



OPEN CALL:

Co-designing Tailored Blue Economy and Climate Resilience Programmes for Entrepreneurship Support Organisations (ESOs) in the Caribbean

Call Opens: 14th of September 2026

Deadline: 12th of October 2026

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1. Overview

Climate KIC is seeking 5–6 established Entrepreneurship Support Organisations (ESOs) based in the English-speaking Caribbean to participate in a co-creation partnership (November 2026–May 2027) designed to strengthen their capacity to design, deliver, and fundraise for climate-resilient blue economy programmes.

We are looking for organisations with at least 3 years of demonstrated experience supporting entrepreneurs and MSMEs that have genuine commitment to building capabilities in blue economy and climate resilience whether or not you have prior experience in these domains. This partnership provides direct technical mentoring, access to Climate KIC's global networks, and strategic support to help you

2. About Climate KIC

Climate KIC is the EU's climate innovation initiative, working to accelerate the transition to a zero-carbon and resilient world by enabling systems transformation. Headquartered in Amsterdam, it operates from 13 hubs across Europe and is active in 39 countries. Climate KIC was established in 2010 and is predominately funded by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union.

As part of our work one of our areas of focus is climate entrepreneurship. At Climate KIC, we prioritise bridging the gap between the supply of climate innovation and the demand for them, thereby accelerating this change across the globe. Our aim is to transform the start-up support landscape, ensuring that climate action is deeply embedded in the fabric of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. For over 15 years, our expertise in climate entrepreneurship has expanded from scaling some of Europe's most successful start-ups to strengthening innovation ecosystems across Africa, South America and the Pacific Islands. Our work focused mostly in the following areas:

- **Scaling climate ventures:** We scale start-ups that contribute to a just, climate-resilient and sustainable future, while also assisting in the early assessment of their climate impact potential.
- **Upskilling accelerators & incubators:** We provide Entrepreneurship Support Organisation (ESOs) with technical and financial support to deliver programmes that address and accelerate local climate ambitions.
- **Strengthening innovation ecosystems:** We strengthen local innovation ecosystems by uniting dynamic groups of interconnected stakeholders who are committed to tackling regional climate challenges.
- **Strategic matchmaking & investment:** We partner with governments, investors, and corporations to co-create entrepreneurship programmes, identify, and match solutions that serve their strategic goals and climate agendas.

3. Introduction and Background

The Caribbean is one of the world's most climate-exposed regions. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) contribute less than 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions yet experience disproportionate climate impacts from intensifying hurricanes and sea-level rise to coral reef collapse and food insecurity. At the same time, the region's blue economy encompassing fisheries, marine tourism, coastal ecosystems, and ocean innovation represents both a critical economic asset and an underexplored vehicle for building long-term climate resilience.

While significant policy frameworks, multilateral finance, and international development initiatives operate in the Caribbean, a persistent gap remains: weak local innovation ecosystems, limited climate finance reaching MSMEs and coastal communities, and insufficient mechanisms to scale locally grounded solutions. Our question is not simply what the problems are—these are well documented—but how to accelerate ecosystem-level change to increase climate resilience and blue economy development while genuinely involving local communities and scaling the most impactful innovations.

This Open Call seeks a qualified Support Organisations (ESOs) based Caribbean to strengthen their local capabilities and position themselves as capable anchors within the blue economy and ocean innovation ecosystem.

group of Entrepreneurship
in the English-speaking

This assignment is financed through Climate KIC's Irish Aid partnership programme. Irish Aid is the Irish Government's overseas development programme, managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland.

4. Objective

Enable 5–6 Caribbean ESOs to establish themselves as locally-rooted leaders in climate-resilient blue economy innovation by equipping them to design and deliver context-specific programmes, secure sustainable funding streams, and catalyse entrepreneur-led climate solutions across ocean-based value chains.

By the end of this phase, participating ESOs will have:

- Begun positioning themselves as regional anchors for ocean innovation by developing locally designed climate resilience and blue economy programmes, piloting initial delivery approaches, and establishing early traction with local entrepreneurs and stakeholders.
- Mapped pathways to financial sustainability through diversified funding strategies, initial funder engagement, and foundational investment-ready proposals that they can continue to develop and pitch beyond this phase.
- Established foundations to scale climate entrepreneurship support by developing systems and processes to identify, mentor, and connect climate entrepreneurs within their ecosystems, positioning them to deepen this work over time.

5. What We Will Support You With

Based on our experience supporting ESOs and local ecosystems around the world, we bring deep expertise across multiple domains. The core of our support is a co-creation process tailored to your specific needs, priorities, and experience level. This means the final shape of our partnership and the topics we focus on will emerge through dialogue with you ensuring the support is truly relevant and impactful for your context.

We have strong capabilities to support you in the following areas:

- Systems innovation approaches and thinking
- Blue economy and ocean-based innovation domains
- Climate-resilient and climate-smart business models
- Core climate impact concepts and fundamentals
- Impact-oriented design and measurement frameworks
- Climate entrepreneurship and early-stage support programme design
- Equity and inclusion principles (Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI) frameworks)

The specific combination of these topics, alongside emerging needs identified during our partnership, will shape your tailored support programme. Some of the potential interventions where we could support your organisation could cover one or more of the following areas:

1) Blue Economy and Climate Resilience Programme Development

Foster climate innovations and local solutions by increasing the pipeline of blue economy and climate ventures and embedding impact assessment within entrepreneurial programmes. We can support you with:

- Systems innovation approaches applied to blue economy value chains
- Climate-resilient business model design and innovation methodologies
- Blue economy impact measurement frameworks
- Gender and inclusion strategies in ocean enterprises
- Programme design for MSMEs focused on blue economy and/or climate resilience
- Specialised technical expertise for programme development
- Co-design of final programme concepts ready to pilot post-June 2027

2) Blue Economy and Climate Resilience Innovation Cluster¹ Readiness

Build foundational conditions for blue economy and climate resilience innovation clusters at island and sub-regional levels. We can help you:

- Support relationships and alignment between ESOs, private sector, and government on climate resilience and blue economy
- Build resilience through systems change, addressing structural bottlenecks in your ecosystem
- Identify constraints of regulatory frameworks for entrepreneurship and innovation in the field of climate resilience, blue economy and/or both.

¹ Our “[innovation cluster](#)” approach focus on activating entrepreneurial activities in a cohesive and systemic way, building a locally embedded innovation ecosystem that includes entrepreneurs as well as other key stakeholders such as local government and businesses, policy makers and investors. This flexible approach strengthens the core foundations of place-based innovation ecosystems, enabling the actors within to collectively foster more inclusive and sustainable economies.

- Set foundational conditions focused on climate economy for innovation clusters resilience and blue
- Identify and design models with your island/sub-region before scaling
- Identify how your organisation can be positioned as a key ecosystem actor in the Blue Economy and Climate Resilience landscape (advancing institutional value beyond accelerator operations)
- Explore integration of private sector ocean innovation (e.g., tourism sector partnerships)

3) Mobilising Capital and Fundraising Strategies for your Organisation

Build your organisation's fundraising capacity and secure sustainable funding for your climate-resilient blue economy programmes. We can assist with:

- Developing clear fundraising strategies and identifying relevant funders
- Creating compelling, investment-ready proposals and funding applications for your programmes
- Building relationships and pathways to climate funders and impact investor networks aligned with blue economy and ocean innovation
- Coaching on positioning your programmes and organisation to attract climate-focused funding and institutional partnerships

4) International Networks and Cross-Regional Knowledge Exchange

Connect your ESO and entrepreneurs to global blue economy and climate innovation ecosystems. We facilitate:

- Structured peer learning between your ESO and Climate KIC's global networks (Pacific Islands, Africa, Asia, Europe, LatAm)
- Shared toolkit libraries and community platforms
- Mentoring matches with domain-specific networks (global ESOs and investors)
- Exploring pathways for Caribbean ventures to access international partnerships and/or markets
- Comparative learning leveraging Climate KIC's global networks facing similar climate challenges

The specific combination of support will be defined through our co-creation process and will be tailored to your organisation's needs, priorities, and ambitions. Please bear in mind that the scope of work will

not include all of them at the same time. One or combination of potential areas not

mentioned here could also be considered based on ESOs need and expectations.

6. Tentative Outcomes and Deliverables

The outcomes listed below represent what we foresee and aim to achieve through this partnership. However, these are indicative and will evolve through our co-creation process based on your needs, context, and priorities. Working together, we anticipate achieving outcomes such as:

- Enhanced organisational capacity to design and deliver blue economy and climate resilience programmes
- New tools, methodologies, and frameworks to better support entrepreneurs and startups in this sector
- Refined or redesigned programme concepts ready to pilot and scale post-June 2027
- Clear funding strategy and identification of relevant potential funders for your initiatives
- Regional network of ESOs exchanging best practices and driving collaborative blue economy and climate resilience projects
- Strategic clarity on positioning your organisation as an ecosystem orchestrator working systemically on Caribbean climate challenges
- Measurable impact frameworks and dashboards to track climate mitigation, ocean co-benefits, livelihood outcomes, and equity metrics
- Strengthened institutional relationships with government, private sector, and other key ecosystem actors in your island/region

7. Timeline

Planned Date	Milestone
Sept 14, 2026	Open Call issued
Oct 12, 2026, EOD CET	Applications deadline
Oct 13–19, 2026	Climate KIC reviews applications
Oct 20–26, 2026	Interviews with finalists
Oct 30, 2026	Notification of selected ESOs
Nov 9–12, 2026	Kick-off meeting and Onboarding
Nov 2026–May 2027	Support, co-creation, and programme development
June 2027	Final activities and closure

* Climate KIC reserves the right to amend this timetable during implementation.

8. Time Commitment

We estimate 4–6 hours per week of average. Some weeks may require more time depending on activities, but the programme is designed to remain manageable for your team. team dedication on

We require a committed team of at least 2 people who will actively participate in all activities and the co-creation process.

9. Why Participate?

Key Benefits

These could be some of the potential benefits for your organisation when joining this initiative:

- Direct mentoring and technical expertise tailored to your organisational needs
- Access to Climate KIC's global blue economy and climate innovation networks
- Opportunity to design tailored programmes and initiatives that are ready for future funding opportunities
- Priority access to follow-up funding rounds with Irish Aid and Climate KIC network partners
- Enhanced capacity and credibility to attract local and international partnerships
- Tools, frameworks, and impact measurement dashboards you can use long-term
- Peer learning with other Caribbean ESOs and regional climate innovation leaders
- Position your organisation as a trusted anchor in the blue economy and climate resilience ecosystem

10. Eligibility and Final Selection

This call will follow a one-stage process with each proposal being assessed for:

- 1) **Eligibility** – where pass/fail requirements related to the conditions of the call are assessed by Climate-KIC. Proponents must pass all criteria.
- 2) **Pre-Assessment** – where a score (0 to 5) is made against the assessment criteria.
- 3) **Interviews** – validation of consistency and coherence according to responses of the application form.
- 4) **Assessment and final decision** – selection according to final evaluation

All submissions will be assessed fairly and transparently in the scope of Climate-KIC's Programme Objectives, eligibility, and assessment criteria.

Conflicts of interest are mitigated through a disclosure process and follow a full recusal from the decision process in such instances. Decisions as to whether a proposal is accepted or rejected will be communicated as detailed in this document.

Stage 1: Eligibility

To be eligible, your organisation must meet the following criteria:

- Established and legally constituted ESO based in an English-speaking Caribbean island
- Demonstrated track record in the entrepreneurial ecosystem with at least 3 years of active engagement developing programmes and support for entrepreneurs, startups, and/or MSMEs
- A dedicated team with at least 2 people able to participate actively in all activities
- Strong interest in blue economy and climate resilience (prior experience is not required, but genuine commitment is essential)
- Willingness to upgrade your capabilities and knowledge in blue economy and climate resilience to increase your impact in the local ecosystem
- Openness to learning, co-creating, and taking on an ecosystem orchestrator or similar role

Proposals that fail the eligibility criteria will not be considered further in the process and applicants will be informed of the outcome via email to the contacts for the proposal; proposals must comply to the full set of the eligibility criteria.

Stage 2: Assessment

The assessment criteria for this call are set out below. Each criterion is scored on a weighted scale by two Climate-KIC reviewers. The score across all categories is totalled to produce a ranked list of proposals (total points that can be achieved max.: 100). All proposals received will be ranked and further assessed based on strategic fit and diversity of applications.

Climate KICs selection criteria will evaluate applications based on:

Criterion	Weighting
Experience and track record in the local entrepreneurial ecosystem	20%
Alignment between your needs and the support CKIC can provide	40%
Your organisation's vision and ambition for the next 3 years	25%
Organisational capacity, team strength, and commitment to the process	15%

Total	100%
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We will also aim to select a geographically diverse group of ESOs across different Caribbean countries to ensure regional representation and cross-island learning.

Stage 3: Interviews

Candidates with the highest scores will be invited to participate in an online interview to explore the selection criteria in depth and provide additional context and supporting information. The same criteria will be evaluated during the interview and either confirmed or adjusted based on the interview outcomes and the interviewers' assessment.

Stage 4: Assessment and Final Decision

Following the results of the offline evaluation and interview, at least two Climate KIC team members will review the findings and deliberate to assign a final score for each criterion for each candidate and identify the final group of candidates that will be selected for the support process.

11. How to Apply?

To apply, please register using the link below and answer the following questions. Your responses should be concise but substantive (300–500 words per question is ideal).

Proposals can be submitted at any time from the launch of the call to **23:59 CET** on the day of closing as indicated above.

All applications must be submitted via the **call for proposals form**. You can access to it [here](#).

12. Terms and Conditions

By applying to this call, you agree to our General Terms and Conditions, as well as Climate-KIC's policies. More information can be found [here](#).

13. Additional questions?

If you have any questions about the programme or application process, please contact us at: fabio.caballero@climate-kic.org.



We look forward to hearing from you
opportunity together.



**Government
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Development
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and exploring this exciting

