Eight years of success in marine conservation:
Applications now open for the 2026 ‘ocean tribute’ award by boot Düsseldorf and the German Ocean Foundation

Winning project to receive €20,000 prize money

Award ceremony at boot in January 2026

With the launch of the ‘ocean tribute’ award in 2017, the German Ocean Foundation and boot Düsseldorf set themselves a clear goal: to support people, projects or initiatives in their commitment to marine conservation. Since 2018, the prize, worth 20,000 euros, has been awarded annually at the trade fair in Düsseldorf and has become a fixture among international marine conservation prizes over the past eight years.

The registration phase for the 2026 ‘ocean tribute’ has begun, and anyone whose projects contribute to marine conservation is invited to apply

https://www.boot.com/en/Program/Awards_Events/ocean_tribute_Award/

We are looking for proactive initiatives, exciting projects and high-profile campaigns to protect the oceans. Applicants must actively contribute to the sustainable improvement and cleanliness of oceans, lakes and/or rivers with their projects. Technical innovations, research projects, scientific and educational initiatives or campaigns to reduce ocean litter can be submitted. The ‘ocean tribute’ award always puts the protection of the oceans first.

Two people have been involved in the ‘ocean tribute’ award from the very beginning and have successfully and effectively implemented their idea: Petros Michelidakis, Director of boot Düsseldorf, and Frank Schweikert, Chairman of the German Ocean Foundation. Together with their teams, they have recognised and realised the appeal and responsibility of boot. Schweikert sums up their philosophy: ‘Alongside climate protection, marine conservation is the most important issue of our time. We must actively implement it together and consistently with a strong personal and social commitment.’

Michelidakis adds: "The international award winners we have honoured at the trade fair since 2018 testify to the global significance of marine conservation. Every country and every person on this earth is affected by the problem. This includes both small-scale initiatives, often developed by a few people in their

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regions, and comprehensive, international projects that aim to protect the oceans and waters worldwide. We are very much looking forward to receiving exciting and innovative applications'.

Young marine conservation advocate joins the jury

The high-calibre jury will first conduct an initial technical evaluation of the entries. Petros Michelidakis: 'The long-standing cooperation with the experts on our jury supports the international reputation that the ocean tribute has been able to establish in such a short time." On board are meteorologist and maritime ambassador Monika Breuch-Moritz, who also contributes her expertise to the advisory board of the German Ocean Foundation, Professor Michael Orbach, anthropologist and advisor on marine policy, Professor Hartmut Graßl, chairman of the Association of German Scientists (both also members of the advisory board of the German Ocean Foundation), and, representing the trade fair, Marius Berlemann, Chief Operating Officer of Messe Düsseldorf, and Robert Marx, President of the European Boating Industry and boot Düsseldorf. New to the committee is Shamim Wasii Nyanda, founder of the 'Doors of Hope Foundation' (for climate and marine conservation and youth empowerment in Tanzania), who speaks for her young, responsible and committed generation. Frank Schweikert: 'We are very honoured to have Shamim Nyanda on our jury. She stands for the spirit of optimism and self-confidence of young people for whom marine and climate protection are not just empty words. With her commitment, she is a role model for an entire generation and shows unparalleled dedication to the important issues of our time.'

Public voting at www.boot.com and announcement of the winning project at the trade fair

After the jury's preliminary selection, the nominees will go on to the 'public voting' stage. Starting in November 2025, anyone interested will have the opportunity to vote for their favourite at www.boot.com. The three projects that receive the highest ratings from both the jury and the public will be presented at boot in January, and the winner of the 2026 'ocean tribute' award will be announced.

In line with the United Nations' sustainability goals

Petros Michelidakis and Frank Schweikert jointly explain the aim of initiating the marine conservation award: 'With the "ocean tribute", boot and the German

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Ocean Foundation are giving marine and water conservation a fitting public and international platform. We are thus promoting projects that are dedicated to their comprehensive protection in line with the United Nations' sustainability goals.'

The world's largest yacht and water sports fair

With more than 200,000 visitors from over 100 countries and 1,500 exhibitors on 220,000 square meters in Halls 1 to 17, boot Düsseldorf is the world's largest yacht and water sports fair. Both sailors and motor boaters will find a wide variety of boats, dinghies, superboats or luxury yachts. The popular water sports of diving, surfing, kite surfing, stand up paddling, skimboarding or canoeing are available at boot in all facets and with the appropriate equipment. Attractive stage programs with the stars of the scene, the latest trends and a high-caliber mix of workshops and hands-on activities, both for leisure sports enthusiasts and experts, make the fair unique worldwide. But marine conservation and innovative, sustainable technologies will also be in focus at boot 2026. In cooperation with the European Boating Industry (EBI), for example, the blue innovation dock offers a unique dialogue format with political, economic, technological and media expertise. The next edition of boot Düsseldorf will open its doors from 17 to 25 January 2026. www.boot.com

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