

BLUE GROWTH WORKING GROUP

ANNUAL PLAN 2020

WORKING GROUP LEADERS

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OBJECTIVES

The Working Group focuses on the blue economy covering both marine and maritime research and innovation areas with the intention to support members with their regional strategies (S3 and sea basin) in the field. Sustainability and the digital challenges related to the marine and maritime sector are key issues. The group aims to foster participation in present and future European funding programmes and initiatives and to build partnership between members.

CONTEXT

What key EU level priorities, strategies, and events does the Working Group aim to monitor in 2020?

- The European Green Deal and especially the section on a sustainable blue economy (p. 14 of the communication)
 - From farm to fork strategy
- DG MARE's proposed Blue Economy Initiative which should be presented in Q1 2020
- EIB strategy "Preserving our oceans"
- BlueInvest Day 2020, 4 February
- The Horizon Europe mission on healthy oceans, seas, coastal and inland waters
- Digitalisation and Digital Innovation Hubs (linking for example to autonomous vessels)
- EU Industrial Policy (to be published in Q1 2020, especially the section on shipping)

Which funding programmes are important for the Working Group and how does the WG aim to facilitate project development?

- Horizon Europe
- European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
- The LIFE programme

- JPI Oceans
- Single Market Programme
- EU Space programme – sections on marine data, satellite technologies
- Bio-based Industries JU and Bio-based Industries Consortium including the proposed partnership for Horizon Europe “Circular bio-based Europe: sustainable innovation for new local value from waste and biomass”

How does the group support partnership building (e.g. S3 partnerships) and collaborate with other European organisations or networks?

- The Working Group might explore the possibilities for a S3 Partnership in blue growth/blue economy – and strengthen the link to existing relevant S3 Partnerships.
- Potential collaboration with European Parliament intergroups: Green Deal, Searica (with MEPs supporting the LeaderSHIP strategy), SDGs, and Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development
- European partnerships in Horizon Europe, in particular:

A climate neutral, sustainable and productive Blue Economy

The objective is to sustainably unlock, demonstrate and harvest the full potential of Europe’s Oceans and Seas through a well-structured, sustained and simplified joint effort in this borderless domain with the aim to support the transition to a strong, climate neutral and sustainable blue economy by 2050.

Zero-emission waterborne transport

The proposed partnership is expected to radically transform inland and maritime waterborne transport, develop knowledge, technologies and demonstrate solutions that will enable zero-emission shipping for all ship types and services¹. It will contribute to maintaining and further reinforcing Europe’s global leadership in green shipping technologies. This will create a foundation for shipping to underpin a carbon neutral future with the demonstration of deployable zero-emission solutions suitable for all main ship types and services by 2030.

Water4All: Water security for the planet

The partnership aims at securing all water demands in terms of quality and quantity, and that both economic and natural systems, as well as people are protected from water-related hazards. This is essential to support the transition to a healthy planet and to ensure a resilient Energy Union, EU climate neutral policy and respect of planetary boundaries.

ACTIVITIES

Autonomous shipping

17 March (TBC)

Digitisation and autonomy in the shipping sector will provide better integrated logistics, change business models, improve safety, facilitate maintenance, and significantly change the role of the crew and skills needed. This meeting will both address the technological aspects as well as the regulatory issues and look at the relevant sections for shipping in the EU Industrial Policy set to be published in Q1 2020.

Target audience: Brussels-based and regional stakeholders

Clean waterborne transport

June – during the Green Week

With the Green Deal a substantial part of road transport will shift to inland waterways. However, in order to meet the 90% reduction in transport emissions needed by 2050 to achieve climate neutrality waterborne transport also needs to become cleaner. Clean shipping will significantly contribute to reduce the environmental impact created by air, water and noise pollution from shipping. It can also be used as the competitive advantage compared to Asian ships.

What measures are needed from a research and innovation perspective to support the long-term transition towards zero-emission waterborne transport? What is already being done by regional and local authorities to address this and where are the current bottlenecks?

Target audience: Brussels-based representatives

Blue Invest Fund and the EIB strategy “Preserving our oceans” – with the Innovation & Investment Working Group

September/October

Access to finance for stakeholders in the blue economy sector is complex. Recently “rebranded” as the Climate bank, the EIB launched its Blue Sustainable Ocean Strategy in 2019. The EIB committed to double the lending to sustainable ocean projects to €2.5 bn between 2019 and 2023. This strategy also fits with the EC’s Blue Invest platform which supports investment readiness and access to finance for early-stage businesses, SMEs and scale-up in the blue economy sector. In February European Commission and European Investment Fund launched €75 million BlueInvest Fund 2020. Presentations on these strategies will aim at helping ERRIN members to get a better understanding of these opportunities.

Target audience: Brussels-based and regional stakeholders

Marine litter – ocean pollution beyond plastics

October/November

Excess nutrients, chemicals, pharmaceutical waste, microbes, noise and other pollutants severely stress the marine environment. With the European Green Deal, the new Commission has the ambition of zero pollution and in Horizon Europe the mission on healthy oceans, seas, coastal and inland waters will support research and innovation efforts. Building on the meeting organised in 2019 on innovative solutions to prevent marine litter, this meeting will look at how research and innovation can tackle ocean pollution beyond plastics.

Target audience: Brussels-based and regional stakeholders

European Maritime Day proposal: A regional approach to skills in the blue economy If accepted, 14-15 May, Cork, Ireland

Lack of skilled labour as well as innovative entrepreneurs is a challenge for the maritime sector and its growth. Rise of new advanced technologies and digitalisation of the sector are heavily transforming the nature of jobs and competences needed. The sector also lacks attractiveness among young people and women. This workshop will showcase how regions have tackled these challenges. We will also discuss how regional cooperation could help enhance the situation and what is needed from the EU to make sure Europe has the knowledge and skills to remain in the lead in ocean science and innovation.