Interviews during the High Policy Dialogue and Hackathon

WP2 – D2.2.3

30/06/2023

Project Acronym	CLASS4.0
Project ID Number	10415212
Project Title	CLuster for dAta-driven Solutions in the Sea economy 4.0
Priority Axis	1 – Blue innovation
Specific objective	1.1 - Enhance the framework conditions for innovation in the relevant sectors of the blue economy within the cooperation area
Work Package Number	2
Work Package Title	Communication activities
Activity Number	2.2
Activity Title	Online and offline events
Contribution by	All Partners
Partners involved	All Partners
Status	Final

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European Regional Development Fund

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CLASS4.0

Background and Challenges

The blue economy, which encompasses all economic activities related to oceans, seas, and coasts, is a vital sector with immense potential. However, it faces several challenges. Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in this sector struggle with low competitiveness on international markets. Their innovation activities often don't yield the desired results, and there's a noticeable skill gap among the workforce. Additionally, there's a lack of cohesive collaboration between the business, research, and public sectors. These challenges are further compounded for Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) due to their size and the high costs associated with research and development.

Project Vision

CLASS4.0 seeks to address these challenges head-on. It doesn't start from scratch but aims to build upon and capitalize on the experiences and results of previous projects such as INVESTINFISH, BEAT, and BLUE KEP. The overarching goal is to bolster the competitiveness and innovative prowess of SMEs. The project recognizes the potential of Data-driven solutions (DDS) in revolutionizing the circular and sea economy.

Key Objectives and Strategies

1. **Raising Awareness:** One of the primary barriers to innovation is a lack of understanding of its potential benefits. CLASS4.0 aims to showcase relatable case studies, making it easier for SMEs to visualize the tangible returns from investing in innovation.
2. **Bridging the Skill Gap:** A significant impediment to the adoption of DDS by SMEs is the existing skill gap. By leveraging methodologies from the BLUE KEP project, CLASS4.0 hopes to create an environment conducive to DDS adoption.
3. **Promoting Technology Transfer:** The project emphasizes the importance of transferring technology and innovative processes, especially those related to DDS in the Blue Economy. Insights from the BEAT project will play a pivotal role in this.
4. **Future Thinking (FT) Methodology:** In an ever-evolving global landscape characterized by volatility and uncertainty, traditional decision-making models may fall short. CLASS4.0 will employ the FT methodology, a forward-looking approach that explores multiple future scenarios. This method is particularly apt for navigating complex environments and ensuring that decisions are based on objective analysis rather than mere opinions.
5. **Capitalizing on Past Successes:** CLASS4.0 isn't about reinventing the wheel. It will draw from the successes of previous projects, adopting and adapting governance models, cooperation frameworks, and innovation capability analyses.
6. **Stakeholder Engagement:** A project of this magnitude and significance requires the active involvement of various stakeholders. CLASS4.0 has a comprehensive plan to engage industry representatives, policymakers, and other relevant entities right from the project's inception.

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7. **Synergies and Collaboration:** The project recognizes the value of synergies. By fostering real connections between different projects and initiatives, CLASS4.0 aims to enhance the visibility and transferability of results.

8. **Four Pillars of Support:** The project's approach is built on four foundational pillars - skills and training, innovation ecosystem and networking, testing innovations before full-scale investment, and support in securing investments. Each pillar is crucial for ensuring the holistic development and competitiveness of SMEs.

9. **Regional Engagement:** While CLASS4.0 has a broad scope, it also understands the importance of regional nuances. Engaging regional managers will ensure that best practices are not just recognized but also integrated into regional strategies.

10. **European Integration:** The project's cluster model is inspired by the European Union's Digital Innovation Hubs (DIH) model. This ensures that the best practices and insights gleaned from CLASS4.0 can be seamlessly transferred and adopted across Europe.

Annexes

For the press releases, we refer to Communication Report 1 and 2, which considers all communication activities carried out for the reporting period.

Video Interviews were published in the project's YouTube channel:
- https://youtu.be/JGscStMMapo
- https://youtu.be/274ovCqxIaI
- https://youtu.be/GFq5brsgHGc
- https://youtu.be/Fw4uees-jM8
- https://youtu.be/Rq65LvUuaLA
- https://youtu.be/DFFBoyCMM-0
- https://youtu.be/XYYRwOZpYLE
- https://youtu.be/NDwKuWOKpv8
- https://youtu.be/Zhg3HKtxZlo

Another interesting interview with Alessandro Maccari - Technical Expert and Policymaker was published in the form of an article in the project website, here: https://programming14-20.italy-croatia.eu/web/class4.0/-/interview-with-alessandro-maccari

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