**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Ocean Resilience and Climate Alliance Continues to Gain Momentum as it Reaches $300 Million in Commitments and Announces New Director**

*The historic coalition of philanthropic funders — including Builders Vision, Bloomberg Philanthropies, and Ocean Kind — taps Dr. Alasdair Harris as its Director and has now pledged $300 million to advance ocean-based solutions to fight climate change*

**Athens, GREECE** — Today, the [Ocean Resilience and Climate Alliance](https://www.oceanclimate.org/) (ORCA), a funder collaborative of leading climate and ocean institutions, announced several exciting milestones just four months after [its launch](https://www.buildersvision.com/news-and-media-coverage/coalition-of-philanthropic-funders-unveil-more-than-250-million-ocean-resilience-and-climate-alliance-to-supercharge-ocean-based-climate-solutions) at COP28, including the appointment of Dr. Alasdair Harris as its Director and an additional $50 million in commitments, bringing ORCA’s total investment to over $300 million. The coalition is also announcing several of the lead grantees that are receiving funding and will support efforts to accelerate ocean-climate and marine-based initiatives.

**Announcing ORCA’s First Director**

Dr. Harris has come on board to lead the coalition, bringing two decades of experience integrating community-led conservation with climate resilience strategies, rejuvenating marine ecosystems, and bolstering livelihoods for coastal communities. Most recently, he served as the founding Executive Director of Blue Ventures, an organization dedicated to rebuilding tropical fisheries with coastal communities. Harris’ work has pioneered new approaches to leveraging local knowledge to foster stewardship and sustainable use of marine resources, with an emphasis on impact at scale.

“I’m thrilled to have the opportunity to join ORCA and help advance the work of this remarkable portfolio of ocean-based climate solutions,” said **Dr. Harris, newly-announced Director of ORCA**. “From the high arctic to the tropics, ORCA grantees demonstrate the vital role of our oceans and coastal communities in addressing the climate crisis. ORCA will accelerate this critical work while transforming the scale and ambition of ocean-climate philanthropy.”

**Harnessing the Power of Oceans**

ORCA officially launched last December at COP28 with an initial investment of $250 million from more than a dozen established champions of ocean conservation, including Ballmer Group, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Builders Vision, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the Jeremy and Hannelore Grantham Environmental Trust, Oak Foundation, Oceankind, Paul M. Angell Family Foundation, Rivian Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Sergey Brin Family Foundation, Vere Initiatives, and others.

The coalition is anchored by Oceankind and Builders Vision and was designed to help tackle the global climate crisis through coordination and collaboration within the ocean sector, a powerful but often overlooked ally in the battle against climate change. ORCA works with philanthropies, nonprofit organizations, local communities, and Indigenous Peoples to make ocean ecosystems more resilient and balanced and help ensure that solutions are just, equitable, and center the frontline coastal communities that are most impacted by ocean-climate issues. The now $300 million coalition will convene again at the upcoming Our Ocean conference in Athens, Greece to update the international community on its efforts.

“Climate change certainly isn’t the only threat facing our ocean, but is a truly existential one. Likewise, while the ocean is not the only source of solutions to address the climate crisis, it includes many *essential* interventions, from decarbonizing shipping to safeguarding blue carbon habitats. The fight against climate change requires that *every* industry play a role, and marine sectors are estimated to comprise up to a third of the necessary emissions reductions. We’re thrilled that the global philanthropic community has begun to catalyze critical efforts in this space,” said **Matt Elliott, Executive Director of Oceankind and an anchor funder of ORCA.**

“Since ORCA’S launch at COP28, we’ve brought on Dr. Harris to lead this incredible initiative, secured an additional $50 million in funding, and started distributing much-needed resources to organizations who have the passion and expertise to drive significant transformation for the ocean and climate,” said **Peter Bryant, Oceans Program Director at Builders Vision, one of ORCA’s anchor funders**. “ORCA is truly a groundbreaking initiative that is catalyzing capital into the blue economy, and we’re looking forward to continuing this great momentum.”

“Bloomberg Philanthropies is thrilled to see such critical and impactful developments at ORCA since launching just four months ago,” said **Melissa Wright, who leads the Bloomberg Ocean Initiative at Bloomberg Philanthropies**. “Investing in ocean-based solutions to fight climate change is one of the most effective ways we can stabilize our planet’s equilibrium. With additional funding, an impressive new cohort of grantees, and Dr. Al Harris as ORCA’s new Executive Director, we will be able to spearhead ocean conservation at a more rapid pace. Bloomberg Philanthropies is excited to help lead this effort through ORCA and guide countries to meet their 30x30 targets.”

**Catalyzing Funding into Global Programs**

ORCA is injecting significant capital into seven core areas that focus on mitigation, sequestration, or adaptation. The programs include enhancing blue carbon habitat restoration and conservation, bolstering ocean diplomacy, fielding ocean carbon research, and empowering coastal communities to safeguard marine resources, among others.

ORCA has identified lead grantees for each focus area that are entrusted with advancing strategies and enlisting additional partners to support these efforts. Some of these initial grantees include:

* [**Oceans 5**](https://www.oceans5.org/)will focus on bolstering strategic ocean diplomacy for a unified ocean-climate agenda: "As the ocean continues to get hotter and more acidic, sea levels rise, and Arctic sea ice cover and glacial retreat continue at unprecedented rates, world leaders are racing like never before to implement ocean-based climate solutions,” **said Jean Flemma, Director, Ocean and Climate Diplomacy Initiative for Oceans 5.** “The surge of philanthropic funding made available through the Ocean Resilience and Climate Alliance is critical to advancing ocean climate action and ensuring that governments, civil society, and communities on the frontlines can work together to leverage the power of the ocean in the fight against climate change."
* [**Oceans North**](https://www.oceansnorth.org/en/)will co-lead efforts to safeguard the Arctic for the people, marine life, and global climate functions it supports:“There are many threats facing the Arctic, but there is also unprecedented global momentum to address the climate and biodiversity crises—as well as growing recognition of the key role that Indigenous Peoples can and must play in conservation,” **said Louie Porta Executive Director of Oceans North.** “Funding from ORCA will help support existing efforts to protect places that matter to people while catalyzing new initiatives and approaches in some of the world’s most productive ecosystems.”
* [**Conservation International**](https://www.conservation.org/)will help build and implement blue carbon positive business models that will increase the scale and durability of restoration efforts: “Over the last few years, the development of blue carbon as a solution for the climate, biodiversity, and communities has reached a critical turning point,” **said Dr. Emily Pidgeon, Vice President, Ocean Science and Innovation at Conservation International**. “With the support of ORCA to launch the Blue Carbon Plus initiative, we are now able to bring scalable models that will allow this innovative approach to reach its full potential along coasts globally.”
* [**Blue Ventures**](https://blueventures.org/)will help advance the capacity of Global South coastal communities to engage in climate solutions, protect their security, and secure their tenure of marine resources: “For the communities where we work, climate change is a real, present, and intensifying threat to survival,” **said** **Sharon Young, Director of Partner Networks at Blue Ventures**. “The Frontline Community Fund is already driving catalytic funding to dozens of local organizations on the frontlines of the ocean emergency so that they can restore marine life and safeguard livelihoods at scale.”

For a full list of ORCA’s seven focus areas and the lead grantees for each, please see the table below or visit [www.oceanclimate.org](http://www.oceanclimate.org).

**ORCA Pillars and Focus Areas**

| **Program Pillar** | **Overview** |
| --- | --- |
| Accelerating Offshore Wind Development Globally | Rapidly scaling offshore wind has the potential to mitigate over 7 percent of all emissions needed to stay below a 2°C of warming. To help ensure that offshore wind meets its climate mitigation potential, **Ocean Energy Pathway** and the **Pooled fund on International Energy** will provide governments and domestic stakeholders with locally tailored tools and practices to jump-start offshore wind. In tandem, the **Global Offshore Wind Alliance** is bringing together governments, the private sector, international organizations to accelerate the global deployment of offshore wind technologies, while the newly launched **Global Initiative for Nature, Grids, and Renewables** seeks to develop a monitoring and reporting framework to protect biodiversity while scaling renewables.  |
| Decarbonizing Global Shipping by Elevating Underrepresented Countries and Building Leadership in Asia | Global shipping represents around 3% of global CO2 emissions; without intervention, carbon emissions from shipping will further increase to 1.5 Gt CO2e by 2050. To fight this dangerous trend, the **UN Foundation** is working to elevate the voices of the Global South at the International Maritime Organization, and **ClimateWorks Foundation** is working to catalyze greater ambition for shipping decarbonization in major Asian shipping nations. |
| Activating Blue Carbon Positive Business Models | Coastal blue carbon ecosystems store more carbon per area than nearly any other ecosystem, but restoration projects are constrained and outpaced by habitat loss. To expand the pipeline of habitat restoration and conservation, **The Nature Conservancy** and **Conservation Internationa**l are building and implementing new blue carbon positive business models that promise to increase the scale and durability of restoration efforts. |
| Advancing Ocean Carbon Sequestration | In theory, marine carbon dioxide removal (mCDR) could potentially meet up to 80% of the carbon removal capacity needed to stay well under 2°C of warming, but the technologies need significant research and development to explore their efficacy and limitations. To help these methods reach their climate-fighting potential, the **Grantham Environmental Trust** is leading a philanthropic push to explore the potential of mCDR to catalyze the maturation of ocean CDR R&D. |
| Safeguarding the Arctic  | As the fastest warming ecosystem on Earth, the Arctic environment needs immediate protection. New pressures from ship traffic, fishing, and industrial development are mounting as summer sea ice could be entirely gone by 2050. To better protect this ecosystem and its critical role in earth’s climate, **Oceans North** and **Ocean Conservancy** will work with Indigenous organizations, governments, coastal communities, and industry to secure increased protections for the Arctic.  |
| Scaling Community-Led Action in the Global South | Long-term and just climate success requires robust support among the coastal communities most affected by climate to lead and drive ocean-based solutions forward. **The Frontline Community Fund (Blue Ventures)** and the **Marine Tenure Initiative** will collectively advance the capacity of Global South coastal communities to engage in climate solutions, protect their security, and secure their tenure of marine resources. |
| Elevating a Unified Ocean-Climate Agenda through Strategic Diplomacy | Internationally, the ocean-climate policy campaign space is fragmented, underfunded, and overlooked relative to its impact potential. **Oceans 5** will be working to strengthen the voice of ocean-climate advocates working across critical fora such as the UNFCCC and Our Oceans. Oceans 5 will help to support and coordinate campaigns around our shared ocean-climate agenda. |

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