



Blue carbon ecosystems support food security, sustain livelihoods, reduce disaster risk, and contribute significantly to climate change mitigation and adaptation. When these ecosystems are degraded, they can shift from carbon sinks to major sources of greenhouse gas emissions, accelerating climate impacts. Strengthening scientific understanding, policy development, and governance frameworks is essential to ensure their protection, restoration, and long-term resilience.

In response to this need, the Blue Carbon Hub aims to enhance knowledge, build capacity, and support practical action for the conservation and restoration of blue carbon ecosystems. By fostering science-based solutions and sustainable financial pathways, this initiative aims to protect coastal environments while improving community resilience, supporting livelihoods, reducing vulnerability to coastal hazards, and contributing to global climate goals.

Applications are now open for the 2026 Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOP) program. Applicants from any IORA Member State who are less than six years of completing their highest degree are invited to apply for the opportunity to undertake a project with the Blue Carbon Hub at the Indian Ocean Marine Research Centre in Perth, Australia.

Projects may include activities such as original research, literature reviews, or the development of policy briefs, with applicants encouraged to propose their own innovative project ideas. This program offers emerging professionals a unique opportunity to build expertise in blue carbon science, finance, or policy. Through this program, participants will contribute meaningful insights that support Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Member States in identifying practical strategies for the protection and restoration of blue carbon ecosystems.

The 2026 program will run between 5 October and 27 November 2026. Applicants are encouraged to nominate a collaborator they wish to work with during their placement, with collaborators expected to be available for regular engagement throughout the program. For applicants without existing professional networks, assistance can be provided to identify suitable collaborators.

The program covers major visit-related expenses, including airfares, accommodation, visa application fees, and daily per diems. Salaries are not included.

Successful candidates will be selected through a competitive assessment process.

- Applications are open to citizens or residents of any IORA Member State
- Successful applicants require endorsement by the IORA National Focal Point (this will be coordinated through the IORA Secretariat)



- Applicants should complete the online application form [here](#).

The deadline to receive applications is midnight on 7 August 2026. Applicants will be notified via email about the outcome of their application by 31 August 2026.

For detailed eligibility criteria and application requirements, please refer to the FAQs available in the 'current calls' section of the Blue Carbon Hub website. Further information about previous ECOP programs can also be accessed via the website.

For questions regarding the program or application process, please contact the Blue Carbon Hub (hello@bluecarbonhub.org). For endorsement-related enquiries, applicants should contact the IORA Secretariat, with relevant correspondence copied as required.