

**Fundación Banco Santander will allocate
450,000 euros to the recovery and conservation of
seas and oceans with *Santander for the Seas***



- *Santander for the Seas* has been launched, with an open call for projects that support the conservation and recovery of marine habitats and unique species.
- Fundación Banco Santander will finance three proposals for two years, each call with a contribution of 450,000 euros.
- The reversibility of marine decline, climate change mitigation and the development of the blue economy will be enhanced by this initiative.

Madrid, February 16, 2021

The concept of *blue economy*, which encompasses a myriad of activities such as fishing, the use of the marine environment to produce renewable energies, tourism and blue biotechnology, is emerging as an important approach to sustainable development. According to figures from the European Commission, published in *Report on the Blue Growth Strategy: Towards more sustainable growth and jobs in the blue economy*, the *blue economy* generates approximately 5.4 million jobs and a gross value added of 500 billion euros per year to economic output. By the year 2030, these figures could potentially double.

However, many marine species, habitats and ecosystems have suffered catastrophic devastation, and climate change is further undermining ocean productivity and biodiversity. Nevertheless, scientists and experts, such as Carlos Duarte, defend the reversibility of global ocean destruction with encouraging data, such as the recovery of blue and humpback whales, as reported in the study *Rebuilding Marine Life*, published in *Nature*. In addition, the proportion of marine species assessed by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species - data from the International Union for Conservation of Nature - as globally threatened with extinction has declined from 18.0% in 2000 to 11.4% in 2019. Recovery rates from numerous studies suggest that a substantial recovery of marine life abundance and functions could be achieved by 2050, if the pressure on the marine environment and climate change is mitigated.

Undoubtedly, it is this profusion of diversity and the breadth of marine life that promotes the recovery of the oceans and contributes to the balance of the global ecosystem, as established by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG14 or "life under water") which aims to "conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development".

These are the data and objectives proposed by the Fundación Banco Santander in its environmental commitment by launching the *Santander for the Seas* initiative, a call for projects endowed with 450,000 euros, which will be allocated to proposals that promote the recovery and conservation of marine ecosystems and endangered or unique species of our seas and oceans.

This new project is part of a new line of environmental innovation launched by Fundación Banco Santander, which continues the path of the Natural Heritage Recovery program it has been developing for more than fifteen years with the

recovery of emblematic land, sea and air species such as the brown bear, seagrass meadows or the bearded vulture, among other species.

The director of Fundación Banco Santander, Borja Baselga, emphasized that "we have been involved in the recovery and conservation of our natural heritage for 20 years. Now we are launching this new initiative aimed at helping to improve marine life. Marshes, seagrass beds, reefs, sentinel species, etc. are some of the ecosystems that we have identified, and we know that they need our attention. Conservation, protection, restoration and climate change mitigation become priority issues for us."

Baselga stressed that "the serious situation we are experiencing makes us even more aware of the need to take care of the environment in which we live, to increase aid for the conservation of the great treasure of our natural heritage, our seas and oceans, in which warming, and loss of biodiversity contribute to the degradation of our future as a species. We believe Santander for the Seas will help improve the ecosystem of our seas and oceans."

Santander for the Seas will select three projects that will be supported for over two years with the allocation of 150,000 euros per initiative. We are looking for projects with environmental impact, that are replicable and sustainable over time, economically efficient and that integrate social and educational aspects. Any organisations wishing to participate may do so through the following link: <https://www.fundacionbancosantander.com/es/medioambiente-e-investigacion/santander-for-the-seas>

"We are at a point where we can choose between the legacy of a resilient and vibrant ocean or an irreversibly disrupted ocean for generations to come," says Carlos Duarte, a scientist of the CSIC, in the article in the journal *Nature* cited at the beginning of this note. Fundación Banco Santander is trying to lead the way at a time of basic social awareness for the recovery of these ecosystems.

With the aim of achieving a fairer, more equitable and sustainable society, Fundación Banco Santander develops initiatives grouped into three lines of action: the promotion of culture as a tool to understand the world around us, social action to facilitate the progress of vulnerable groups and care for the environment to protect the natural heritage.

About Fundación Banco Santander

At Fundación Banco Santander we work to contribute to building a more equitable, inclusive and sustainable society.

With this objective in mind, we develop initiatives grouped into three lines of action: the promotion of culture as a tool for understanding the world around us, social action to facilitate the progress of vulnerable groups and care for the environment to protect our natural heritage.

In all our programmes we strive to create collaborative networks with the third sector to jointly address major global challenges.