



Sustainable development of Blue economies through higher education and innovation in Western Balkan Countries – BLUEWBC

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Introduction

This document is prepared to emphasize the main actions that will be undertaken by BlueWBC consortia in order to ensure the sustainability of the project after its end. Thus, sustainability means that the project will deliver benefits to its beneficiaries after the project lifetime.

Considering that the project aims at improving the skills and competences of students to better respond to the labor market needs of the maritime sector and to “Strengthening of relations between HEIs and the wider economic and social environment”, the role played by the external stakeholders is crucial for the success of the project.

The final objective of the BLUEWBC project is to ensure optimal use of results within the project timeline and afterwards. The dissemination strategy and all activities are designed in such a way to contribute to sustainable results and impact lasting after project completion. The means of communication and the dissemination channels are chosen to target not only the direct beneficiaries of the project (students, teaching staff, technical and administrative staff, blue economy enterprises, etc), but a wider audience in the program countries and worldwide.

The project website and the social media will be publicly accessed and will be active for at least three years after the project lifetime, thus enabling further communication and dissemination after the project end and providing long-term benefits and resources to all interested audience. They will be maintained as a part of partner countries HEIs websites.



1. Sustainability strategy framework

The key pillars that ensure that the impact of the project will be sustained beyond its lifetime are:

First, the outputs of the project which are expected to give long-term impact: The Entrepreneurship and Innovation Centers established will be used and will give results for future generations of students, stakeholder, academic staff, etc. The updated curricula will be used for at least three years after the end of the project. The trained staff and students will engage their gained knowledge in training and teaching students / professionals in future, in further improvement of curricula, etc.

Second, the variety and solid network of project partners, stakeholders, students, alumni, decision makers, which will ensure that the outputs will be maintained after the project lifetime. Except of the excellent relations between the partners in consortia, the project will produce a list of stakeholders and alumni database with all their contacts, who will be involved in future activities that will be organized by each HEI. Therefore it is crucial to create proactive relations with all potential stakeholders.

The sustainability plan foresees the institutional support for Partner Country HEIs to sustain project results to a very high extent. Planned measures to collect Sources of financial (/logistic) support for sustaining the project results are related to the:

- Partner HEIs and
- Private sector.

In accordance with the long-term implications, the project will eager to promote EU's horizontal principles such as:

- Climate action,
- Culture, education and youth,
- Science and technology,
- Business,
- Energy and natural resources,
- External relations and foreign affairs,
- Regions and local development, and
- Transport and travel.



Besides that, the project impact at individual level after its completion will be recognized through the following:

- The attention to vulnerable groups will be provided to a very small extent. The next indicators will be provided and kept to be achieved:

Number of direct beneficiaries in the Partner country(ies) per year: academic staff from HEIs	7
Number of direct beneficiaries in the PCs(/year): administrative staff from HEIs	4
Number of direct beneficiaries in the PCs(/year): HEIs students	8
Number of direct beneficiaries in the PCs(/year): non HE individuals	5

- Providing impact at institutional level will be achieved through the following:

To what extent will the project results have an impact at institutional level: for instance new courses / strategies (policies, regulations) / services (units, centres)	<i>To a very high extent</i>
Potential of planned project measures to contribute to new national cooperation activities in the Partner countries HEIs as a result of the project (Memorandum of Understanding /research projects / joint publications /participation in networks or associations etc.)	<i>To a very high extent</i>
Potential of project to contribute to new international cooperation activities in the Partner countries HEIs as a result of the project (international agreements / Memorandum of Understanding /research projects / joint publications /participation in networks or associations, etc.)	<i>To a very high extent</i>

- The impact on HEI sector will be provided through the following:

Potential of project to contribute to new (/updated) national or regional policies /laws/ regulations in HE	<i>To a small extent</i>
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Potential of project to contribute to the establishment (/ further development) of external bodies (/associations /agencies)	<i>To a very high extent</i>
Potential of project to contribute to improve the excellence/ competitiveness/attractiveness of the Higher Education institutions	<i>To a very high extent</i>
Innovative character of the planned results (i.e. the courses developed; the new tools, services, procedures delivered; the strategies implemented for reaching the target groups; etc.)	<i>To a high extent</i>

- The impact on the society as a whole will be provided through the following:

Potential of the project to pay particular attention to least developed countries	<i>To a very small extent</i>
Potential of the project to engage Partner Countries HEIs in new means of cooperation with employers and other stakeholders (e.g. NGOs, associations, etc.)	<i>To a very high extent</i>
To what extent the project is planning measures to contribute to improving lifelong learning approaches in the Partner Country HEIs	<i>To a very high extent</i>

Taking into consideration these pillars, the main activities that will be delivered to achieve the sustainability strategy are divided in the following sub-categories:

- A. Plan of activities for web-site sustainability
- B. Plan of activities related to I&E centers
- C. Plan of activities for further collaboration among partners
- D. Plan of activities for the Alumni database and knowledge sharing hub-portal (UoM)

2. Plan of activities for web-site sustainability

1. ***Plan of web-site posting for news and activities*** in relation to Blue economy. The project will require at least one post from each partner per year with news content related to the Blue Economy. Such content can be related to news on:



- what is happening in each country in the blue economy;
 - curricula development in partners' HEIs related to Blue Economy sectors;
 - labor market and services for developing blue economy requirements in the respective countries.
2. **Planning of Social Media Management** includes a plan of posts with at least two per month, from at least two partners. Each partner should write content for the SM at least each five months, for at least three years after project ending. Social Media Management can engage even students of the partner HEIs, who can write post content related to the courses in blue economy, innovation in blue economy, digitization and sustainability etc.
 3. **Stakeholders' events and collaboration.** Each partner has a plan to stay in touch with the stakeholders engaged during this project for the purposes of dissemination and exploitation. Each partner should in addition to the other posts, engage in referring some content for stakeholders' events organized by them, or about the collaboration of partner HEI with stakeholders in relation not only to this project aims and objectives, but also other engagements. At least two of the total posts of each partner in the Web-site and one in SM will have to be related to the stakeholder's events and collaboration.
 4. **I&E centers' events and activities.** All these activities must be posted in the web-site through short text and photos. The related news in each HEIs web-site can be adopted for the BLUEWBC website.
 5. **Publishing news** about research of the partners related to the topics in Blue economy; Publishing related activities from other project implementation; and other activities according the field of study and research in each partner HEI related to the keywords of this project.
 6. **Establish "Keynote of the Month"** informative article contribution from an innovative writer/professor in I&E, to highlight new ideas and breakthrough concepts.

The KPI-s include the number of posts in the Website and in SM, the traffic for the website, countries that bring traffic, etc. for the social media the specific KPIs are the insights of posts in each SM (Facebook, Instagram LinkedIn). The overall goal of sustainability in the web-site can be monitored also through the type and number of staff and students engaged in the web-site above mentioned activities.



3. Plan of activities related to I&E center for Tourism

1. **Business and tourism enterprises involvement**, to support student in creating and developing any idea as an obligatory project in the courses related to innovation and entrepreneurship. Each Center will host at least one course that will implement the project development. At least 5 student projects will be supported through the centers' infrastructure, each academic year, for at least three years.
2. **Signing agreements with businesses** to support financially the center/or some of the center activities. Each center will try to sign at least one agreement for each academic year for a concrete project support.
3. **Application of projects within the centers**, that will involve the stakeholders, such as start-up call, innovation for improving tourism services competition, professional trainings in blue economy etc. This will help for the further upgrade of the center from an outside perspective, by putting the effort on partnering not only in national but also in different EU projects.
4. **Organize an annual "Case study day"** where former and current participants that have used the I&E center can present the outcome of their project/idea. The activity will include success stories but also some other cases of interest (may be also failures) as long as there is constructive learning (Ref. the fail-fast-fail-often concept to improve as an entrepreneur).

The KPIs of this action are:

- number of blue economy business and tourism business included in projects, students support and other center activities;
 - number of signed agreements with businesses and stakeholders
 - number and types of stakeholders involved in the center activities
 - amount of funding raised through the centers
 - number of case studies presented
 - number of students and staff involved in the activities
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4. Plan of activities for further collaboration among partners

1. **Partners will involve each other bilaterally and/or in a group bases in possible research activities** organized by HEIs, such as conferences, workshops, conventions, seminars. Such involvement may take a form, from the dissemination of Call for Papers/contributions to further collaboration in joint research with papers and presentations or involve keynote speakers, develop joint sessions etc. Database of partners contacts will be used to communicate and find joint interests in at least one research activity in each year, for the next three years.



2. **Engage officially, through provost (or other research and projects) offices** for possible application in other EU projects or bilateral projects.
3. **Explore possibility of funding support** through national and EU programs for developing capacities of faculty members to advance in their career to Professorship. Explore opportunities to obtain funding for PhD candidates with joint mentorship in the above process.

KPIs are:

- Number of research activities that will involve partners in this project
 - Number of academic staff involved in research, joint research and activities in point 1
 - Number of partners involved in applications for EU and/or other funding
 - Number of possible collaborations for PhD theses
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5. Plan of activities for the Alumni database and knowledge sharing hub-portal

1. Alumni database will support graduate students in establishing and maintaining a professional network.
2. Alumni opportunities will be organized where recruitment of new talent and career development is in focus.
3. Alumni network will support spreading success stories of past students with distinguished career development in research, innovation and business development.
4. Follow up plan of activities for collaboration with stakeholders.
5. Anniversary meet-ups will be promoted
6. Provide and update listing of I&E centers in Western Balkan countries and EU countries.

The KPIs are:

- Media promotions, info sessions, press releases, workshops which are foreseen to promote the results and impact of the project will also ensure: Better and longer international recognition in program countries HEIs and wider;
 - Sharing of good practices and achievements of the project which can be followed by other HEIs;
 - Raising awareness of future students and professionals on the study programs they can attend in the future.
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The knowledge sharing hub / portal, which also will be maintained for at least three years after project completion, will aim to:



1. Establish a culture where students and professionals see opportunities leading to new businesses and improved attitude towards establishing new activity;
2. Establish bridges between HEIs (students and academicians) and the private sector/labor market which could bring benefits for both parties in sharing knowledge, business practices, market needs and gaps, etc. Development of the alumni database is of high importance in context of dissemination beyond the project lifetime and will be used to ensure:
3. Support to Lifelong education of graduate students;
4. Continuous feedback from graduate students and professionals on aspects related to project focus.

To achieve these points, the knowledge sharing hub-portal plan of activities for the next three years after the project ending, will include:

- sharing materials of all courses related to the project and maintenance, especially those related to the improved curricula
- sharing materials in PowerPoint Presentations of best practices and cases presented and supported in all activities of I&E centers
- sharing tutorials and/or other materials related to teaching and cases in Blue economy
- sharing testimonials of businesses and blue economy sector collaboration with all partners HEIs

All the above mentioned materials and others produced through the project lifetime and at least three years after the project, will be available for all project partners and wider public in order also to provide the project sustainability in future. Moreover, through the collaboration actions the network of HEIs will be strengthened and serve as a hub for future collaboration in Blue economy of education staff and students' knowledge-exchange on international scale.

6. Plan of other activities

Media promotions, info sessions, press releases, workshops which are foreseen to promote the results and impact of the project will also ensure:

- Better and longer international recognition in program countries HEIs and wider.
- Sharing of good practices and achievements of the project which can be followed by other HEIs.
- Raising awareness of future students and professionals on the study programs they can attend in the future.



7. Sustainability outcomes and resources

Sustainable Outcomes	Strategy to ensure their sustainability	Resources necessary to achieve this	Where will these resources be obtained?
Web site of the project	Maintenance and sustainable as a part of partner countries HEIs websites	E – support	Public access
Equipment of I&E Centers	Maintenance, course / trainings / workshops, etc.organization	Internal mangement by HEIs	At partner countries HEIs
An open common knowledgeTsharing hub/portal	It will provide up to date information about the start up and spin off companies that can use this kind of services	E-support that will electronically connect academics, professionals and all interested stakeholders	Providing support also by P8, P9 and P10 in organizing dissemination activities as a part of the symposia sessions, conferences etc.
Development of students/professionals ' alumni base for providing feedback from graduated students and professionals	Partner countries HEIs will define data collecting from the beginning of the project and an analysis will be reported	Communication, negotiation, open info days, meetings	Workshops, meetings, info days, media promotion, at partner countries HEIs
Capacity building of teaching staff at partner countries HEIs	Development of long lasting and sustainable study programs	Teaching staff certificated in the field	Organized courses at partner countries HEIs
Production of higher quality human resources in the field	Including I&E in Blue economy Training programs, courses, practical lectures	Training programs, courses, practical lectures	HEIs and I&E centres

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