

Ocean Challenge 2026 Applicant Handbook

Program Overview

Ocean Challenge 2026 invites applicants worldwide to utilize marine elements and innovative ideas to address crises and challenges facing the ocean. Since its launch in 2019, Ocean Challenge has engaged nearly 1000 participants from 28 countries in efforts to protect the ocean. We are eager to involve more young individuals from both local and global communities to propose, initiate, and realize ideas that promote sustainable ocean development and work together to enhance ocean resilience.

Eligibility

- The program includes 2 categories as follows:
 - A. Teen Category:** Applicants aged 12-18.
 - B. Youth Category:** Applicants aged 19-35.
- Each team should consist of 2 to 8 team members of any nationality. Cross-school or cross-category teams are permitted. Cross-category team will be classified by the majority of applicants' age (teen or youth) to determine which category the team belongs to. If it is fifty-fifty, the team can decide which category you would like to participate in.

Theme

The theme for 2026 is "Global Solution, Youth in Action". We are calling on participants to concentrate on three crucial aspects: Net-Zero Ocean, Ocean Literacy & Cultural Education, and Safe Ocean. Bring forth your innovative solutions to address the pressing ocean crises and make a powerful impact.

*Please refer to Attachment 1 for further information.

Important Dates

Application Deadline	May 25, 2026
Finalists Announced	July 31, 2026
Finalists' presentations/Winners Announced	Early September, 2026 (Date TBA)

Please note: the OAC and the co-organizers reserve the right to amend the regulations of this handbook at any time.

- **Deadline**
 - ✧ Applications are due by **11:59 pm CST (UTC+8) Monday, May 25, 2026.**

Please note that the OAC and the co-organizers reserve the right to extend the application deadline.

- ✧ Please email your application form and the links of your application materials to oceanchallenge01@gmail.com

Written Proposal	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Proposals may be submitted in any language. (If not written in English, please provide an English translation.)2. The proposal should include an explanation of current situations, analysis of the problem, implementation strategies, and expected outcomes.3. PDF or Word document with a maximum of 6 pages, including both text and images.4. Must include a proposal summary (max. 500 words).5. Upload to a Google Drive folder and provide the link.
Pitch Video	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Participants should produce a pitch video for the innovative solution with creativity. The video should include English subtitles or a transcript provided within 3 minutes.2. Video resolution: 1920×1080 or higher; file format: MP4. Please upload the video to YouTube and provide the video link.3. The video should have a title sequence with the Team's Name, the Title of the Proposal, and "Ocean Challenge 2026".

Selection Process

The selection process will consist of two stages. A panel of judges, consisting of experts in the field of ocean science and marine affairs, will review all submitted proposals and accompanying pitch videos.

- **Nomination**

All submissions will be evaluated by the judges based on effectiveness (25%), innovation(25%), feasibility(25%), as well as educational and social impact (25%). Six teams from each category will be nominated for the finals.

- **Final (presentation round)**

Every team will showcase their proposal concepts (all languages are

welcome). Judges will offer feedback and ask questions. The team will subsequently address the judges' queries. The time distribution is as detailed below:

1. Presentation: 6 minutes
2. Feedback and questions from judges: 6 minutes
3. Team's response: 8 minutes

Please note: International participants are allowed to join final presentations through a virtual meeting platform. A link to the platform will be provided prior to the event.

Awards

- **Implementation Grant:** Each finalist team will receive a participation grant of NT\$10,000 to be used for the implementation of their proposal. This grant will be disbursed in the form of a cash prize to the team.
- **Awards for Each Category**
 1. **First Place:** NT\$120,000 and an award certificate.
 2. **Second Place:** NT\$80,000 and an award certificate.
 3. **Third Place:** NT\$50,000 and an award certificate.

Copyright

The entrant hereby grants a non-exclusive, sub-licensable, worldwide, irrevocable license in perpetuity to OAC and the co-organizers to use, copy, modify, translate, and/or adapt, distribute, publicly display by any means and in any media to create derivative works of the entry (such as photographs, video & audio recordings, microfilms, music writing and editing, documentaries, etc.) in activities related to, and the promotion of the competition and the particular project, without any further notice or remuneration to the entrant.

By entering the competition, the entrant also acknowledges and accepts that all aspects of any submission narrative, description, details, images, illustration and animation may be used for publicity purposes by OAC and the co-organizers. OAC and the co-organizers hold the right to publish such material in whole or in part, to use them in any way it sees fit in connection with the competition without permission of the entrant or payment for such use.

If a winning entry involves works from a third party, a license from its author must be submitted to OAC and the co-organizers. The entrant shall waive any moral rights or similar rights having in your competition entry whether such rights arise

pursuant to the relevant copyright or equivalent legislation anywhere in the world.

Website

<https://ocean-challenges.com>

Youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/@OceanChallenge01>

Points of Contact

1. Ocean Affairs Council

Phone: +886-7-3381810 ext. 261324 / Email: oceanchallenge01@gmail.com

2. American Institute in Taiwan Kaohsiung Branch

Phone: +886-7-3355006 ext. 6007 / Email: LeeDJY@state.gov

Attachment 1: Ocean Proposal Challenge

Are you ready to make the ocean different because of you? No matter whether your proposal highlights a net-zero ocean (blue carbon × green energy × green shipping), brings ocean literacy and culture to life in a way that's easy to understand and truly resonates, or leverages AI and international maritime law to safeguard maritime safety and protect people at sea, you're welcome to submit your idea. Let's take on these three major themes together, and build a lower-carbon, more inspiring, and safer ocean future together!

(1) Net-Zero Ocean

Imagine this: what if we could combine Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage (CCUS) technologies to turn blue carbon ecosystems—such as mangroves, seagrass beds, and salt marshes—into even more powerful “natural carbon-sinking machines”? And what if we could go a step further by using AI and big data analytics to monitor carbon sequestration performance and ecosystem health in real time—how cool would that be?

You can also tackle the challenge from the energy and industry side to build a smarter ocean future—for example, by designing eco-friendly marine renewable energy solutions (offshore wind, ocean energy), or advancing new-energy vessels (hydrogen, electric, methanol fuels) to upgrade traditional shipping into truly green shipping. With AI-powered route optimization to cut fuel consumption, and blockchain technology to track carbon footprints and the sources of green fuels, emissions reduction can become not only transparent, but also trustworthy.

(2) Ocean Literacy & Cultural Education

To love the ocean, we must first understand it. But to truly *care* about the ocean, we also need to see how it connects to our daily lives, memories, and culture. Making ocean science easy to understand, fun to engage with, and emotionally resonant is the starting point for sustainable action.

You can use VR/AR, social media, podcasts, film, and artistic creation to turn complex ocean science into something accessible and relatable. You can also integrate citizen science by mobilizing the public to join ocean monitoring, beach cleanups, and data reporting—so that “learning about the ocean” becomes “protecting the ocean together.” We also warmly welcome proposals that bring culture into the picture: use local fisheries, port stories, traditional knowledge, maritime beliefs, and food culture as teaching materials, and design cross-cultural courses or exhibitions and performances—helping people understand that the ocean is not only a natural resource, but also our shared cultural heritage.

(3) Safe Ocean

You can shape your proposal into a disaster prevention and ocean resilience solution that works “from normal times to times of crisis.” For example, by combining AI and big data to integrate weather, tides, currents, vessel movements, and coastal monitoring, you could build smarter forecasts and alerts—such as wind-and-wave early warnings, tsunami/storm-surge risk advisories, maritime incident hotspot

analysis, and real-time reporting mechanisms. Paired with education and outreach in schools and communities, along with clear lifesaving and evacuation guidance, safety would no longer depend on luck, but on preparedness. You can also draw on publicly available information to advocate for citizen-led actions on ocean safety and resilience—for example, exposing ‘dark ships’ operating in maritime areas (vessels that turn off AIS, the Automatic Identification System), tracking substandard flags-of-convenience vessels, or building a dynamic undersea cable safety map. Such initiatives can increase transparency around illicit activities at sea and strengthen international condemnation and deterrence, thereby enhancing the overall maritime security order.

Your proposal can also elevate the concept of a “safe ocean” to a higher strategic level. Using international law of the sea as the framework, you could compare the common legal claims and rule-based narratives across three theatres—the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea, and the East China Sea—and analyze how different parties shape order through freedom of navigation, maritime jurisdiction, the legitimacy of maritime law enforcement, maritime delimitation, and dispute-settlement mechanisms. Building on this, you could propose a “rules-based action plan” to safeguard the maritime security of the Taiwanese people: develop multilingual legal position papers and policy advocacy toolkits; connect Taiwan Strait security to shared interests in international shipping and regional stability; and promote coordinated narratives and institutionalized cooperation among like-minded countries in multilateral fora—so that Taiwan is included and supported in discussions on ocean governance, navigational order, and regional security.

Open Data Platforms

Are you curious about additional resources to spark your creativity? These fantastic open data platforms are here to help you:

- NODASS: <https://nodass.namr.gov.tw/>
- iOcean: <https://iocean.oca.gov.tw/>
- Environmental Data Open Platform: <https://data.moenv.gov.tw/>
- Taiwan Marine Vessel Dynamic Information System: <https://reurl.cc/p9ERxQ>
- Marine Traffic: <https://reurl.cc/eGYo5b>
- Global Fishing Watch: <https://reurl.cc/1XRWZm>

** These are merely a few examples of open data platforms. You can also check out other government open data!*

Attachment 2: Application Form

1. General Information								
Categories	<input type="checkbox"/> Teen <input type="checkbox"/> Youth			Team's Name				
Title of Proposal								
	Name	Gender	Nationality	Ethnicity (skip it if not applicable)	Date of Birth	Mobile	Email	Organization/ School
Captain				<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Tribe:				
Member				<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Tribe:				
Member				<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Tribe:				
Member				<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Tribe:				
Member				<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Tribe:				
Member				<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Tribe:				
Member				<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Tribe:				
Member				<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Tribe:				
2. Coach's Contact (if applicable)								
Name				Gender		Organization		
Email					Mobile			