

# MarLEN

Announcement for Call 1 (2025)



## Imprint

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**Introduction – MarLEN (Maritime Low Emission Network) is a partnership of European ministries and funding organizations responsible for funding RTD in maritime technologies from 9 European countries. The network includes representatives from national and regional public authorities competent for public maritime research programmes and support policies.**

**The objective of this initiative is to strengthen the European Research Area in waterborne research by coordinating and developing synergies between national and regional maritime research programmes and policies in line with the aims of the partnership Zero Emission Waterborne Transport (ZEWT). The activities will include exchange of information and knowledge among national programme owners and programme managers as well as the implementation of distinct joint activities.**

**This is an announcement for the first call for projects within MarLEN.**

## **1 Objectives of the Call**

MarLEN shall further deepen, broaden and strengthen the already established transnational cooperation based on the experience gained and some existing cooperation structures. New organizations from several partner countries will broaden the network of maritime ministries and funding organizations with the knowledge of former ERA-NETs MARTEC and MarTERA. Lessons learned especially from the previous MarTERA project are taken into account in this proposal, aimed at improving and intensifying the transnational cooperation and, most importantly, consolidating it in such a way that it becomes self-sustaining.

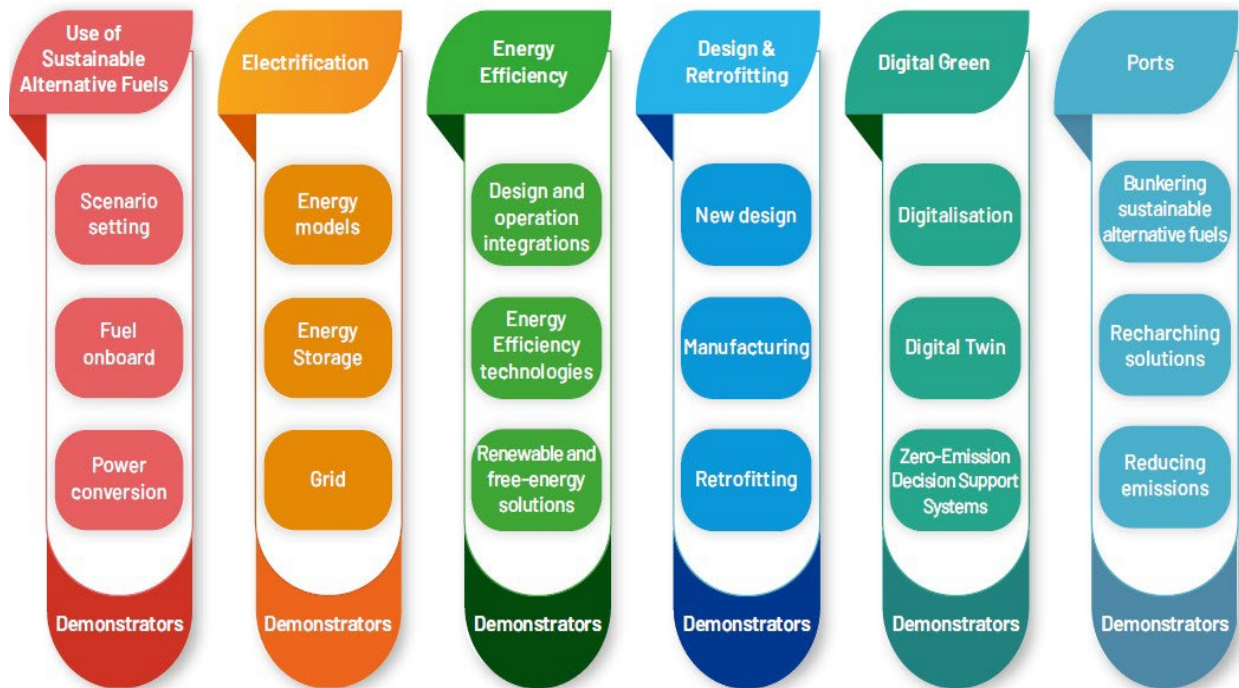
Further objectives are the broadening, deepening, streamlining and strengthening of the joint activities, including strengthening the existing ongoing trans-national research to cover the whole innovation chain from science to business by launching new transnational activities.

The specific objectives of MarLEN and its calls are:

- To increase the impacts arising from the Zero Emission Waterborne Transport (ZEWT) European partnership towards the achievement of zero emission waterborne transport in Europe,
- To promote international cooperation,
- To identify and respond to gaps in research activities,
- To create the necessary critical mass in research in certain areas,
- To improve the cost-effectiveness of current research programmes,
- To develop common standards for the prioritization, commissioning and evaluation of research proposals and for the subsequent monitoring and evaluation of the research activities,
- To contribute to the competitiveness of the European research community in the field of maritime technologies,
- To contribute to the competitiveness of the European maritime industry.

## 2 Scope of the Call

The selection of topics for funding is based on the overarching objectives and scopes of the Zero Emission Waterborne Transport Partnership according to the following graphic.



The participating organizations have agreed to focus on projects within the following three (1, 2, 3) Main Priority Areas (MPA):

### 2.1 MPA 1 (Early concepts, R&D)

Projects in this MPA should focus on promising early concepts within the scope of ZEWT partnership and should include activities that predominantly fall within the category of industrial research.

### 2.2 MPA 2 (D&I)

Projects in this MPA should focus on research and development activities according to the topics of the ZEWT partnership as well and should be predominantly experimental development. In general, projects should include industrial partners with one as the coordinator. The participation of SMEs is strongly encouraged and they benefit from higher funding rates. Research or other partners are optional but their participation is also encouraged.

### 2.3 MPA 3 (End user involvement)

Projects in this MPA should focus on studies, demonstration and implementation of fuels and technologies on routes that stimulate early adoption of promising long-term solutions to reach zero emissions in shipping.

Project consortium should include ports and shipping operators on relevant routes on which the solutions can be implemented. Consortia should also bring together a team with the necessary expertise and experience to successfully deliver the project objectives.

**Please note:** Not all MPAs have the same priority and relevance for all participating organizations and countries. Coordinators should be aware of the rules that apply for the partners from other countries in their consortia in order to avoid any risk of ineligibility of the proposal. Please contact your NPM (National Program Manager).

## 2.4 Further Notes

According to the guidelines for grant applications, applicants must check whether funding is available from the EU Framework Programme for Research. Priority should be given to these funding opportunities. Topics advertised in the call in the EU research framework programme 2025 (HORIZON EUROPE) in cluster 5 - destination 5 under Zero Emission Waterborne Transport parallel to this call are not given priority support in MarLEN.

## 3 Call Structure

### 3.1 Definitions

#### Call Office

The MarLEN Call Office, hosted by Projektträger Jülich, Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH, Germany, is the central contact point for applicants regarding all technical and general issues of the submission.

#### National Programme Manager (NPM)

Each Participating Funding Organisation in this call has nominated NPM(s) to provide information on national/regional funding rules and procedures.

#### Expert Evaluation Panel (EEP)

The EEP will be composed of at least one representative per Participating Funding Organisation involved in the respective lead proposal and will be the decision-making body in the framework of this call.

#### Lead Proposal

The lead proposal should comprise all information necessary for checking the transnational and pre-checking the national eligibility of each consortium and project by the EEP. It is required that each partner in a consortium contacts his/her NPM(s) to receive information on the applying rules in his/her country/region prior to submission of a lead proposal.

## Funding

Funding depends on the applying national/regional regulations and the eligible project costs for each applicant. Funding is limited by the committed budget of the respective country as well as possible limitations that are stated in the National Guidelines. For further details, refer to national criteria available through additional call information or your NPM.

## Industrial Research/Experimental Development

According to the definition of the EC.

### 3.2 Participating Countries

Consortia for transnational research projects can apply for funding and will get guidance from the partner institutions of the MarLEN consortium listed in ch. 5.

Applicants from countries, which are not partners in the MarLEN consortium are welcome to participate in the Call 2025 but have to ensure that funding is available from a national funding agency or ministry to join the transnational project. A letter of engagement of the budget availability and the origin of the funds must be presented.

Country	Organization	Commitment in EURO
Germany	BMWK	3,000,000 – 6,000,000
Belgium	VLAIO	500,000
Türkiye	TÜBITAK	750,000
Ireland	MI	500,000
Romania	UEFISCDI	500,000 pending
Norway	RCN	840,000

### 3.3 Application procedure

The call procedure comprises of two stages: a lead proposal in a first transnational stage and depending on national regulations a second national stage.

#### 3.3.1 Transnational stage

Preparation of a lead proposal according to chapter 8.1, comprising information on the project consortium and a description of the project. Based on this lead proposal an expert evaluation panel (EEP) composed of representatives from the funding organizations within each lead proposal will

evaluate the proposals and decide which projects are invited to submit a national proposal for each partner.

Step 1: Submission of lead proposals	
2025-05-01	Submission system open <a href="https://marlen.ptj.de/call1">https://marlen.ptj.de/call1</a>
2025-09-30 (17:00 MEZ)	Deadline for Lead Proposals
2025-11-14	Notification of acceptance to the coordinators

### 3.3.2 National stage

Submission of national proposals if applicable.

Step 2: Submission of national proposals (if applicable)	
2026-02-27	Deadline for National Proposals
2026-07-01	Est. start of projects

After the national application process, a final funding decision will be made and the applicants are informed about the decision

## 4 Eligibility Criteria

The following criteria are mandatory and must be fulfilled for any proposal in order to be considered eligible:

### 4.1 Scope

The proposed research and innovation project must be consistent with the scope and objectives of this call and with the thematic priorities of the associated national programmes of the involved countries/regions. National/regional priorities are described in the National Guidelines and can be further elaborated by the respective National Programme Managers (NPM).



The proposed research must be original, innovative and clearly distinguished from on-going or completed projects funded by other instruments, programmes or projects.

## 4.2 Consortium composition

Project consortia consisting of at least two independent eligible legal entities from at least two different European Member States or associated countries can apply for funding. The project proposals must involve industry partners. Depending on the national funding rules, not all types of entities are eligible in all countries/regions. The eligibility of each partner in a consortium should be in accordance with the National Guidelines.

The consortia should be balanced regarding work, budgets and national/regional origin of the involved partners. Whereas one entity has to act as coordinator of the consortium and bear responsibility for the submission of the lead proposal.

## 4.3 Budget

National/regional programme specific rules apply. Please check the National Guidelines and contact your NPM(s) to receive detailed information on budgetary criteria.

The indicated costs for each project must be in accordance with the project objectives. Project costs should be balanced with respect to the partners and countries/regions.

## 4.4 Project duration

The maximum project duration is three (3) years (36 months). The earliest possible starting date for projects will be fixed at the beginning of the contract negotiations. Additional national/regional regulations on starting and ending dates and permitted project duration may apply. Please check the National Guidelines and contact your NPM(s).

## 4.5 Submission

The lead proposal must be written in English. Applicants have to ensure a good level and style of language before submitting. The submission will be carried out via the MarLEN submission tool. (<https://marlen.ptj.de/call1>)

Each duly and timely submitted lead proposal will be checked for eligibility. Failure of one single partner within a consortium to comply with the criteria will cause the rejection of the entire project. Each partner is therefore strongly advised to contact his NPM(s) to ensure eligibility. The project coordinator is responsible for the compliance of the lead proposal with the National Guidelines of all countries/regions involved.

## 5 National Programme Managers

Country	Organization	National/regional Programme Manager	
Germany	FZJ	Jöran Ritzke	<a href="mailto:ptj-marlen@ptj.de">ptj-marlen@ptj.de</a> / <a href="mailto:j.ritzke@ptj.de">j.ritzke@ptj.de</a>
Belgium	VLAIO	Jozef Ghijselen	<a href="mailto:jozef.ghijselen@vlaio.be">jozef.ghijselen@vlaio.be</a>
Türkiye	TÜBİTAK	Arzu Ipek Yilmaz Ucuncu Serhat Melik	<a href="mailto:ncptransport@tubitak.gov.tr">ncptransport@tubitak.gov.tr</a>
Ireland	MI	Paul Brewster	<a href="mailto:paul.brewster@imdo.ie">paul.brewster@imdo.ie</a>
Romania	UEFISCDI	Cristina Cotet	<a href="mailto:cristina.cotet@uefiscdi.ro">cristina.cotet@uefiscdi.ro</a>
Norway	RCN	Maren Søvre Haukeland	<a href="mailto:msha@forskningsradet.no">msha@forskningsradet.no</a>

## 6 Dates and Deadlines

Time schedule of the Call	
Step 1: Submission of lead proposals	
2025-05-01	Submission system open <a href="https://marlen.ptj.de/call1">https://marlen.ptj.de/call1</a>
2025-09-30 (17:00 MEZ)	Deadline for Lead Proposals
2025-11-14	Notification of acceptance to the coordinators
Step 2: Submission of national proposals (if applicable)	
2026-02-27	Deadline for National Proposals
2026-07-01	Est. start of projects

## 7 Coordination and Contact

Dr.-Ing. Jöran Ritzke  
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The MarLEN partners ensure complete confidentiality to all applicants. The proposals will only be accessible to the national/regional funding organisations and the mandated experts responsible for the evaluation of the proposals. The proposals will be handled by the MarLEN Call Office.

## 8 Appendix

### 8.1 Requested content and structure for the Lead Proposal

#### Cover Sheet

##### ACRONYM AND TITLE

**KEYWORDS** (MPA1/2/3; Use of Sustainable Alternative fuels, Electrification, Energy Efficiency, Design&Retrofitting, Digital Green, Ports)

##### CONSORTIUM (overview)

**ABSTRACT (max. 2000 characters)** A short abstract or summary should describe the proposal for external readers. Please note that the abstract will be published on the MarLEN website if your project is selected for funding.

**EU-ADDED VALUE (max. 2000 characters)** Proposals must justify how their objectives, results, intellectual property (IP) management and exploitation strategy contribute to the creation of EU added value and strategic autonomy throughout the supply and value chain. This includes the competitiveness of the EU waterborne industry, enhancement of the EU's R&I capacity, technological know-how capabilities and human capital, and resilience of the EU industrial and manufacturing base. Proposals are encouraged to prioritise partners located in the EU and EEA.

#### Main Part

**PROJECT OBJECTIVES (max. 6.000 characters)** Please enter a summary of your proposed project, including the general/strategic, scientific/technological and commercial objectives, the relevance to the MarLEN Call scope (including Priority Area and Sub Topic(s)).

**CONSORTIUM COMPOSITION (max. 12.000 characters)** In this section, the background and competences of each partner as well as the necessity for cooperation have to be described.

**STATE OF THE ART (max. 12.000 characters)** In this section, the current state of the art in research and development (including alternative solutions, intellectual property protection rights, information search) has to be filled in.

**WORKPLAN (max. 12.000 characters incl. GANTT-chart)** In this section, the proposal objectives, methodology, research design, and work plan details have to be filled in. **WORK PACKAGES** please describe in detail your work packages and tasks and add the duration. Enter only essential milestones and deliverables for the work packages. Per task ca. 1,500 characters are available.

**FINANCIAL PLAN (Table only)** In this section, the budget of the proposed project has to be specified per partner. Costs have to be assigned to the predefined categories (Personnel, Travel, Consumables/Equipment, Subcontracts, Overhead, Other) and the own contribution has to be specified (note that national/regional regulations apply for funding rates). Some categories of cost may not be eligible by all funding organisations (see National Guidelines).

**FINANCIAL COMMENTS (max. 1.000 characters)** please enter a brief description per cost category. For overhead costs, national/regional regulations apply. If you have 'Other' costs, please specify. For personnel costs, please state the required person months.

**EXPLOITATION PLAN (max. 12.000 characters)** In this section, the economic advantage/expectations and potential impact resulting from the project have to be described. The text should cover the following aspects: commercialisation of results, potential IPR, scientific and/or technical expectations, scientific and economic connectivity, impact for companies (status quo, growth, competitiveness, employment), compatibility with norms, standards and regulation, sustainability including social and environmental impact (employment, quality of life, regional aspects, working conditions).

**ADDED VALUE (max. 6.000 characters)** In this section, the added value in carrying out the work at a transnational (European) level and in solving of societal or environmental problems has to be described.

**FUNDING AND RISK (max. 4.000 characters)** In this section, the necessity for funding and the risk (scientific and technological risk) associated to the proposed project have to be explained.

**REFERENCES** (if applicable, 15 most important)