

INNOVAMARE PROJECT

Blue technology – Developing innovative technologies for sustainability of Adriatic Sea

D3.3.2

Policy Recommendation Paper ver.2

Project References

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SECTION 1 – Objectives of the Policy Recommendations Paper

This deliverable is connected to InnovaMare strategic project - Blue technology - Developing innovative technologies for sustainability of Adriatic Sea, coordinated by the Croatian Chamber of Economy, is co-financed by the European Union, ERDF (European Regional Development Fund), through Interreg VA Italy - Croatia Programme (2014-2020). Its aim is to enhance framework conditions at cross-border level by reinforcing capacities, both at strategical and operational level, to develop an innovation ecosystem promoting breakthrough technologies for the environmental sustainability of the Adriatic Sea, with a focus on underwater robotics and sensors. Expected outputs will contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR), with particular reference to Pillar 1 “Blue Growth”, Topic 1 “Blue Technologies”.

The deliverable was prepared by the Maritime Technology Cluster FVG PP5 in the framework of WP3 “Enhancement of framework conditions by development of innovation ecosystem” of InnovaMare project, as an integration of the first D3.3.2 Policy Recommendation Paper, presenting the outcomes of direct interaction with reference stakeholders in terms of policy makers and governmental bodies on topics and activities reconnected to the growth of the InnovaMare community.

InnovaMare project partners organized a set of activities directly aimed at involving key stakeholders and acquiring valuable insights from them to be capitalized in the activities, which will hopefully bring to the creation of a cross-border innovation ecosystem on underwater robotics and sensors, for the sustainability of the Adriatic Sea.

In particular, the following tasks have been successfully performed through the implementation of the following:

- Inclusion and involvement of Italian, Croatian and international key stakeholders in dedicated meetings;
- Organization of targeted roundtables;
- Organization of targeted events with involvement of policy makers and institutions.

The outcomes were collected in the below listed project related meetings and events:

- 2021 10 19-20 B-Blue conference – Šibenik, Croatia;
- 2022 02 17 Roundtable Challenges of companies in the transition to digitalization and modern technologies in application vs. legislation – Zagreb, Croatia;
- 2022 02 21 Meeting with Croatian Ministry of Regional Development and EU funds – Zagreb, Croatia;
- 2022 05 22 Blue Talks The role of marine robotics in ocean’s monitoring – online;
- 2022 06 08 Meeting with public bodies and companies – Šibenik, Croatia;
- 2022 09 30 Ocean monitoring and protection Technologies and Services – BTS event Biograd na moru, Croatia;
- 2022 12 14 SEE Regional Conference 2022 EEN – Tuheljske Toplice, Croatia;
- 2023 05 04 Seaborne communities for sustainable blue economy – MAREINFVG event

- Trieste, Italy;
- 2023 02 01 Emilia Romagna Region cooperation meeting – online;
 - 2023 05 11 InnovaMare project final event - Šibenik, Croatia;
 - 2023 06 21 EMRA Challenges and opportunities for sustainable blue economies - Šibenik, Croatia.

SECTION 2 Best practices for sustainable innovation ecosystems

2.1. Insights from policy makers

When considering innovation ecosystems and importance of target groups that should be involved, it becomes necessary to highlight the relevance of a constant relation and coordination with policy makers with the aim of better aligning needs from innovation players like academia, research, industry end entrepreneurship and to better address needs and challenges of the society. With this regard, actions as tailored events, meetings and roundtables has ensured a strong and constant link among the stakeholders with the aim of supporting the adequate design of a consistent innovation system that could rely with local, national, and international frameworks and give voice to each part of the ecosystem. A set of dedicated issues emerged in relation to cooperation in innovation ecosystems.

COOPERATION It's important to keep the dialogue open and to act simultaneously at national, macroregional and international level. The synergies are fundamental to meet and getting closer to key players and to find out which activities are mostly indicated to widen networks and to share priorities. Events organized in the framework of B-Blue project, and events as BTS, MAREINFGV and EMRA helped to understand how involvement of policy makers and connection with other networks is important. The potential to be exploited drives towards a concrete interaction with cross-cutting and complementary sectors as blue-biotechnologies, digitalization, and automation. From this perspective it's important getting comfortable with activities as thematic tables to establish links with Regional and local administrations, National government bodies, bilateral and macro-regional initiatives, and European Institutions. The partnership deepened the importance of aggregation players as they can effectively contribute to innovation ecosystem. Particular reference was dedicated to Digital Innovation Hubs DIH and European Digital Innovation Hubs as key instruments for cooperation. On another point of view, it has been understood how important is raising awareness and improving knowledge not only in relation to innovation and technology related topics but also in relation to innovative cooperation actions and tools. From this point of view, the project implemented specific training programs open to government bodies and event on skills alliances confirmed the importance of education and training. With this regard, partnership experienced the importance of local and international events as Breaking the Surface and EMRA for raising attention, stimulate involvement of the reference governmental bodies.

FINANCING Another aspect when considering innovation that consequently affects all stakeholders is funding. With this regard, meetings and events highlighted how important is to identify and involve funding institutions and how important is to be involved and updated on funding opportunities at different levels. Starting from local level with key players at national level as HAMAG BICRO and aggregations of private investors, the perspective is easily widened shifting to the international projects presented during the “Seaborne communities” event and through the key involvement of players like European Investment Bank during the event organized in the framework of BTS 2022 and of WIDERA during the EMRA 2023 event. Cooperation and support to growing initiatives is the key aspect that was underlined at different levels both at national, EUSAIR and European levels and concrete references to projects, strategic pillars and initiatives were provided.

METHODOLOGY Organization of structured round tables and events helped to have a more transparent exchange of information and knowledge on available methodologies that could be capitalized or transferred among reference stakeholders and ecosystems. The outcomes of InnovaMare project and the establishment of the related Digital Innovation Hub was widely disseminated. The interaction with specific players that helped to link with initiatives and projects connected to the marine and underwater robotics helped to have a constant exchange of views and ideas on methodologies and tools implemented. This activity increased and was widely deepened in the second part of the project with a deep sharing of best practices in relation to innovation ecosystems. From this point of view experiences and insights achieved during the study visits in Norway and Finland helped to have a different perspective and to share experiences.

2.2 Key factors for the creation of a successful innovation ecosystem

The effort of project partnership in building and strengthening relation with target stakeholders is reconnected to the primary importance of establish a concrete and reliable innovation ecosystem that is recognized and supported from the governmental side. Their importance was reprised during the events organized and their role, as complex and dynamic environments bringing together different complementary actors pursuing technology development and innovation was acknowledged, together with the view of increasing competitiveness, promoting growth and solving societal challenges. The most relevant inputs collected could be summarised as follows:

- **SYNERGIES** with other projects, initiatives and opportunities is of primary importance to leverage the field of action;
- **AWARENESS** is important to help public administration to understand importance of innovation ecosystems;
- **SKILLS** are not only related to innovation related topics but can be enforced to train key stakeholders and of course event policy makers;
- **FUNDING** is important not only ad local level but even more at international level and information on financing opportunities should be promptly widened;
- **NETWORKING** is important and tailored events are a primary importance tool to commit target groups;

- FRAMEWORK is important, a clear structure in terms of innovation ecosystems could tackle barriers or constraints that could be overcome with effective exchange of best practices.

CONCLUSIONS

Innovation ecosystems are based on a network of interactions facilitating flow and exchange of information, knowledge, and talent in an organized system of co-creation of value. Within this framework the policy makers play an important role and should be always involved to keep the “end users” updated and have a clear exchange of views on their needs and priorities. The attendance and the organization by the InnovaMare partnership of several events, meetings and roundtables shed light on a concrete priority that needs to be maintained in a short-, medium- and long-term perspective. The involvement of the policy makers and local governments in thematic events should be maintained to better align needs and priorities of living ecosystems. This issue assumes more relevant perspective when considering the challenges of innovative and disruptive technologies as marine and underwater robotics that in certain cases are still not regulated but will need to be in the near future.