EUROPEAN CLIMATE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT EXECUTIVE AGENCY (CINEA)

CINEA.D - Natural resources, climate, sustainable blue economy and clean energy
D.3 - Sustainable Blue Economy

Synergies and Clustering between Maritime Projects (EASME/EMFF/2020/3.1.12) – SI2.850620

Workshop Report:

"Blue Skills"

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Credits: Lead Contractor: Cogea. Report written by lead workshop organiser and consortia member ERINN Innovation.

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1. Executive Summary

CINEA, the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency is implementing an initiative titled **"Synergies and clustering between maritime projects"** with the aim to provide a platform for exchange of information, best practices and synergies between EMFF funded projects as well as with other funding programmes in support of the Integrated Maritime Policy's goals. Running from June 2021 for two years and supported via a consortium of consultants through a tender contract, a key component of the initiative is to run a series of workshops to facilitate and foster networking, cooperation, sharing of experiences and to maximise the impact of relevant thematic clusters of EMFF funded projects.

The second workshop, on **"Blue Skills"** took place on Tuesday, 22 March 2022 (9:45-13:45 CET). The aim of this thematic workshop was to identify and facilitate opportunities for synergy and cooperation between the 18 EMFF funded blue skills projects and projects funded under other funding mechanisms which aim to develop blue skills at national and trans-national level.

A total of 66 attendees participated in the workshop, representing European Commission funding mechanisms as well as beneficiaries from both EMFF projects and skills projects from other funding mechanisms. A mixed methodological approach was used to drive engagement and participation in the virtual setting.

Over four hours the five sessions helped to:

a) **Contextualise** the overarching EU Skills agenda for Europe and the current policy drivers related to skills for a sustainable blue economy.
b) **Explore** current blue skills policy and set the scene on the direction of future skills policies.
c) **Identify** key characteristics of some best practice case studies that will demonstrate how current and future blue skills projects can be calibrated to maximise impact.
d) **Generate Ideas** on actions that can support implementation and help current and future skills projects align to the European agenda.

It is hoped that the outputs generated during this workshop will provide both the contracting authority and participants alike, with valuable insights on how the EMFF and other funding programmes can forge synergies and complementarities, to ensure that all blue skills projects are aligned and working together to add value to European research in the maritime sector and beyond.

2. Introduction

This was the second in a series of thematic workshops being held under the "Synergies and Clustering between Maritime Projects" initiative. The 'Blue Skills' workshop took place on Tuesday, 22 March 2022, and aimed to explore current and future policy drivers for skills projects to support a sustainable blue economy in Europe, and provide an opportunity for project beneficiaries to come together and share knowledge and insights on the implementation of best practice blue skills projects.

A comprehensive agenda included an overview of the EMFF blue skills projects, presentations on the skills agenda for the maritime sector, skills challenges for a sustainable blue economy and mobilisation of actors for future skills projects. A series of best practice case studies from both EMFF and ERASMUS+

projects, and a networking session for project beneficiaries were also included as part of the agenda. The workshop was supported by interactive sessions to allow participants to share their own experiences. Using a co-creation and participatory approach the aim was to achieve a common understanding of the blue skills agenda as well as gain insights and knowledge on best practice implementation of projects. Finally, it was hoped that this workshop would support and inform the development of future blue skills calls.

3. Workshop Objectives

The objective of the workshop was to utilise a co-creation and participatory approach to achieve a common understanding as well as gain insights and knowledge on the following elements:

- **Clarity**: Understanding of the direction of EU policies going forward and how future projects should be orientated to support this.
- **Foresight**: Insights to help inform future funding programming to address blue skills needs.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Sharing between beneficiaries on experiences and insights focused on legacy/impact.
- **Synergies:** Identify opportunities for collaboration among beneficiaries for future collaboration.

4. Target Participants

For this thematic workshop the following groups were the primary targets:

a) **Coherence Panel members** from EC funding mechanisms who are responsible for Blue Skills/Careers calls.
b) **EMFF funded projects** on Blue Skills (both closed and ongoing, 18 in total). Coordinators and partners were invited.
c) **Blue Skills Projects from other funding mechanisms**

A total of 66 participants attended the workshop (59 of which registered for the workshop in advance)*. Attendance consisted of members of the coherence panel, representatives from other EU funding programmes, and beneficiaries from both EMFF funded projects and other funding mechanisms.

Breakdown:

Total Registered: 59
Coherence Panel Members: 3
Project Beneficiaries: 27
Other: 29

*Some participants did not register for the workshop and accessed the call using a Zoom link directly provided to them by CINEA

5. Workshop Methodology

The four-hour workshop took place online via Zoom. Participation was free and open to all relevant stakeholders. The event was advertised via multiple channels.

In order to engage all participants and encourage participation, the methodology included a mix of presentations, case studies, plenary discussions and breakout sessions.

The workshop began with an introduction on the purposes of the workshop and an overview of EMFF blue skills projects, this was provided to set the scene and frame the current direction and focus of blue skills projects being funded under EMFF. The opening presentations were followed by presentations on the skills agenda for Europe, skill challenges and the mobilisation of actors for a sustainable blue economy. A series of case studies on past and current blue skills projects helped showcase best practices and challenges faced by skills projects and drive discussion. Q&A sessions following the presentations gave workshop participants an opportunity to develop insights on the topics being discussed. The workshop concluded with a networking session for project beneficiaries, developed around some key prompt questions and themes. Prompt questions put forward during a plenary discussion were centred around needs for future funding calls and sectoral challenges, while the breakout session sought feedback on best practice project implementation, opportunities for collaboration and suggestions for funding authorities under three themes: Cooperation, Effective project implementation and Legacy. Using this combination of breakout rooms and plenary discussion, the networking session generated targeted and specific feedback on the current and future needs of blue skills beneficiaries.

For the breakout components of the workshop, a carousel methodology was utilised in order to capture participant feedback in a rapid and quickfire manner. Facilitators rotated around three breakout rooms capturing and refining insights from participants around three themes.

To ensure an efficient and engaging meeting, especially in a virtual setting, some virtual tools were deployed to stimulate discussion and involve participants; Slido was used to prompt discussion during plenary sessions, while Padlet was used to capture feedback in the breakout rooms.

ERINN were the key points of contact for all speakers throughout the workshop planning stage, collating all presentations, and providing briefing documents and technical support in the run up to and during the workshop. The workshop was moderated by David Murphy (ERINN Innovation). Facilitation for breakout sessions was provided by ERINN Innovation. ERINN staff also provided technical support during the workshop.

The agenda for this workshop can be found in **Annex 1 – Event Agenda**.

6. Workshop Execution

The workshop took place as scheduled on Monday, 22 March from 9:45-13:45 CET. The workshop had two parts - Part 1 focused on blue skills policy and foresight, while Part 2 facilitated networking for EMFF project beneficiaries.

A short narration of the presentations and case studies delivered during Part 1 of the workshop are provided below. A recording of the whole workshop and copies of each presentation are available on the **Maritime Forum**.

As time was limited during the Case Study Presentations, a short summary of each project represented was provided to participants in advance in the annex to the agenda. Participants were asked to familiarise themselves with the projects in advance of the session (See **Annex 2** for summaries).

An overview on the EMFF portfolio of skills projects (see **Annex 3**) and information about the "Synergies and Clustering between Maritime Projects" contract (see **Annex 4**) were also provided to participants in advance of the workshop.

Part 1: Blue Skills, Policy and Foresight

Session A:	
This opening session outlined the purposes of the workshop and provided an overview of current EMFF blue skills projects in order to set and the scene and contextualise the workshop.	
Title	**Name and Affiliation of speaker**
Introduction to Initiative & Purpose of workshop	**Charlotte Jagot, CINEA**
Overview of EMFF Blue Skills Projects	**Charlotte Jagot, CINEA**
Summary: **Ms Charlotte Jagot** introduced the initiative and purpose of the workshop, which was to explore the current skills policies supporting the development of a sustainable blue economy, and allow both project beneficiaries and representatives from European funding mechanisms to share their perspective and experience on the implementation of blue skills projects. A comprehensive overview was then provided on the blue skills projects funded by the EMFF between 2016-18; 18 projects were funded in total, with representatives from 20 different countries. The total budget for the cohort was €13.6m of which the EMFF contribution was €11m. Focus areas for blue skills projects included vocational training and higher education projects from the following sectors: Aquaculture, Fisheries, Biotechnology, Shipping, Shipbuilding, Tourism, Nautical charters, Seafarers, Logistics, Water sports and Tourism.	

Session B: System Level – Exploration of "Integration, Scale up and Cooperation"	
Through a series of insightful presentations, this session aimed to set the scene on current policy drivers for skills projects for a sustainable blue economy in addition to providing foresight on the future agenda for blue skills and the mobilisation of stakeholders.	
Title	**Name and Affiliation of speaker**
Skills Agenda for Europe	**Felix Rohn, DG Employment**
Skills challenges for a sustainable blue economy	**Andy Kontoudakis, DG MARE**
Mobilisation of Actors	**Joao Santos, DG Employment**
Summary: **Mr. Felix Rohn** delivered a presentation on the European skills agenda. Published by the European Commission in 2020, under four key pillars, the skills agenda links to many European strategies including the Digital Strategy and the Green Deal. It will serve to address the widening skills gap in the European economy. Mr. Rohn outlined how this agenda relates to the European maritime sector and how it will inform future skills projects needed to address the skills gaps in the blue economy.	

Ms. Andy Kontoudakis delivered a presentation designed to set the scene on the skills challenges for the blue economy and outline what is being done to address those needs. This includes the transformation of different sectors, mobilising all stakeholders and linking to policies such as the green deal and circular economy. Ms. Kontoudakis outlined how these sectoral transformations can be achieved through blue skills projects.

Mr. Joao Santos helped set the scene on the skills ecosystem for innovation, regional development and social included. He highlighted the ERASMUS+ Centres of Vocational Excellence concept (CoVE) as one tool to help rapidly adapt skills provision to help evolving needs. The plan is to support 100 CoVE networks with an available budget of €400m.

Session C: Knowledge Sharing and Learning

Session C aimed to explore best practice in terms of Blue Skills projects in the current landscape. Knowledge sharing was a fundamental part of this session and flash presentations from the coordinators of current and past blue skills projects provided insights on best practice and challenges faced when implementing blue skills projects. Prompt questions were used to gather participant insights in-flight via Slido while presentations were being delivered.

Title	Name and Affiliation of speaker
EMFF Case Study Presentation	**Nikolas Ventikos, Sea of Experience**
EMFF Case Study Presentation	**Kais Falcón, MarENet**
EMFF Case Study Presentation	**Martina Rossi, ASSESS**
EMFF Case Study Presentation	**Raffaele Mancini, BAPSI**
ERASMUS+ Case Study Presentation	**Lucia Fraga, MATES**

Summary:

The objective of this session was to provide a series of case studies from both EMFF and ERASMUS+ funded projects on best practice and challenges encountered in the implementation of blue skills projects. Each speaker was provided with a presentation template requesting; 1) project overview, 2) Main Achievements, 3) Main Challenges, 4) Main Priorities to address the skills gap.

Mr. Nikolas Ventikos represented the EMFF funded Sea of Experience project (Establishment of Eastern Mediterranean Regional Network: pooling, sharing, development of innovative face-to-face and digital training/mentoring tools for the maritime sector). Outlining the key challenges faced by the project alongside its main achievements, Mr. Ventikos put forward key **priorities to address the skills gap** including promoting gender equality and equal opportunities, upskill and reskill for digital skills. A culture of lifelong learning and industry-academia collaboration. Enhancement of soft skills including problem solving.

Mr. Kais Falcón delivered a presentation on behalf of EMFF's MarENet project (Atlantic Maritime Ecosystem Network). Challenges faced by the project included complicated processes involved to gain accreditation for certifications and gaining international recognition for certifications. **Priorities identified for addressing the skills gaps** include continuous stakeholder engagement, periodic monitoring and quick response to detected needs, and lifelong learning initiatives.

Ms. Martina Rossi from the EMFF funded ASSESS project (Advanced Skills in Safety, Environment and Security at Sea) found the main challenges to be reaching the right target audience, building credibility for new courses and designing financial sustainability of the programme. **Priorities for**

addressing the skills gaps should be upskilling on digital tools for mature workers, attracting talent to traditional jobs and support for updating training courses to meet the needs of future jobs.

Mr. Raffaele Mancini from the EMFF funded BAPSI project (Blue Academy for Professionals of the Seafood Industry) cited the main challenges related to covid implications that created delays and a move to virtual events, lack of partner physical meetings and adaptation of project design (e.g. study visits). **Priorities for addressing the skills gaps** were focused on thematic topics, cold chain, sustainable packaging, circular approaches and marketing strategies.

Ms Lucia Fraga represented the ERASMUS+ funded project MATES (Maritime Alliance for fostering the European Blue Economy through a Marine Technology Skilling Strategy). Addressing continually evolving skills gaps, stakeholder cooperation and project impact within a project timeframe were cited as key challenges faced by MATES and were considered priorities for improving future project implementation.

Below is a list of Prompt Questions posed to participants during this session. Responses to these questions have been collated in Section 7 on workshop outputs.

1. How many skills projects have your organisation undertaken in the past 10 years?
2. What are the main skills challenges in your sector?
3. Where do you see the future of your sector going?

Part 2: Blue Skills Networking Event for EMFF Project Beneficiaries

Session A: Knowledge Sharing

Session A of the networking session aimed to pose a series of prompt questions to project beneficiaries in a plenary format and using the virtual Slido in order to gain insights and encourage knowledge sharing between beneficiaries.

Prompt Questions

Below is a list of Prompt Questions posed to participants during this session. EMFF beneficiaries were asked to share their experiences and advice on the specific topics. Responses to these questions have been collated in Section 7 on workshop outputs.

Slido Questions:

1. What would help you most in future skills funding calls?
2. What are the main skills challenges in your sector currently?
3. What do you see as the future skills needs in you sector?

Plenary Questions*:

1. **Building on past projects**: How can we ensure best practices from past projects are built upon in successful projects funded under new programmes/calls?
2. **Accreditation**: How can we ensure courses/training are accredited appropriately?
3. **Innovative methods**: What novel methodologies do you think would be suitable for future blue skills development programmes (delivery methods, training e-tools, pedagogy, assessment)?

4. **Vocational experience**: How valuable are apprenticeships/incorporating hands-on experience in skills development projects?
5. **Policy alignment**: How can we boost digitalisation and greening of jobs in the blue economy?
6. **Collaboration:** How do you think you can achieve collaboration with other stakeholders? (e.g. Policy makers, academia, industry)

***Note that while these were the prompt questions prepared, they were not necessarily asked in this order or format during the discussion**

Session B: Networking and Collaboration

Session B of the networking session used a carousel methodology to capture participants' feedback to three prompt questions under three different themes. Facilitators rotated between three breakout rooms to capture participant feedback, each facilitator was responsible for capturing feedback for one theme. As facilitators moved to new rooms they summarised the previous room's input under that theme and collated new comments. The breakout room function in Zoom and the virtual tool Padlet were used to facilitate this methodology.

Prompt Questions

Below are the three themes explored using the carousel methodology:

Theme 1 - Cooperation: How to effectively achieve stakeholder cooperation in fulfilling blue skills gaps?
Theme 2 – Effective Implementation: What works really well in skills project implementation?
Theme 3 - Legacy: How can we ensure project legacy?

Under each theme the following three prompt questions were posed to participants under each heading.

1. *What worked well and why (best practice examples)*
2. *Collaboration opportunities going forward*
3. *Ideas/suggestions for funding bodies*

Responses to these questions have been collated in the Section 7 on workshop outputs. The raw data from these breakout rooms can be found in Annex 5.

During plenary discussions, input was sought from all participants, with coherence panel members in particular, being invited to share their insights at key points throughout the workshop.

The workshop concluded on schedule and was closed out by Charlotte Jagot, CINEA.

In order to allow participants of the networking session an opportunity to reflect and further build on the questions presented during the breakout room discussion, a Google Form survey with the same questions was distributed to participants. Participants were given one week to add any further insights to the survey. The output of this survey can be found in Annex 6.

7. Workshop Outputs

This section summarises the key points captured during plenary and breakout sessions during the event.

7.1: Key Points Captured from Part 1 Session B: Setting the Scene Q&A Sessions*

**Note these key points have been synthesised based on plenary discussions, see video for original interactions.*

Plenary discussion points captured following presentation from Felix Rohn (DG EMPL) on the 'Skills Agenda for Europe':

- Industry stakeholders, while interested in skills development, are generally focused on their core business.
- Industry participation can depend on sector, member states or region.
- In many funding programmes SME participation is strong and interest is there.
- It is up to universities and vocational education centres to engage industry actors and work with them.

7.2: Key Points Captured from Part 1 Session C: Knowledge Sharing and Learning Slido Questions**

***Note these points are the raw responses collected in Slido. Minor spelling errors have been corrected for clarity.*

Below are the anonymous responses to the prompt questions posed to participants in Slido during this session:

How many skills projects has your organisation undertaken in the past 10 years? (Question posed in Slido)

- **None:** 13%
- **1 Project:** 13%
- **2 Projects:** 13%
- **3 Projects:** 13%
- **4 Projects:** 0%
- **5-10 Projects:** 13%
- **More than ten projects:** 38%

What are the main skills challenges in your sector? (Questions posed in Slido)

- VET-education catching up with the skills needed in industry.
- Soft skills related to an interdisciplinary approach and general project management.
- It is almost impossible for young science divers to be trained, gain experience and the necessary equipment in order to perform their work underwater due to the high cost of training in diving, high cost of diving and high cost of obtaining the necessary personal equipment which is absolutely necessary for safe dives. A dedicated project for support of the young science divers is needed in order to achieve the "Decade of the Ocean Science". Science Diver project is developing the framework for a successful programme in this field.

Where do you see the future of your sector going? (Questions posed in Slido)

- Upgrade of digital, green and soft skills in VET and higher education. Hopefully a sustainable cooperation between education, industry and legislation in education.

- Marine sciences and research can contribute and is essential for knowledge and innovation
- The need of scientific diving is increasing but the engagement of young science divers is still difficult, especially for women.

7.3: Summary of Feedback from Part 2 Session A: Knowledge Sharing Plenary Discussion***

****Note these key points have been synthesised based on plenary discussions.*

What would help you most in future skills funding calls? (Questions posed in Slido)

- To support beneficiaries in applying for future skills funding calls, there are many actions which funding bodies can take, included providing earlier access to planned calls, running information days to help understand the scope of the call text better, provide information on previous projects and results.
- Enabling mechanisms to recognise certifications, either by a seal from the funding agency or by incentivising institutions to recognise them would help certifications get accreditation faster.
- Include specific calls for specific regions.

What are the main skills challenges in your sector currently? (Questions posed in Slido)

Responses included: Entrepreneurship, Resistance to new technologies, Sustainability, Digital skills, Leadership, Green skills, Efficient communication.

What do you see as the future skills needs in you sector? (Questions posed in Slido)

Responses included: Cross-sectoral skills, New challenges in logistics and geopolitics, Artificial Intelligence, Smart technologies, Digitalisation, Automation, Robotics, Energy efficiency.

General Comments

- Many of the skills problems faced by the maritime sector are not uniquely blue. We can look to other sectors to see how they are addressing these issues.
- Soft skills that will enable stakeholders to communicate their needs/vision with each other are essential. You must be able to translate your needs/vision to non-experts in order to solve your problems or share your solutions e.g., aquaculture technology developer needs to explain how hardware/software can be used and why it is beneficial to producers. This is especially important when it comes to digital solutions where the function and potential for new tools such as artificial intelligence may not be fully understood by end users.

7.4: Summary of Feedback from Part 2 Session B: Networking and Collaboration Breakout Room****

*****Note that this summary feedback has been synthesised based on raw results from three breakout groups (See Annex 5).*

Theme 1 – Cooperation: How to effectively achieve stakeholder cooperation in fulfilling blue skill gaps

What worked well and why:

- Invest time and engage with industry actors early on. Align on short term plans and strategies and include industry stakeholders as part of your project, either on boards or as members. Gain their specific input from the beginning, allow a budget for this if necessary.
- Learn while doing, train the trainers in the field.

- Understand the needs and requirements of stakeholders, have a plan for managing knowledge. Translate scientific publications (language wise and into lay man's terms) so that they are accessible to all – bring people closer to the topic.

Collaboration opportunities going forward

- Develop a platform to measure the skills gap – include learning providers and other stakeholders. Such a platform could also be used as a legacy tool.

Ideas/suggestions for funding bodies

- Find a way of highlighting success and make sure a beneficiary's level of participation and cooperation is recognised in a project – a measure of effort could be included in performance reviews on the institutions/companies involved.
- Create awareness of links/opportunities for synergies with other funding mechanisms (e.g., H2020) – this could be done by providing a mailing list of project partners.

Theme 2: Effective Implementation

What worked well and why:

- Engaging stakeholders early on and maintaining open channels of communication throughout the project was important. Survey stakeholders before implementing courses to find out their needs. It is important to build trust between stakeholders and education institutions. This will help gain buy-in from the industry.
- Work to build strong partnerships between project beneficiaries. Ensure partners have a range of skill sets to make the project stronger.
- Find ways to include policy makers in the project too. Ministry/Governmental endorsements are important to training programmes.
- Work to ensure skills acquired during training activities are recognised, commonly accepted skills standards go a long way to doing this. It can be challenging when skills gained in one area/region/jurisdiction are not recognised in another.
- Adopt a quadruple helix approach and engage academia, industry, policy makers and society/communities in your project. Solutions need to work for all stakeholders.

Collaboration opportunities going forward

- It can be difficult when skills developed in one jurisdiction are not recognised in another, collaboration between international bodies needs to occur and they should align on commonly accepted skills.
- Involve industry actors from the start of the project.
- There is a need to keep funding flowing so that stakeholders can access support beyond the end of the project. Funding to retain a project manager could be beneficial.

Ideas/suggestions for funding bodies

- Partners can struggle to keep collaboration going after funding runs out. Experience is lost and beneficiaries move on to new projects. Funding support to keep core activities running could be beneficial – it should be noted that plans for sustainability/legacy may be the responsibility of the project.

Theme 3 – Legacy: How can we ensure project legacy?

What worked well and why:

- Building interdisciplinary partnerships and creating a network with local communities can help ensure legacy.
- Engage stakeholders early on to ensure project results are complimentary to their needs. This will help ensure results continue to be taken up.
- Create international standards that continue to be used beyond the lifetime of the project.

Collaboration opportunities going forward

- Use tools developed in past projects.
- Take advantage of the multiplier effect via existing networks. Use networks like the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), use their services for creating follow on opportunities, for networking and for scale up advice.

Ideas/suggestions for funding bodies

- Post project funding needs to be allocated to maintain platforms/portals in order to gain momentum and demonstrate the benefits/value of results developed during the project.
- Support could be provided by funding authorities to help achieve sustainability beyond the short lifetime of the project.
- Ensure funding is available for people to avail of the training courses developed during projects. Affordability can be a barrier to legacy.
- Communicate results to society.
- Robust legacy plans should be part of the evaluation criteria for funding.
- Move beyond projects to larger initiatives – think bigger.

8. Conclusions

The workshop brought together a mix of stakeholders including funders, project beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Over 4 hours the three sessions helped to:

- ✓ **Contextualise** the overarching EU Skills agenda for Europe and the current policy drivers related to skills for a sustainable blue economy.
- ✓ **Explore** current blue skills policies and set the scene on the direction of future skills policies.
- ✓ **Identify** key characteristics of some best practice case studies that will demonstrate how current and future blue skills projects can be calibrated to maximise impact.
- ✓ **Generate** ideas on actions that can support implementation and help current and future skills projects align to the European agenda.

Knowledge was captured using a variety of methods (presentations, surveys, breakout rooms, follow up surveys, plenary discussions). Key messages conveyed by several participants across the event included:

- The fact that **emerging skills needs are not unique to the blue**; digital, green deal, sustainability etc.
- The requirement to ensure that **training providers and programmes are agile** and able to respond to both today and tomorrow's skills needs.

- **Recognition of the importance of "soft skills"**, e.g., communication, problem solving, entrepreneurship, digital literacy etc.
- The question of **who pays for training/skills acquisition,** recognising that for some sectors training cost is a barrier to skills development.
- The **importance of a multi-stakeholder engagement** across all phases of projects; needs identification, implementation, legacy efforts.
- To **design projects with legacy** in mind ensuring actions during implementation and close out, and if possible (funding permitting) post project.

In relation some **ideas for funding bodies preparing future skills/blue skills calls/programmes**:

- **Increased flexibility** to allow projects to adapt during implementation where beneficial to achieve the intended impacts of the project.
- **Post-project support** in terms of ensuring forums for storing project outputs for future users to update or the possibility of post project funding to allow effort to be spent on knowledge transfer/legacy/follow on funding.
- **Support in terms of networking/clustering** between related projects but also with the external stakeholders/end-users who may benefit from the outputs.
- **Support in helping to identify suitable follow-on funding** to help initiatives continue their work/scaling and achieve tangible impacts.

9. Follow Up Actions

A recording of the workshop and PDF copy of all presentations delivered on the day is available on the Maritime Forum.

Annex 1 – Event Agenda

Agenda

Chair: David Murphy, ERINN Innovation

Part 1: Blue skills, Policy and Foresight

Session A: Welcome

09:45-09:50 Introduction to Initiative & Purpose of workshop (CINEA)
09:50-10:00 Overview of EMFF Blue Skills projects (CINEA)

Session B: Setting the scene

10:00-10:30 Skills Agenda for Europe
DG EMPL – Felix Rohn, Policy Officer, DG Employment, European Commission
10:30 – 10:45 Skills challenges for a sustainable blue economy
DG MARE – Andy Kontoudakis, Policy Officer, DG MARE, European Commission
10:45 - 11:00 Mobilisation of actors
ERASMUS+ Centres of Vocational Excellence – Joao Santos, Senior Expert, DG Employment, European Commission

Session C: Knowledge Sharing and Learning

11:00-11:30 EMFF and ERASMUS+ Case Study Presentations (tbc)

1. *Sea of Experience*
2. *MarEnet*
3. *ASSESS*
4. *BAPSI*
5. *MATES*

11:30-11:45 Q&A Session and Coherence Panel Reflections

11:45-12:15 Break

Part 2: Blue skills networking event for EMFF project beneficiaries

Session A: Knowledge sharing

For this session, EMFF beneficiaries will be asked to share their experiences and advice/tips on the specific topics

12:15-13:00: Part A: Knowledge Sharing – Plenary Discussion

Session B: Networking and Collaboration

For this session, participants will be facilitated to network for future collaborations.

13:00-13:45 Part B: Networking and Collaboration – Facilitated thematic breakout session

13:45 Workshop end

Annex 2 – Session B Case Studies

1. Sea of Experience (EMFF Project)

Start date: October 2019 **End date:** October 2022 **Budget:** €935,007

Original Project Abstract:

Sea of Experience is a regionally-oriented project that aims at establishing a training/mentoring network; the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Network (EMReN), for professionals and youngsters related to maritime transport, shipbuilding and ship repair, ports and the cruise industry. It also targets to bridge the skills gap between education offer and labour market needs, especially with regards to technological developments and innovation, strengthen cooperation between industry, academia and public authorities, encourage mobility of students, teachers and professionals, raise societal awareness and provide guidance and advance knowledge about blue professions. The consortium will implement a wide spectrum of actions to achieve the overall objectives. More specifically, four common training programs, one for each selected blue sector will be formulated to tackle with the emerging skill shortage of the maritime domain. These educational items will consist of the cornerstone for the development of innovative face-to-face (e.g. summer schools, apprentices) and digital (e.g. Virtual Reality videos, digital competitions) training tools. Finally, a digital platform (the sharing-pooling e-platform) will be developed for hosting this novel toolkit. The EMReN; a dynamic ground-breaking network of academics, maritime industrial representatives and public Authorities, will focus on improving relationships between education and the sectors of interest. Furthermore, it will develop targeted and highly innovative mentoring/training initiatives (human big data) that will enable professionals and students to acquire new skills, diversify and expand on their existing skills and competencies. On the long-term, this blending of innovative face-to-face activities with digital technologies will lead to new employment opportunities in the Eastern Mediterranean region and will attract higher education graduates and/or professionals with significant technical and non-technical skills.

Link to project website: https://seaofexperience.org/

Additional Information: https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/featured-projects/sea-experience_en

2. MarENet (EMFF Project)

Start date: October 2019 **End date:** October 2021 **Budget:** €876,922

Original Project Abstract:

The Project seeks to strengthen the cooperation between maritime business and academia, designing and implementing a Northwest European Atlantic Maritime Network made up by training centres and industry, meeting the needs of the port maritime market and maritime curricula, whilst enhancing the visibility and opportunities of blue economy and therefore, attractiveness of blue careers. Through the consortium, actors from blue economy sectors and related value chains (maritime transport, shipbuilding and ship repair, shipping, blue biotechnology, fisheries and aquaculture) will join their effort to offer to students and employee pertinent skills needed to adapt their knowledge and take part to blue economy development. To achieve this objective, an executive committee will be defined to support the trans-regional network of maritime-port industries and educational centres that will constitute the European

Atlantic Maritime Network, offering an overview of current maritime education and employment demands in the maritime-port sector of the Atlantic sea basin. This Network will be consolidated in a Maritime Knowledge Centre on which to build long-term structured collaboration between industry, education and public authorities. The network will be made up by training centres (university and vocational training centres) and business of three main maritime sectors: shipbuilding, seaport logistics and fishing and is conceived to become the supporting framework to share human capital, best practices and tools in the Atlantic maritime environment, driving new collaborative training actions to integrate strengths and innovative proposals of each region.

Link to project website: https://www.marenet.org/home/

Additional information: https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/featured-projects/marenet_en

3. ASSESS (EMFF Project)

Start date: February 2017 **End date:** January 2019 **Budget:** €695,624

Original Project Abstract:

ASSESS is an education and training project focused on professional profiles specialized on safety and security issues related to ships and off-shore plants with three main concerns: safety and security for ships and plants, for people (human life at sea) and for the environment. The project will focus not only on technical subjects, but also on complementary skills that are mandatory when dealing with complex and highly technological products, in particular, in the validation processes related to the compliance of the products to the regulatory framework (for shipping and off-shore activities), which is defined internationally. The project will develop 3 high-level education and training courses aiming at spreading specialized tailored knowledge to the main different actors dealing with "safety and security issues' processes during the whole ship/off-shore plant life: 1. an advanced master for people involved from the design until the execution phase of a ship or an off-shore plant, from the first plan approval until the final validation and compliance of the product to the design specifications; 2. a professional course for professionals in charge of ensuring the correct periodical checks of the ship/plant during its lifecycle at sea; 3. a refresher course for teachers of nautical high schools (train the teacher activity). While the 1st and the 2nd courses will attract professional profiles directly employable (or already employed) in businesses and represent the strongest link with industry, the 3rd is dedicated to high-school teachers and it is expected to have the greatest multiplier effect especially in terms of orienting young people towards maritime vocations.

Link to project website: http://assess.dia.units.it/

4. BAPSI (EMFF Project)

Start date: October 2019 **End date:** April 2022 **Budget:** €749,801

Original Project Abstract:

As the demand of seafood product worldwide constantly increases, there is the need to respond in an efficient, responsible and sustainable manner. In order to do so, professionals working in the sector must

be equipped with relevant expertise. Nevertheless, an overall lack of adequate skills and competencies has been perceived and acknowledge by the representatives of the sector. An overall lack of connection between the industry and education is one of the causes of this gap, which is affecting the competitiveness of companies and their capacity to cope with the constant changes and challenges of the sector. The project aims to promote a fruitful dialogue between the industrial sector of fishery and education, in order to address the necessity of professionals to be trained and equipped consistently with the needs of the industry. By putting together the direct representatives of the fishery industrial compartment and the academic and research providers, the projects aims to empower hybrid professional figures, equipped with the exact skills required by the industry. BAPSI will implement a one-year academy, which will offer: - 12 short blended courses; - 2 days of seminars/conference; - 5 practice learning days; - Practical experience for willing selected participants to be chosen among: apprenticeship, "alongside the manager" format and "Exchange visits" format. On general terms, the project' expected impact is to challenge and change the current situation faced by the industrial compartment of fishery, as to say the lack of duly equipped professionals and the lack of collaborative schemes between industry and education. Target groups will benefit by learning from highly professionalizing courses. Moreover, the combination of theory and practice will enable participants to gain not only the most updated expertise from the industry and academic sides, but also to live concrete practical experiences. The creation of a CoP enables participants continuous learning.

Link to project website: https://http//www.assoittica.it/

Additional information: https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/featured-projects/bapsi_en

5. MATES (ERASMUS+ Project)

Start date: January 2018 **End date:** April 2022 **Budget:** €4.9million

Original Project Abstract:

MATES' objective is to develop a skills strategy that addresses the main drivers of change to the maritime industry, in particular shipbuilding and offshore renewable energy. Both sectors are strongly linked and require new capacities to succeed in an increasingly digital, green and knowledge driven economy.

As a transversal line of action, MATES will carry out a robust dissemination and outreach plan. This aims to increase the attractiveness of the maritime industry, particularly careers in the shipbuilding and offshore renewable energy sectors, while also ensuring future adoption of the strategy.

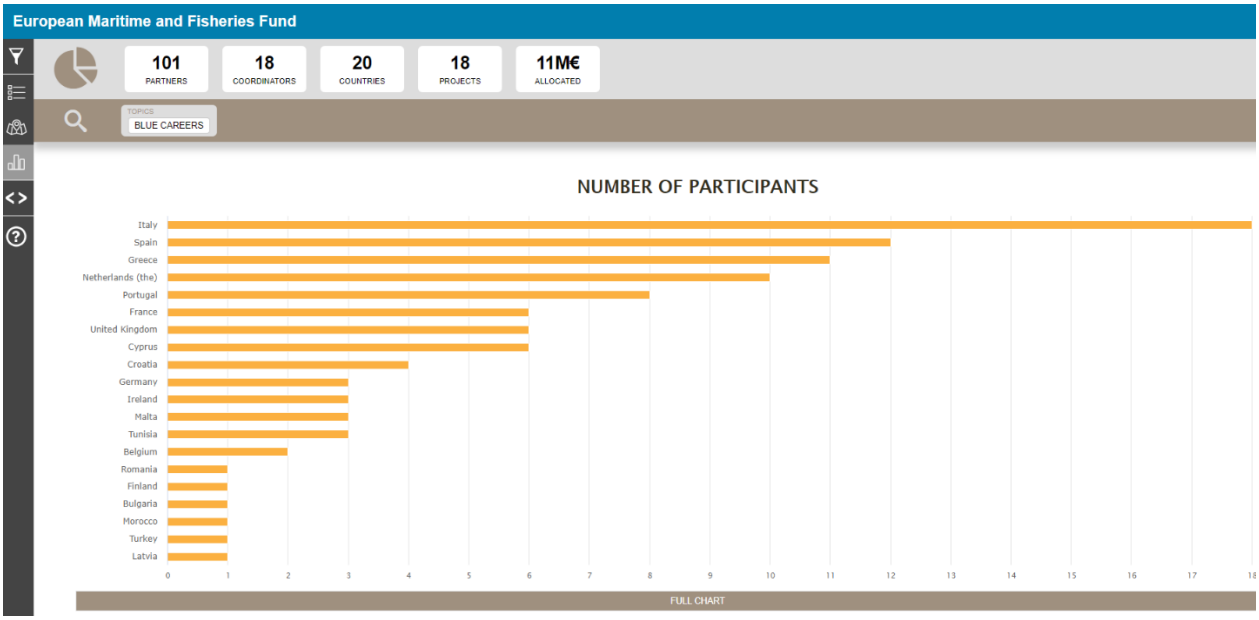
MATES will validate actions and priorities suggested by the skills strategy through the setup of 11 pilot case studies. These case studies will test the MATES concepts on digital skills, green skills, mobility, innovation management, curricula development and ocean literacy.

Furthermore, the project will widen perceptions of Ocean Literacy initiatives by embedding an appropriate industrial perspective. It will spread an updated image for the maritime industry and send out a convincing message concerning the high-tech and long-term future of the maritime sector.

Link to project website: https://www.projectmates.eu/

Annex 3 – EMFF Portfolio of Skills Projects

In the EMFF portfolio of projects managed on behalf of DG MARE, we have 18 projects in total from various calls dealing with skills and blue careers including vocational training. Details on the projects can be found on the following website by filtering the topic “blue careers” https://emff.easme-web.eu/#



Annex 4 - Information About The Contract

Synergies and Clustering between Maritime Projects (EASME/EMFF/2020/3.1.12) – SI2.850620

INFORMATION ON THE CONTRACT:

The general aim of this contract is to set up and develop a process for **evaluating and clustering EMFF** (bottom-up) financed projects from 2016 onwards. The service contract will manage and animate a platform for **structured exchange of information**, **mutual learning**, **greater visibility** and **cross-fertilisation between projects** funded under EMFF.

SYNERGIES – COHERENCE PANEL:

An originality of the contract is that a "coherence panel" from Commission services (and executive agencies) managing other programmes such as HEurope, INTERREG, ERASMUS+, INTERREG will also intervene. The coherence panel's outlook on EMFF projects will complement the workshops that are planned under the networking activity (WP3) and the task of evaluation (WP1) and of clustering/visibility of projects (WP2). Drawing lessons and experience from such EU funding instruments and relevant funded projects will be a key role of the coherence panel that will intervene under this service contract under Work Package 3 (WP3) in a specific workshop where projects from other EU funding instruments will be invited to participate. The coherence panel will be composed of representatives of the European Commission, chosen by the Contracting Authority.

Basically, the contract will cover 3 key activities:

1) **Evaluation (WP1)**

The contract will cover 60-90 projects and evaluation of these projects is the first task (WP1) based on indicators (some provided as part of the technical specifications and some as part of the technical tender) so we think it is relevant to have someone from your team to be informed, contribute and be invited to meetings where necessary. For example, we need to provide the contractor with a list of sectors in the blue economy at the start of the contract. We are indeed looking at the sectors identified in the blue economy report although some further granularity may be needed.

2) **Clustering and visibility (WP2)**

Under this activity the contractor will set-up thematic clusters of projects and give visibility to relevant EMFF projects through the preparation of communication material for social media and on the maritime forum (web).

3) **Networking (WP3)**

Under this activity, the contractor will organise thematic clusters workshops to allow projects to exchange lessons learnt and best practices but also to identify opportunities for cooperation and also 3 specific workshops (one on integration between EU funding instruments, one on seabasins and a final conference). This task will also be closely linked to WP2 regarding communication and dissemination.

The contract will have as main results:

(1) a better understanding of factors that positively influence the success of projects supported by the EMFF direct management, as well as of bottlenecks (in order to inform and improve future processes for programming actions to be funded under EMFF through direct management).

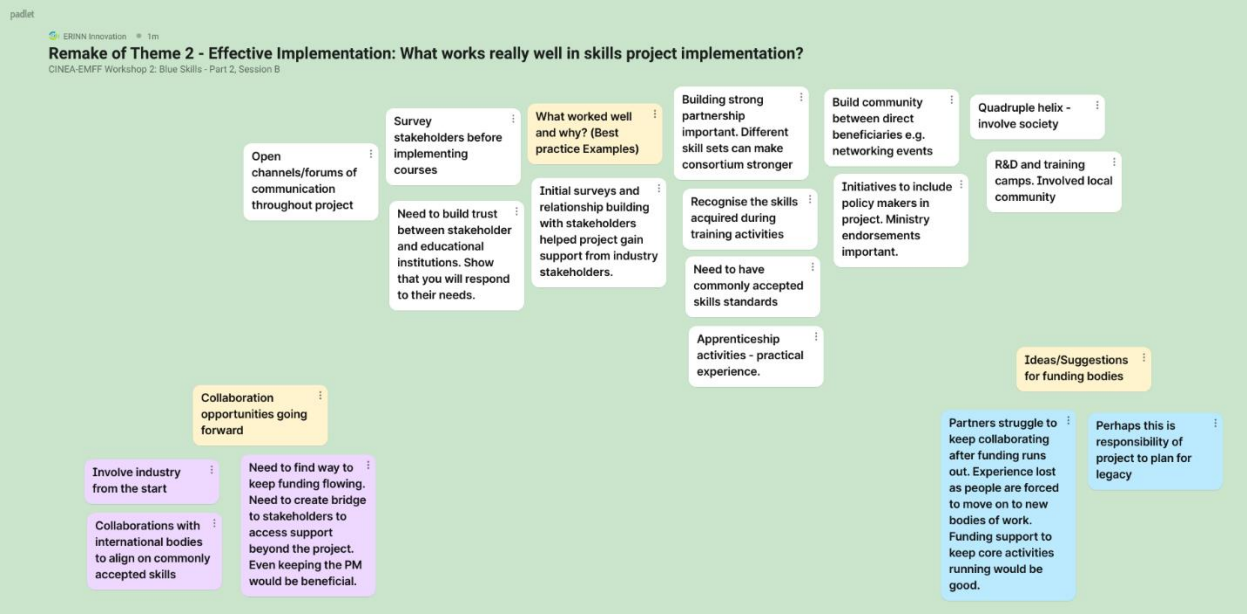
(2) mutual learning to enable projects to take advantage of insights and practices from other projects, including relevant similar projects funded by other EU funding instruments (i.e. Horizon Europe, INTERREG, LIFE etc.);

(3) an increased visibility of EMFF projects.

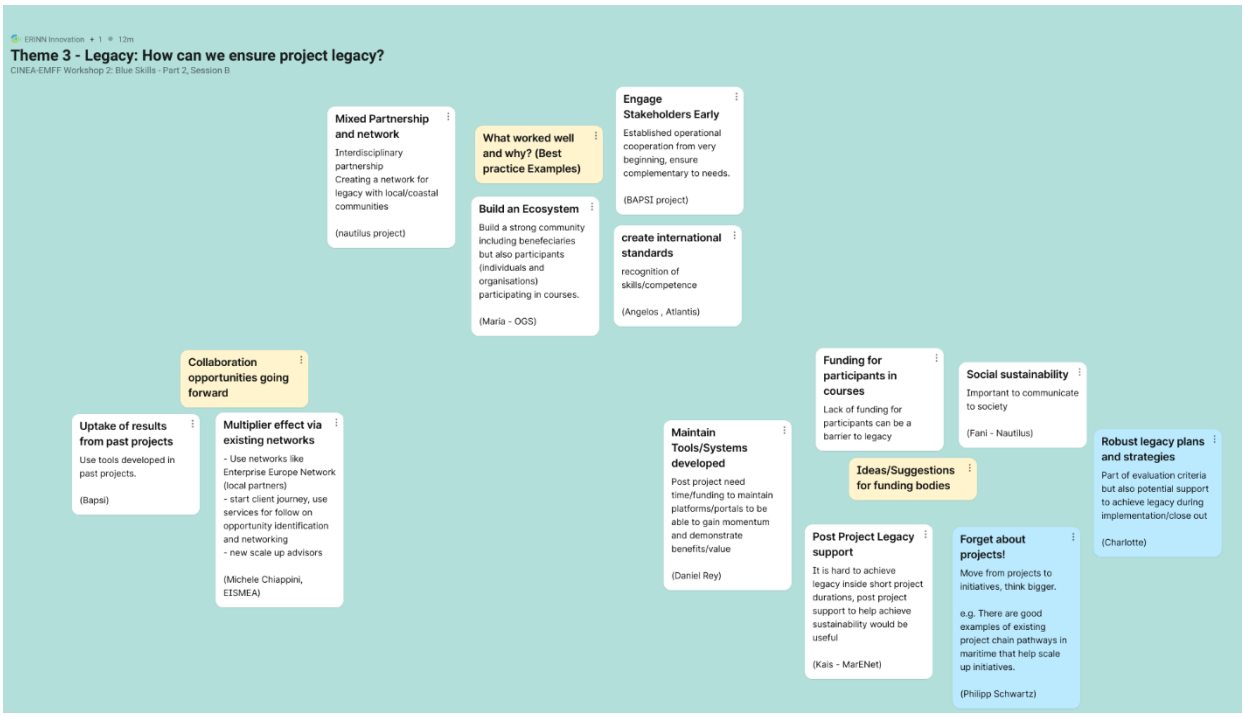
Annex 5 – Breakout Room Raw Data

Theme 1 - Cooperation

Theme 2- Effective Implementation



Theme 3 - Legacy



Annex 6 – Post Event Survey Responses

Theme 1 - Cooperation

Question 1: What worked well and why

When there is a global need/problem is good to work at global perspective. This is what we have been doing with other organisations from the States and Australia under the ISO.
1) Using a project to answer effectively skills needs from industry. 2) involve professionals from industry as teachers (training gains value)
Involve the stakeholders from the early stages of the project. In NAUTILUS project we did a detailed mapping of the stakeholders in watersports tourism sector and then we involved them in our research for the blue skills gaps, the job analysis, and the training needs analysis of the occupational categories we are focusing on.
The session last week shows all kind of projects of which you are not always aware.
Study visits in enterprises; involvement of schools
Involving end users early in the process. Working with them to design the solution.
The project had already the results of the MENTOR project, so it was a smooth continuation of it, adding more details.
Engagement activities like workshops

Question 2: Collaboration Opportunities going forward

We believe that the establishment of a permanent legal entity of representing the European Science Diver filed is necessary.
Verify if training experiences have the potential to be implemented in other territories.
A new subcategory in the 'Maritime Forum Themes' for the vocational training opportunities in the Blue Economy Sectors. New training schemes, certificates, workshops, seminars, online courses, and even short life-long training courses provided by universities, academies or vocational education institutions. The EU Maritime Forum platform should be upgraded to an active hub for Blue Economy stakeholders.
We will contact the Blue Skills project to see what we can learn for each other, already cooperating with Skill Beyond the Sea
1) the schools will keep organizing drawing competitions, as designed in BAPSI, on seafood issues 2) collaboration with local TVs to forecast 2 videos produced within the project; 3) educational entities can freely use the 11 webinars produced since they are now self-paces courses.
Expanding the scope of blue skills and finding synergies and cross sector opportunities.

Question 3: Ideas/Suggestions for funding bodies

The cost of training, gaining experience and obtaining their gear for young science divers is obsolete. So we need a funding mechanism to compensate this at European level.
Push on collaboration among ongoing projects in terms of 1) promotion of respective courses and 2) find commonalities to capitalize on the results in the future

New calls that will exploit the results of previous successful projects.
No expertise on this
New projects have to capitalize and scale up on at least one significant outputs produced in the previous calls
Small grands to allow end users to benefit from training and certifications.
Funding bodies like EMFF could encourage more collaboration between the project under the same call, and the respective stakeholders, through roundtables etc.
organisation of info days

Theme 2 – Effective Implementation

Question 1: What worked well and why

The platform of e-recruitment that we developed brings together all of the stakeholders in our field, it is providing the skill gap in real time and is a powerful tool.
Online and registered lessons. Study visits
Cross-sectoral collaboration and synergies. Exchange of knowledge. Involve the local communities and the youth. R&D workshops and training camps.
We are giving webinars on the project itself and educational packages made, which works well. People or organisations that will not come to a (paid) big (day) event do have time for a webinar of one hour.
To offer practical activities as part of an educational path established at the outset of the project with the full involvement of SMEs from the very beginning
A more agile implementation approach (necessary due to covid) with a lot virtual and hybrid events. A smaller implementation team to take care of day-to-day activities.
The workshops that the project organised and events that the project participated.
Close communication with project partners, wide dissemination

Question 2: Collaboration Opportunities going forward

The organisations providing training to bridge the skill gap can do it focused and on-time by getting paid by the firms recruiting candidates with shortcomings in certain skills.
Strong partnership able to implement a further training beyond the project
Establish training protocols and mechanisms that will continue after the end of the project.
SkillSea is working on a knowledge hub to share future needs, decide on learning outcomes, make educational packages and validate those in the hub again.
Standardisation and certification in the industry. Incorporating training and skills in other projects.

Question 3: Ideas/Suggestions for funding bodies

One idea is to update the platform for the whole bleu skills industry.
Ask for a specific plan for future self-funding and sustainability of the project.
part of the pilot that is starting next week
To cluster projects and organize 1 on-line meeting per year during the implementation
Financial Support to industry to improve the blue skills of their workers
facilitate dissemination through EU pathways

Theme 3 - Legacy

Question 1: What worked well and why

We want to leave behind a European Directive, a pan-European body representing the Science Diver field and a sustainable platform for e-recruitment.
The most successful results became the basis for a new training course: self-funded and realized by the same partnership.
Our project is not over yet, however we are developing a training scheme that will lead to a certification according to the International Standard ISO/IEC 17024.
We hope the hub will work as networking is of importance
Think of operational sustainability beyond the project. Foster synergies between successful projects with a clear path to commercialisation.
From an early stage there was a a bridge between partners, stakeholders, and beneficiaries.
Focus on concrete outputs that are worth mentioning. Project outputs should be in line with the organisation's expertise

Question 2: Collaboration Opportunities going forward

2022 edition is in the pipe with the aim of scaling up in terms of participation.
The NAUTILUS certification (according to ISO/IEC 17024) facilitates the recognition and the acceptance of certified persons in the international labour market. Networking with stakeholders and targeted dissemination could provide a mechanism for future collaboration. Project legacy could be ensured through education and training (informal training by VET providers, and formal education opportunities for Blue Growth and Ocean Literacy, through e.g EPICUR European University). Moreover, exploitation of results for future synergies and future projects could ensure the sustainability of the collaboration mechanism.
We hope the hub will work as networking is of importance
Work in common facilities / resources for operational sustainability of projects. e.g. 2-3 relevant projects work together to keep their activities live.
A cluster including the consortia of the projects could be formed.

Question 3: Ideas/Suggestions for funding bodies

Could you please slightly reformulate my message "Forget about projects!". It is clear for those participating in the discussion but might lead to misunderstandings by others. Please formulate instead "To ensure project legacy, do not focus purely on individual projects and their individual results, but put them into the bigger context. Either ex-ante by developing project chains/pipelines including several projects from different funding sources together achieving a common goal. Or, ex-post by thematic capitalisation and clustering across funding sources and projects - promoting the change they led to all together instead of talking about individual project results."
Erasmus+ calls for blue skills to create training camps for youth and promote the blue professions, and their training opportunities to all European sea basins.
Part of the pilot withing SkillSea
As said in the previous section, it must be mandatory to capitalize at least 1 output produced in the previous call (e.g. webpage, E-learning platforms and material, comm material etc.)
Support successful projects in actual commercialisation activities through Financial Support to Third parties (FSTP) instruments.
Try to maintain the outcomes of each project, and make them something bigger.
Upgrade the EU directory for submitted results from other projects