

Annex 1: Guidelines for Applicants – Creating an Expected Impact Narrative

In the **Project Idea phase**, applicants are required to provide an impact narrative that explains how their proposed activities will lead to meaningful change during and after the project. This narrative is an essential part of the application because it demonstrates the logical link between project actions and the long-term objectives of the EU Mission *Restore Our Ocean and Waters*. It should help evaluators understand not only what the project will do, but why these actions matter and how they will create lasting benefits.

1. What is an Impact Narrative?

An impact narrative is a concise, forward-looking description of the pathway from your project's activities to its intended impacts. It should describe the steps your project will take, the immediate results you expect, and the longer-term changes these results will enable. Think of it as telling the story of your project's contribution to Mission objectives—ecosystem restoration, pollution reduction, and sustainable blue economy.

2. How to Structure Your Narrative

To make your narrative it is strongly advised to follow the **Pathway to Impact** concept illustrated in the figure below. This approach organises your thinking into four key elements:

i. **Activities**

Describe the concrete actions your project will implement. These could include survey or development tasks, stakeholder workshops, technology pilots, restoration measures, or policy development activities.

ii. **Outputs**

Explain what your project will produce as a direct result of these activities. Outputs are tangible deliverables such as new methods, tools, datasets, guidelines, training materials, or physical interventions (e.g., restored habitats).

iii. **Outcomes**

Identify the immediate effects these outputs will have on your target community, environment, or sector. Outcomes might include improved stakeholder capacity, adoption of innovative practices, or measurable reductions in pollution.

iv. **Long-Term Impact**

Describe the ultimate change your project aims to achieve beyond its lifetime. This could involve healthier ecosystems, sustained reductions in pollutants, or systemic shifts toward a circular blue economy. Even if these impacts will only fully materialize after the project ends, outline how your activities will initiate or accelerate this change.

3. Tips for Writing a Strong Narrative

- **Be specific and realistic:** Avoid vague statements. Clearly link each activity to an output, and each output to an outcome or impact.
- **Align with Mission objectives:** Show how your project supports at least one of the three core objectives of the EU Mission.

- Protect and restore marine and freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity
 - Prevent and eliminate pollution of oceans, seas, and waters
 - Make the sustainable blue economy carbon-neutral and circular
 - Check WISE Marine website for more information and inspiration:
<https://water.europa.eu/marine/europe-seas/eu-mission-restore-our-oceans-and-water>
- **Include both short-term and long-term perspectives:** Explain what will happen during the project and what changes you expect after it ends.
 - **Use evidence where possible:** Refer to baseline data, regional priorities, or scientific studies to justify your expected impacts.

Ptol demonstration: Seagrass restoration case

Inputs: Project funding and local marine biologists provide the resources and know-how needed to begin seagrass restoration at a selected coastal Baltic Sea site.

Activities: Divers plant seagrass shoots in a defined restoration plot at the site, following a standardized field protocol.

Outputs: The newly planted plot produces immediate monitoring data on shoot survival and sediment conditions during the first months after planting.

Outcomes: The site-specific monitoring results guide local authorities in adapting restoration practices and planning additional seagrass plots in the surrounding area.

Impact: Successful expansion of seagrass restoration at the site enhances long-term habitat quality and ecosystem resilience along that Baltic Sea coastline.



Annex 2: Draft Guidelines for Creating KPIs in the full proposal phase

This annex represents a first draft and may be updated as the project progresses. Adjustments will be made to better support applicants once the range of potential topics and funded actions is known, and as new guidance or indicators become available through WISE Marine and other Mission Ocean and Waters resources.

1. Purpose of Annex 2

This annex provides practical guidance for defining Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in the Individual Integrated Project Plan (IIPP). KPIs ensure that project implementation and impact are measurable, transparent and aligned with the EU Mission Restore Our Ocean and Waters. Applicants must complete the KPI tables provided and include a short narrative explaining how their activities contribute to Mission objectives.

2. Minimum requirements

Each project must provide:

Performance KPIs: At least two KPIs describing project execution and outputs.

Impact KPIs: At least two KPIs (one short-term impact KPI, achievable during the project; one long-term impact KPI, expected after project end).

Additional requirements: KPIs must align with at least one Mission Ocean objective (1. Ecosystem restoration and biodiversity protection, 2. Pollution prevention and elimination and 3. Carbon-neutral and circular blue economy). Each KPI must include name, definition, baseline, target, source, reporting frequency and (for impact KPIs) PESTLE category. Also required is a short impact narrative linking activities → outputs → outcomes → impacts.

3. How to create KPIs (step-by-step)

Step 1: Identify the relevant Mission objective

Select the objective(s) that best match your project.

Mission objectives can be found at:

<https://water.europa.eu/marine/europe-seas/eu-mission-restore-our-oceans-and-water>

Step 2: Map your logic using Pathway to Impact (PtoI)

Based on Annex 1, identify:

1. **Activities** (what you will do)
2. **Outputs** (what you will produce)
3. **Outcomes** (resulting changes during the project)
4. **Long-term impacts** (resulting changes after the project)

Step 3: Define your KPIs

Performance KPIs focus on implementation and outputs.

Impact KPIs focus on outcomes and longer-term changes linked to Mission objectives.

Step 4: Assign baseline, target, sources, and reporting

For each KPI:

1. **Baseline:** value at project start (often zero)
2. **Target:** value at project end (or beyond for long-term KPIs)
3. **Source:** where the information comes from (e.g. WISE Marine, monitoring data)
4. **Reporting frequency:** annual, milestone-based, or final
5. **PESTLE category (impact KPIs only):** Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental

4. KPI templates

Table A: Performance KPIs (required)

KPI name	Definition	Baseline and target	Reporting frequency
<i>Example: Number of activities completed vs. planned</i>	Ratio of completed activities to those planned in the IIPP	Baseline 0; Target 100%	Annual / Milestones / Final
<i>...project-specific entries...</i>			

Table B: Impact KPIs (required)

KPI name	Definition	Baseline and target	Source	Reporting frequency	PESTLE category
<i>Example: Area of habitat restored</i>	Hectares of habitat restored under Mission objective 1	Baseline 0; Target per project plan	Project monitoring	Annual / Milestones	Environmental
<i>...project-specific entries...</i>					

5. Narrative Requirement

Applicants must include a short narrative (10-12 sentences) that:

1. Follows the Activities → Outputs → Outcomes → Impacts structure
2. Explains how the project contributes to at least one Mission Ocean objective
3. Describes both short-term and long-term resulting changes as proposed in the project plan
4. Supports and contextualizes the chosen KPIs

The narrative should be precise, realistic and consistent with the baselines and targets given in the KPI tables.

6. Practical Tips for Applicants

Use WISE Marine indicators as a reference but adapt them to your project context.

Ensure KPIs are quantifiable and linked to your project's objectives.

Include both qualitative and quantitative evidence where possible.

Review examples provided in Table 1 (Performance KPIs) and Table 2 (Impact KPIs) for inspiration.