



Blue Career Centre of Eastern Mediterranean & Black Sea

Mentoring for the Sea



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The MENTOR project and the Blue Career Center in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea – welcome onboard and bon voyage!

The general objective of the MENTOR project is to set up a regional platform in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea called a Blue Career Centre. It aims to provide prospects for young jobseekers in four key Blue sectors of the region - maritime transport, cruise tourism, offshore oil and gas and marine aquaculture, and to support businesses in finding the right staff with proper qualifications. This facility will promote and reinforce the study, education, training, professional progress, research and innovation in the four aforementioned sectors of the Blue Economy in the wider region of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea. It will be focused on attracting students, graduate professionals and interested parties to support their re-training, upgrading and widening of skills.

Considering that the MENTOR project is at the verge of its completion we should mention some of the major cornerstones completed so far by the international consortium comprised of seven partners located in four different countries – Cyprus, Bulgaria, Greece and Romania.

The project was divided into five work packages, each addressing specific objectives through accomplishing various actions. The project outputs are interconnected, aiming to provide the Blue Career Centre with necessary tools serving as its background.

The major achievement was the establishment of the Blue Career Centre Secretariat in Cyprus in January 2018 and its local representations in Greece, Bulgaria and Romania that may later extend to other countries in this area - Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, which were selected as project observers and might be the succeeding locations. Next, the consortium mapped the provided maritime education and training in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea region by describing the available educational infrastructure. Further, the partners developed re-training schemes for blue professionals in the maritime transportation sector, aquaculture, cruise tourism, and offshore oil and gas sectors. Then they performed mentoring and career guidance to students (age 15-18) in 200 schools in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, and Romania, as this was combined with re-training of blue professionals and the establishment of introductory e-learning courses in the four key Blue sectors. Later on, the project team organized a series of Blue Career Fairs in the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea to raise awareness among young people and to promote the mobility of 39 students and 26 project staff within the region. Another objective was balancing of the demand and supply of maritime, aquaculture, cruise tourism and offshore oil and gas professionals in the region and the promotion of the harmonization of maritime education and training within the consortium countries. Finally, an action plan for the management of the Blue Career Center was developed and the First Regional Conference of Maritime education and Training Providers gathered leading lecturers, researchers and professionals from eight countries in the region to discuss the challenges and opportunities in the Blue Growth sector and share findings and results.

7 partners:

- University of Cyprus (UCY) - Cyprus
- Maritime Institute of Eastern Mediterranean (Mar.In.E.M.) - Cyprus
- Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) - Cyprus
- National Technical University of Athens (NTUA) - Greece
- Agricultural University of Athens (AUA) - Greece
- Marine Cluster Bulgaria (MCB) - Bulgaria
- Constanta Maritime University (CMU) - Romania

4 observers:

- Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport - Egypt
- Jordan Academy for Maritime Studies - Jordan
- Al-Manar University of Tripoli - Lebanon
- Istanbul Technical University - Turkey

Project Duration:

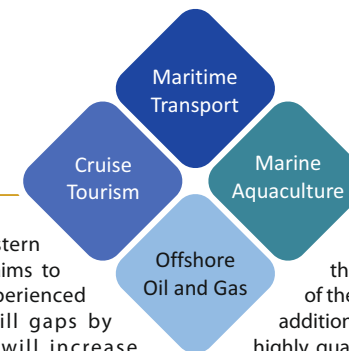
24 months -
1st March 2017 until
28th February 2019

Total cost:

EUR 689 762

EC financial contribution:

EU 551 810 (80%)



Blue Career Pros & Cons – Maritime Professions at a Glance

The Career Centre for the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea aims to attract young people and experienced workers and fill existing skill gaps by supporting activities that will increase employability in key Blue Economy sectors of the region: coastal & maritime tourism, marine aquaculture, shipbuilding & ship repair, transport (cargo & ferry), offshore oil & gas.

The maritime business demands maritime educated staff and skills for a wide range of professions in all aforementioned subsectors. In addition, local governments need qualified human resources for their institutions, the navy and the coastguard. All key Blue subsectors represent drivers and growing industries with expansion potential that could offer many different types of jobs, as the ports in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea are of great importance for commodity exchange in Europe.

A career in the maritime sector requires various skills and specific qualifications with a relevant degree. Certain positions require some form of qualification, but some of the entry-level positions are open for those that have no qualifications yet. One can just imagine the multitude of jobs that await. Prospective Blue employees should possess certain knowledge of the maritime industry standards, must be committed to work long hours and be problem solving oriented. Applicants must acquire a basic safety and emergency training, as well as safety, survival and firefighting courses.

In addition to the numerous career paths and the various alternative careers, the Blue Economy can offer certain benefits than no other industry can support. This includes the ability to work abroad and to reside in your native country in combination with the opportunity to work and travel worldwide to visit world heritage sites while enjoying the flexibility of planning of on board duty and holidays. Another advantage is the internationally recognized qualification and certification of the Blue employees and their direct access to the international labor market through a labor contract as per world standards. This is complemented by the strictly regulated labor conditions and guaranteed rights in the maritime industry, which also sets the highest labor security standards by imposing an obligatory financial and health risk insurance for all seafarers. Further, the

Blue professionals are able to upgrade their qualification without interruption of their usual work cycle and after acquiring additional education, they could perform a highly qualified work in other related branches.

Last, but not least, a Blue career offers a long-term personal financial planning and savings opportunities supported by the high initial income, a swift realization and a rapid career growth.

However, one should not overlook certain challenges that are inherent to the Blue careers such as the long absences from home and the irregular travel schedules. The occasional social exclusion and limited access to services combined with higher insalubrity compared to most other professions are considerable shortcomings of the maritime profession. Further to these, the constantly increasing regulatory requirements (conventions, codes, regulations, directives, etc.) followed by the permanent external control of the duties (port & flag inspections, class society inspections, audits, company inspections) are an additional source of stress. Another disadvantage is the fact that although the Blue Economy jobs have no alternative and the demand for workers in the Blue industry is constantly growing, the staff/crew is often replaced with applicants of markets abundant in human resources and in the end, this career is based on hired labor resources. Finally, global economic crises causing shrinking consumption, fleet reduction and surplus of personnel also have their unfavorable impact on Blue jobs.

To sum up, after weighting the pros and cons of a Blue career one could conclude that this high mobility and flexibility of the Blue professionals and their residence beyond conventional resources leads to professional collaboration and friendships with colleagues of different nationalities and vastly expands the personal horizon of an individual. Therefore, young audiences and persons considering a career change should turn to each one of the four Blue Career Centers based in Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Cyprus to be further mentored and advised by our experienced team.



**Blue Career Centre
of Eastern Mediterranean
& Black Sea**

Mentoring for the Sea

Mentoring, Career Guidance & e-Learning Courses

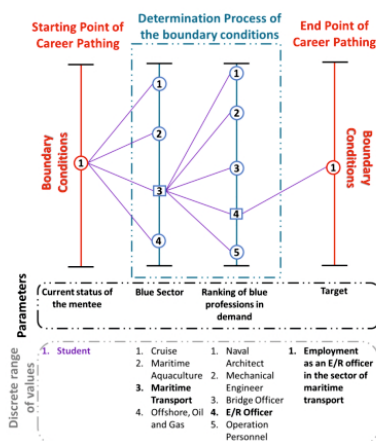
One of the main obstacles for the Blue Economy is the shortage of highly skilled personnel. The lack of high quality career guidance regarding the Blue Sectors, i.e. the shipbuilding and ship repair industry, the offshore oil & gas industry, and sea related tourism, significantly affects the ways that students choose to follow a relevant career path. Therefore, students, especially those between the age 15 - 18, need to be properly mentored and guided on the broad field of job opportunities offered in the Blue Economy in order to make an informed and sound decision on the career path they will follow. The main objective to increase their awareness and properly inform them on job opportunities and relevant prospects has been achieved by numerous visits at schools. The project team organized meetings with students of high schools in each participating country, presenting the opportunities for careers in the four key blue sectors, conducting discussions and telling true success stories.

A cooperative network of training institutions has been designed, based on existing Erasmus inter-institutional Blue Agreements, in an effort to facilitate students to access courses and educational material from a multitude of different training centres in the Eastern Mediterranean & Black Sea. The network consists of 30 training institutions from Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece and Romania, forming 32 agreements for the selected MEAs.

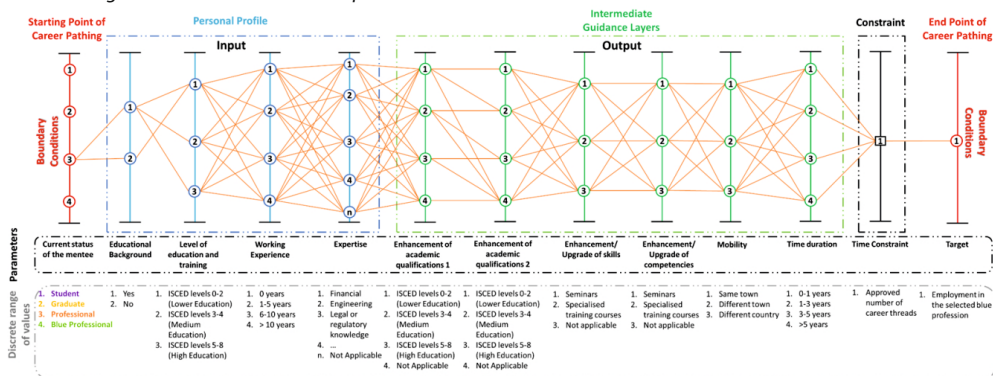
The carrier guidance to graduates or persons with a vocational/technical qualification to maritime professions through targeted and innovative education and/or training initiatives, as well as re-training of blue professionals in the maritime sector, cruise tourism, fish tourism and ichthyotourism and offshore oil and gas sectors are also aims of the project. Having identified the needs, the required skills and competencies of the selected Blue sectors, a mentoring framework was developed to provide the career guidance and occupational orientation not only to students but also to existing graduates and professionals. Numerous career paths were generated by matching the needs of each potential candidate for employment in the selected MEAs with the current or expected needs of the selected industry depending on the occupational status of the candidate. A detailed personal profile of the mentoree was constructed based on a specific set of parameters, which presents a dynamic reflection of the status of the candidate under examination, which will be continuously updated according to his professional development based on the selected career thread.

eLearning courses were developed as the best tool for addressing the educational and training needs of tech-savvy professionals by incorporating a wide array of digital technologies. The e-learning courses aim at the familiarization of students with the selected maritime sectors. During the e-learning courses significant information for the concept of Blue Growth, the economic overview, the required academic qualifications, the necessary technical skills and behavioural competences and the potential job opportunities for a successful professional career in the mentioned sectors is presented.

The career guidance framework-1st Step



The career guidance framework-2nd Step



The Blue Career Fairs – the Matchmaking Event of MENTOR

The consortium partners arranged eight events called Blue Career Days, a set of two activities held evenly throughout the project duration of two years in each one of the participating project countries – Cyprus, Greece, Romania and Bulgaria. The second Blue Career Fairs were held on the 19th October 2018 in Constanta, Romania; on the 15th November 2018 in Varna, Bulgaria and on 30th October 2018 in Athens, Greece. The fairs intended to raise awareness amongst the younger generation with regard to the marine and maritime industry, including the four key Blue sectors – maritime transport, cruise tourism, the offshore oil & gas sector and the marine aquaculture, and to explore the opportunities of a sea- or shore-based career. In order to achieve this, career counselors, secondary school students, university students, unemployed graduates and professionals participated in the annual fairs. The second Blue Career Fair in Cyprus was organized in three different cities, i.e. in Nicosia, Larnaca, and Limassol on the 11th, 13th, and 14th of December 2018. The main objective of the fairs was to bring together maritime education and training organizations, employers and future job seekers in a way that would be mutually beneficial for all involved participants. The consortium members decided the mode of conduct of each event, but it generally included presentations covering all the four sectors of interest of the MENTOR project. Some of the programs included also introductory modules for blue economy, specialized presentations about innovative entrepreneurship in these sectors and a career game in the sense of speed interview. The fairs gave high-school learners and students the opportunity to take part in plenary debates as well as to face professional discussions with marine employers. This approach allowed for continued communication and for making the employees aware of marine industry expectations. Participants from high schools and universities received useful information on career opportunities in the Blue Economy. In this context, distinguished professionals and academics from the marine and the maritime industry presented their different disciplines (e.g. shipping, tourism, fish farming, offshore energy) by delivering presentations where they highlighted the specific qualifications required, the duties and responsibilities that each discipline entails, as well as the future employment and career development opportunities. Further the participants met business representatives and were consulted how to apply for a job in various maritime sectors.



The Second Blue Career Fair in Constanta, Romania, at the Constanta Maritime University, 19th October 2018



The Second Blue Career Fair in Varna, Bulgaria, at Younashki Salon Hall, 15th November 2018



The Second Blue Career Fair in Limassol, Cyprus, at the Limassol Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 14th December 2018



The Second Blue Career Fair in Athens, Greece, at the Agricultural University of Athens, 30th November 2018

Mobility and Cooperation Promotion in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea

A framework for promotion of mobility of students and staff within the region was elaborated on the ground of the information collected during a research aiming to identify and illustrate the current situation of institutions in the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea region that offer training and education relevant to the selected Marine and Maritime Economic Activities (MEAs).

Results of the study demonstrated that currently the educational and training offer towards blue professionals and practitioners is still fragmented, which leaves much room for international cooperation in this domain. In order to address this problem, a central information hub for education and training of blue professionals by cataloguing the relevant resources in the region was developed with the aim to work as a tool for strengthening international collaboration by establishing a communication platform for fast and easy exchange of information and expertise between institutions that provide Blue education and training.

The main tool for implementing the central information hub is a dedicated database containing a wide array of information relating to academic institutions, training centres, as well as governmental and non-governmental educational organizations, namely a catalogue of training institutions in the region. As a result, the survey revealed the existence and operation of 477 educational and training centres providing education and training in the selected Blue sectors, of which a significant majority is based in Greece – representing 67% of the total number of the educational and training centres.

On the ground of the above finding, a “Mobility e- tool” was created aiming to facilitate the mobility of students and staff in the region and the four MEAs. The main objective of the mobility e-tool is to give each mentoree all the available information regarding each Blue sector in the four participating countries in a fast and simple procedure. The collected information will be available to mentorees, undergraduates, postgraduates or professionals so they can choose a course according to their personal educational profile that will lead them to a Blue profession within the region. The developed e-tool is currently focused on a Blue career in the area of the Erasmus inter-institutional agreements in the Eastern Mediterranean & the Black Sea.

39 students and 26 project staff had the opportunity to participate in short mobility visits in the region mainly through the Blue Career Fairs between the MENTOR countries. Specifically, the mobility of students was organized between Bulgaria and Romania as well as between Cyprus and Greece. The objective of this activity was for the students and the project staff to exchange experience, to become aware of the educational and training opportunities offered by partner universities and allow for further collaboration in the field of student mobility.

Harmonization of the Requirements for Maritime Professional Training

The objective of the Blue Career Centre of the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea is to deliver training courses for multidiscipline groups such as:

- trainees and young people
- professionals with a vocational/technical background
- currently employed professionals in the maritime sector that would like to progress their career and increase their mobility in other maritime jobs.

Considering the above, the MENTOR project strives to assist and work towards harmonization of requirements for maritime professional training focusing on practice with an accent on sea-faring staff mostly. Even though the shipping industry is overregulated, there is still need to bridge gaps and provide some basic requirements for people serving in the selected economic activities.

The consortium partners performed a case study of maritime professionals with seagoing experience who would like to mobilize to shore-based careers. It was estimated that almost 20% of seafarers would like to shift their career to land, as they needed to find something new and challenging in their career life-cycle along with being away from home. Even though maritime professionals are considered valuable to shipping companies, insurance, auditing and surveying, shipbuilding and repair, seafarers lack the perspective of how shipping operates. Apart from their maritime knowledge a series of technical and soft skills are equally needed. Leadership and communication were identified as critical components to a successful career and personal development while technical reporting and data analytics are considered as important as maritime knowledge is.

The Blue Career Center Headquarters and Representations

The MENTOR team welcomed 2018 with the exciting news of the establishment of the secretariat of the Blue Career Centre (BCC) of the Eastern Mediterranean & Black Sea in Cyprus registered successfully in January 2018. This action was consequently followed by the foundation of three BCC branches in Bulgaria, Greece and Romania.

Each subsidiary designed and set up their own organizational structure, legal form, operational procedures, communication strategy and tools towards the target groups – school children, higher education graduates or persons with a vocational/technical qualification to maritime professions and the society.

The career centers will provide information and guidance on the “Blue career” path that target groups are interested to follow and the respective educational and professional requirements/skills that they need to fulfill/develop. Representatives of the Centers will visit schools in order to inform directly teachers and students about the BCC initiative and the “Blue careers”. The Blue Career Centers will also organize workshops, seminars, information days and local Blue Career Fairs in cooperation with professional associations, educational and research institutions, companies and government departments whose activities fall within the Blue Economy. Members of the BCC will also offer voluntarily their time and expertise to participate in ongoing committees, special projects, or presentations at workshops and conferences, representing the BCC in those occasions and informing the participants/attendants on the objectives and activities of the BCC network.

The consortium is also actively participating in defining the necessary skills and competencies of career practitioners, a timely and much-needed initiative in this fast-growing professional field. Each one of the BCCs will promote closer cooperation and coordination with its potential branches in the respective countries of the project partners - including the associate members in non-EU countries such as Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. The BCC members will also encourage alternative forms of enhanced cooperation on “Blue career” mentoring and career counselling with non-project partners and institutions in the region. Thus, the MENTOR project through its Blue Career Center initiative has taken a leadership role in advocating for the development of high-quality maritime career information and in helping to identify the basic requirements for producing this type of information.

MENTOR’s Digital Outreach Program

To reach easily young audience, mainly university and high school students and to involve them, the consortium partners put an emphasis on modern technologies and social media.

MENTOR’s official website was designed and launched on www.bluecareers.com, as it is constantly updated with information on the on-going activities and results of the BCC initiative. The site contains information about the project objectives, approach, status, study sites, deliverables and planned events. It is continuously extended and updated during the project lifetime and has both a public access area and a limited access area for consortium use, to transfer information and facilitate information exchange. All partners contribute with relevant information on the website.

A dedicated project logo was designed in addition to create an uniform presence of MENTOR and is depicted in all visual material, banners, posters, flyers, newsletters, video material, online advertising material etc.

Seven videos were shot and a trailer was elaborated, demonstrating a wide range of careers in the selected marine and maritime sectors. These videos, as well as the videos from the career fairs were uploaded on a dedicated YouTube channel. The project activities are accessible on social media via the MENTOR project profiles in Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn as well.

Follow us by scanning the codes with your mobile phone to get involved



www.bluecareers.org



bit.ly/2CwhbjU



[linkedin.com/
company/blue-career](https://linkedin.com/company/blue-career)



twitter.com/Blue_Career



goo.gl/TPcWpy

MENTOR's Communication, Presentation & Event Activities

The Blue Career Center of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea initiative was widely promoted to public and private audiences at numerous events such as international marine and maritime conferences, specialized workshops, dedicated branch association meetings, the European Maritime Day 2017 and 2018, knowledge festivals. Representatives of the MENTOR team delivered presentations, speeches, interviews and presented informative posters. The consortium members published several academic articles in respectable scientific journals and initiated publications in relevant media, including national business-, innovation- and technology-related magazines and newspapers. The Blue Career Fairs held by each partner in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece and Romania were covered extensively by local media and received a great reception by different audiences and the society.



Blue Career Centre of Eastern Mediterranean & Black Sea

Mentoring for the Sea

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