budget. Any work that is dependent on co-funding must be in addition to the core work produced for the EMBracing the Ocean programme.

Engagement with Ocean science community

The awardees are expected to co-develop their work with Ocean scientists (i.e. active scientists with a contract at a research organization/institute/university). This engagement must include:

- Collaboration with one or more Ocean scientists. At least one scientific collaborator must be contacted by applicants and confirm that they agree to collaborate on the proposed project prior to artists submitting their application. Applicants may make an account on [BlueBioMatch](#), and join and post on the *Ocean & Arts Collective* group if they are looking for scientists to collaborate with.

The EMB Secretariat/EMBracing the Ocean committee may assist the successful awardees to identify additional scientists and stakeholders relevant for their work if needed;

- Presenting and discussing work at EMB meetings and/or other Ocean events (online/in-person); and
- Discussing ideas and plans for work and public engagement with EMBracing the Ocean Committee (online).

Other engagement activities may include but are not limited to:

- Attending relevant events and meetings to engage with Ocean science topics of interest (online/in-person).

Expected output

By the end of the 12-month residency, the awardees must have produced tangible result(s) including an initial public output e.g. a new piece of work, or series of work, through a two-way co-design process with Ocean scientists and first public presentation. This may build on the artists previous work, but there must be an element of novelty that is co-developed with the scientist(s). The work can focus on any Ocean science topic relevant for sustainable development, including but not limited to those covered by the marine science-policy work of the EMB, and/or wider activities within the framework of the Ocean Decade. It should aim to **connect people to our Ocean by 1) raising societal awareness of and embrace connection to the Ocean, 2) inspire positive behaviour towards sustainability, and 3) contributing new insight and/or perspectives to science**. To achieve these goals, the work of the awardees is expected to reach a wide range of citizens, achieving impact both within and beyond local communities, preferably also at an international level. The work should also have longevity of societal impact beyond the 12-month residency. Solutions for overcoming language barriers related to the work should also be considered. The final work produced will be owned by the awardee, with an agreement that the EMB can use the work as appropriate after the end of the residency. The awardees will be required to liaise with the EMB Secretariat to disseminate updates on EMB social media channels, website, documents, and newsletters. Documentation (e.g. photographs/videos) will be required of place-based work (e.g. exhibitions, performances) for this dissemination.

Timeline

The awardees will begin their residency in April 2026. Applicants should submit a provisional monthly timeline for their work as part of their application including initial ideas of the activities they expect to carry out. If applicable, this can include an initial exploratory phase of maximum two months where the awardee spends time to consolidate ideas for their work in partnership with scientific collaborators. The final timeline and the final budget should be agreed with the EMBracing the Ocean Committee within the first two months of the residency. Awardees must deliver short quarterly progress reports to the EMB Secretariat.

Application Procedure

Applications should be submitted via the [application form](#) before **midnight Central European Time on 16 February 2026**. In case of any technical issues please email info@marineboard.eu. Applicants will need to upload one PDF file (max. 4 MB) including:

1. **Project summary pitch (max. 150 words).** Please include: 1) objectives, topic, and output(s); 2) co-creation approach and reciprocal influence between artistic and scientific work; 3) expected impact on societal awareness of and connection to the Ocean; 4) target audience and how they will be reached; 5) longevity of impact after the residency;
2. **Project description (max. 500 words).** Please include 1) objectives; 2) topic(s) of interest; 3) activities; 4) output(s); 5) co-creation approach and reciprocal influence between the artistic and scientific work; 6) scientist(s) the applicant will collaborate with (name, affiliation, and link to webpage).
3. **Communication and public engagement plan (max. 150 words).** Please include 1) target audiences and how they will be reached; 2) plans to achieve impact; 3) plans for longevity of impact; 4) how the project will raise awareness of and embrace connection to the Ocean; 4) how the project will inspire positive behaviour towards sustainability; 5) links to cultural organisations.
4. **Creative practice to date (max. 150 words).** Please include 1) focus of practice; 2) links to Ocean/ sustainability topics, or motivation for engaging in these topics; 3) co-creation with scientists or communities; 4) societal reach and impact.
5. **Previous scientific collaborations (max. 150 words).** Please include 1) description and nature of collaboration(s); 2) name, affiliation and link to webpage of previous collaborators; OR 3) motivation for collaboration with scientists in case of no previous experience.
6. **Monthly timeline** including expected activities.
7. **Budget** including e.g. artist fees, materials, expenses, travel, promotional materials, campaigns.
8. **Letter of agreement** from scientific collaborator(s) that they will engage in the project.
9. Artist(s) **Curriculum Vitae**.

In addition, applicants may submit their portfolio with examples of previous work (1 PDF/MP3/wav/rar/zip upload, max. 5 MB).

Please note that high resolution files are not required, and that smaller resolutions are preferred in order to reduce the digital carbon footprint of your application.

Selection Process and Criteria

Candidates will be shortlisted by the EMBracing the Ocean Committee. Shortlisted candidates will be invited for online interviews, together with their scientific collaborator(s), to be held on **April 13th and 14th 2026**.

The following criteria will be used for scoring applications, and applicants should be sure to address these clearly in their application materials:

- quality of provisional ideas, timeline, and budget.
- relevance and quality of previous work.
- potential for reciprocal influence between the artistic and scientific work.
- quality of engagement with and impact on target audiences, including a diverse range of audiences.
- potential to raise societal awareness of and embrace connection to the Ocean, and inspire positive behaviour towards sustainability, including longevity after the residency.

When selecting awardees in relation to each other and in relation to previous EMBracing the Ocean artists-in-residence, the Committee will also ensure a diversity in activities, art forms, target audiences, topics of interest, as well as gender and geographic location of the artists and their projects. In case of a conflict of interest between Committee members and applicants, the application in question will not be evaluated by the Committee member with a conflict of interest.

Useful Resources

EMBracing the Ocean webpage:

<https://www.marineboard.eu/emb-artist-residence-programme>

EMB Publications:

<https://www.marineboard.eu/publication/EMB-publications>

EMB YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcBGY9IckBVRijeW-0a1CsQ>

EMB Third Thursday Science webinar series:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXKTm_QGiR-hgSo_aRXdgKiYrDuF6Fkvl

EMB X:

<https://x.com/EMarineBoard>

EMB Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/emarineboard/>

Second World Ocean Assessment (WOAII):

<https://www.un.org/regularprocess/woa2launch>

UN Ocean Decade Publications:

<https://oceandecade.org/decade-publications/>

[“Emotional disconnect with Europe’s aquatic environments”](#) report for the European Commission's mission board for healthy oceans, seas, coastal and inland waters

Citizen Science and Ocean literacy resources

<https://eu-citizen.science/>