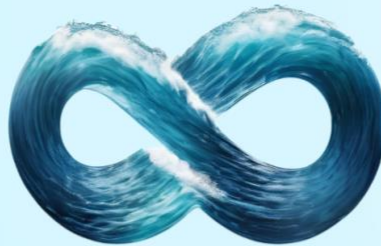




FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

The Continuum: Future-Proofing Florida and the Nation
by Revolutionizing BlueTech Acceleration



The Continuum

A Coordinated Network of
Ocean Enterprise Accelerators



In Partnership With:





The Continuum Launches with \$13.9M NOAA Grant to Advance BlueTech Solutions in Florida and Beyond

*Seven Powerhouses Unite to Accelerate Breakthrough Solutions for
Ocean and Environmental Resilience*

TAMPA, FL (December 10, 2024) – Seven leading entrepreneur support organizations from across the United States are joining forces to tackle critical challenges impacting our oceans, coastal communities, and economy. This powerful collaboration is made possible thanks to **\$13.9 million** awarded by the [NOAA Ocean Enterprise Accelerators program](#). As a result, [Braid Theory](#), [Ocean Exchange](#), [St. Pete Innovation District](#), [Seaworthy Collective](#), [Tampa Bay Wave](#), [University of South Florida](#), and [World Ocean Council](#) are proud to announce the launch of **The Continuum**. This groundbreaking partnership model is poised to set the national standard for BlueTech and blue economy accelerator programs, serving as a blueprint to advance innovative ocean and environmentally friendly data solutions, making them more scalable, efficient, and interconnected.

The Continuum will redefine commercialization programs by creating a coordinated network of ocean enterprise accelerators to fast-track innovative technologies and data, prioritizing sustainable development goals, economic growth, and innovation leadership to leverage Florida's position as a coastal and ocean resilience hub. By 2028, this initiative aims to drive advancements in renewable energy, pollution control, hazard mitigation, and ecosystem services while providing a "continuum" of support for hundreds of BlueTech startups. The effort bridges collaboration between industry leaders and research institutions, making resources and guidance freely available for startups innovating in a data-driven ocean economy.

Setting the Standard for BlueTech Innovation

Over four years, this \$13.9 million grant will establish a high-impact network of business accelerators and commercialization programs, fostering hundreds of startups tackling environmental and ocean challenges. These participating organizations will leverage their collective programs, expertise, and networks to accelerate deployment of data-driven ocean economy solutions, ensuring the U.S. remains a global leader in technology innovation and economic growth.

"NOAA is proud to support The Continuum as a partner in our mission to harness the innovation and entrepreneurship of the private sector for the Ocean Enterprise," says [U.S. IOOS Office Director Carl Gouldman](#). ***"By empowering startups to develop and commercialize groundbreaking products and services, this initiative reflects the critical***



role of collaboration between industry, government, and academia in pursuing the emerging opportunities presented by the growing blue economy."

"The Continuum is the culmination of intentional design and collaboration; built around years of feedback and demonstrated needs across the hundreds of entrepreneurs we've collectively supported. Our model will more effectively mobilize shared networks, resources, and opportunities to break down the systemic barriers keeping much-needed resilience solutions from getting to market." adds [Daniel Kleinman](#), CEO of [Seaworthy Collective](#).

The Continuum will cultivate a tightly connected multi-stakeholder model that guides startups through their commercialization pathways, helping startups scale initiatives effectively. Its expansive reach offers startup founders flexible engagement and individualized support at every stage of the entrepreneurial journey. With a groundbreaking focus on national and international industry partnerships as well as financial networks, this robust ecosystem is primed to advance innovative solutions for coastal and ocean-based resilience and set a new benchmark for fostering BlueTech innovation.

This initiative will support the development of solutions such as siting offshore wind and aquaculture farms, better understanding the conditions that lead to rapid hurricane intensification, and creating the most energy-efficient shipping routes. Propelled by The Continuum, these innovations will address critical ocean-based challenges through advanced data collection, monitoring, and predictive capabilities, empowering BlueTech startups to deliver sustainable solutions while enabling industries to adopt more responsible practices.

Geographic and Sectoral Scope

The Continuum will operate both regionally and nationally, building on environmental resilience ecosystems in Florida while supporting startups through partner nodes in California, the Great Lakes, the Gulf Coast, New Jersey, and the Chesapeake region that serve as test beds for demonstrations. This broad geographic reach ensures that regional challenges are addressed with a holistic, interconnected approach, strengthening national innovation capacity, as well as offering American startups the potential for international reach. The Continuum will embrace a bottom-up approach, focusing on current challenges and resource limitations, initially using Florida as a pilot.

Florida's coastal regions, home to nearly 17 million people, are often impacted by hurricanes and offer a logical location for fostering an innovation cluster focused on ocean-based resilience technologies.

"Tampa Bay Wave has a strong track record of driving innovation through tech entrepreneurs who turn creative ideas into solutions and business opportunities. I am



thrilled that this major federal grant will help coastal communities become more resilient and prepared for escalating environmental impacts," said [U.S. Representative Kathy Castor](#). ***"As recent hurricanes demonstrated, communities across the Tampa Bay area must be better prepared for and adapt to costly and extreme events. This public-private partnership will benefit from the world-class marine scientists at USF St. Pete and the St. Petersburg Innovation District to bring ocean-based resilience solutions to the market."***

By facilitating interdisciplinary collaboration and providing clear commercialization pathways, The Continuum will connect startups with diverse customers, including energy companies, consulting firms, ports, military bases, shipping lines, fisheries, and more. Key themes include renewable energy, carbon sequestration, hazard mitigation, ecosystem services, and pollution, with structured value chains to address ocean-based challenges and opportunities for data and technology solutions.

"The Continuum represents a pivotal moment for BlueTech innovation, bringing together a network of visionaries to tackle some of the most pressing environmental and economic challenges of our time. This is a bold step forward in addressing climate and ocean innovation and resilience through this transformative collaboration. At the University of South Florida, we are proud to contribute our expertise and resources and to be a partner in this national collaboration, empowering startups to develop groundbreaking technologies that will shape a more resilient and sustainable future for our oceans and coastal communities." – [Dr. Sylvia Thomas](#), Senior Vice President for Research & Innovation, [University of South Florida](#).

Innovative Approach and Future Impact

By empowering startups to address corporate and governmental challenges with cutting-edge technologies, The Continuum will position Florida as one of the most environmentally resilient states in the nation.

The Continuum streamlines collaboration between startups and industries, coordinating standardized startup evaluations, tailored programmatic support, and guiding companies through combined partner ecosystems to achieve growth goals. Founders at all stages—whether potential, early, or mid-stage—will receive resources to overcome participation barriers and bring innovations to market.

"Our goal with The Continuum is to find the formula that rapidly accelerates any BlueTech startup, ensuring innovative solutions reach the market faster and more effectively," says [Millicent Pitts](#), CEO of [Ocean Exchange](#).

[Linda Olson](#), CEO of [Tampa Bay Wave](#) adds, ***"By leveraging cross-industry expertise from***



sectors like FinTech and CyberTech, we can address the pressing challenges of resiliency and ocean sustainability with groundbreaking technologies that are tested and ready to launch in a receptive market."

By 2028, The Continuum aims to significantly advance the commercialization of BlueTech startups and scale-ups, catalyzing the development of a future-ready nation and boosting sustainable economic growth. This pioneering model is set to redefine accelerator programs worldwide, ensuring that critical technologies and actionable data are swiftly deployed to combat the pressing challenges threatening the health of our oceans. As the urgency to address these threats grows, so does the unparalleled opportunity to reshape the future.

[See the full NOAA Press Release HERE.](#)

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About [Braid Theory](#)

Braid Theory is a vertically integrated venture advisory firm that supports science and engineering-led companies operating in the sustainable Blue Economy. Through accelerator, incubator, and entrepreneur advisory services, over 100 startups are mentored annually. Since 2016, Braid Theory has focused efforts to find solutions to grow a sustainable blue economy. Weaving together entrepreneurs along with industry influencers and corporate partners, we accelerate the adoption of transformative technology, drive market growth, and create profitable collaborations. Headquartered in San Pedro, California at AltaSea at the Port of Los Angeles allows ocean-focused founders an unparalleled opportunity in Southern California. To support our global expansion, Braid Theory recently announced its European headquarters in Barcelona.

About [Ocean Exchange](#)

Ocean Exchange is a global ecosystem whose mission is to accelerate the adoption of innovative solutions for healthy oceans and the sustainable blue economy. A 501c3, Ocean Exchange fulfills this mission through a rigorous, multi-level program that includes annual monetary awards, promoting registered Solutions Inspiring Action across multiple communication channels, and facilitating access to the global network comprising its Board of Directors, Delegates, Solutions Review Team, Executive Team and other experts from around the world. Its award finalists have raised \$3.1 billion in investment, IPO and exit transactions. Ocean Exchange's mission is funded largely by private donations including those from Wallenius Wilhelmsen, Royal Caribbean, Schmidt Marine Technology Partners, Oceankind, Marine Research Hub of South Florida, Angus Littlejohn, Jr. Family, Apollo Opportunity Foundation, and other business and family philanthropic entities who share the passion for healthy oceans.



About [St. Pete Innovation District](#)

St. Petersburg Innovation District is a nonprofit public-private partnership located on Tampa Bay (Gulf of Mexico). Among its cross-sector initiatives, the District brings together a network of maritime technology firms with academic institutions, and government and private sector customer connections to advance ocean enterprises. As part of this effort the District manages the Maritime and Defense Technology Hub, a 32,000 square foot co-working facility for maritime technology firms with in-water testing/demonstration capabilities and the Ocean Team, a premier maritime consortium in the Southeast that includes Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission – Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Region, Pole Star Defense, Saildrone, Tampa Bay Estuary Program, Tampa Bay Watch, U.S. Coast Guard Sector St. Pete, and U.S. Geological Survey.

About [Seaworthy Collective](#)

Seaworthy Collective is a 501c3 nonprofit that supports current, aspiring, and underrepresented entrepreneurs driving innovation for ocean impact (AKA BlueTech). Our mission is to make BlueTech accessible and inclusive; bringing all hands on deck via programs to co-create and grow early-stage startups, build regional capacity, and educate our community. We empower Sea Change Makers – diverse founders leading profitable and planet positive businesses addressing pollution, coastal resilience and adaptation, as well as greenhouse gas reduction and removal. Since 2021, we've supported 40 startups and 78 founders (70% from underrepresented backgrounds), who have raised over \$10 million since graduating. Based in Miami, our local and global community generates scalable solutions for 71% of the planet (our ocean) to regenerate 100% of the planet. Learn more at www.seaworthycollective.com

About [Tampa Bay Wave](#)

Tampa Bay Wave, Inc. is a 501c3 nonprofit providing entrepreneurs with facilitated access to the resources, expertise, and capital they need to grow vibrant technology-based companies in Tampa Bay and beyond. Since March 2013, Tampa Bay Wave has supported more than 550+ tech startups who have raised more than \$1 billion thanks to federal funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) plus the National Oceanographic Atmospheric Agency (NOAA), along with support from its economic development partners Hillsborough County and the City of Tampa. Tampa Bay Wave also receives support from individuals such as Michael and Korrine Fraser, as well as from corporations and foundations such as: A-LIGN, and Bank of America.,. Tampa Bay Wave is an accredited member of the Morrow (formerly Global Accelerator Network) network of accelerators. For more information, visit www.tampabaywave.org



About [University of South Florida](#)

The University of South Florida, a high-impact research university dedicated to student success and committed to community engagement, generates an annual economic impact of more than \$6 billion. Across campuses in Tampa, St. Petersburg, Sarasota-Manatee and USF Health, USF serves approximately 50,000 students who represent nearly 150 different countries. U.S. News & World Report has ranked USF as one of the nation's top 50 public universities for six consecutive years and, for the second straight year, as the best value university in Florida. In 2023, USF became the first public university in Florida in nearly 40 years to be invited to join the Association of American Universities, a group of the leading 3% of universities in the United States and Canada. With an all-time high of \$692 million in research funding in 2023 and a ranking as a top 15 public university for producing new U.S. patents, USF is a leader in solving global problems and improving lives. USF is a member of the American Athletic Conference. Learn more at www.usf.edu.

About [World Ocean Council](#)

The World Ocean Council (WOC) is a US 501c3 global, cross-sector ocean business and industry leadership alliance committed to "Corporate Ocean Responsibility." WOC is a membership driven organization, developed by and for the private sector, with a unique and multi-sectoral approach to address cross-cutting issues affecting ocean sustainability, science and stewardship of the seas. The WOC believes that responsible and coordinated ocean business community efforts are essential to a healthy and productive global ocean and contributing waterways, particularly in the face of the planet's poly-crisis moment and related ocean tipping points. WOC engages leaders, practitioners and innovators from diverse sectors, including shipping, fisheries, mare/aquaculture, coastal resilience, tourism, renewable energy (wind, wave, tidal), ports, marine carbon reduction, circularity, as well as the maritime/ocean legal, financial and insurance communities.

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