

She4Sea

Employability and entrepreneurial development of women in water-based blue economy sectors

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Introduction

This report (“Consultation/Best Practice Report”) is part of WP2 (A7), following the development meeting in Athens on October 31st, 2023. Its primary goal is to provide valuable insights for the subsequent development of the She4Sea Competence Framework and Compendium (A8), one of the two main results of WP2. This framework will, in turn, serve as guide for the development of the She4Sea training in the following work package (WP3).

The report compiles data sourced from:

- The Human Resources (HR) experts who participated in the project development meeting in Athens;
- The national reports developed by project partners (HELMEPA in Greece, NVNA in Bulgaria, and Sea Teach in Spain).

In more detail, the report provides information that HELMEPA will employ to delineate the training approach within the She4Sea Competence Framework and Compendium. To this end, it catalogs the training programmes suggested by HR experts as well as participants’ training preferences, as outlined in the three national reports (i.e. Greek, Bulgarian, and Spanish). The gender dimension is central to this discussion, as both HR experts and participants in focus groups/interviews have proposed training initiatives considering the challenges, barriers, and facilitators influencing women's professional development in the blue economy.

The report consists of three main parts:

- [Introduction](#): Preliminary information on the report (including its objective, content, and structure).
- [Findings](#): The core part of the report discussing the data provided by experts and participants.
- [Conclusions](#): A comparative approach to country-specific findings.

Findings

In this section, the findings are presented on a country-specific basis, while a comparative approach is employed in the following section, namely “Conclusions”. As discussed in the introduction, the presented information covers two main topics:

- Training programmes suggested by HR experts and/or listed in the national reports;
- Participants’ training needs and preferences.

Both of these themes will be further expounded upon in this section.

Greece

The following table presents the five training programmes discussed by participants and the HR expert in Greece, Ms Ioanna Betsi. The “Key features” column summarises essential aspects of the training highlighted during the discussion, providing valuable insights for the She4Sea training.

Training Programme	Targeted Skills & Knowledge / Programme’s Objective	Key features
Full ahead	Interpersonal & Leadership skills	Oriented towards workplace environments
Empowering Women Towards Sustainable Aquaculture Development	Sustainable aquaculture practices	Addressing to young women
Women in Leadership	Leadership skills	In collaboration with business experts
Empowering the Human Element in Shipping	Soft skills (one of the targeted areas)	Fostering voluntary sharing of knowledge and expertise for the benefit of all members
Innovative SOft SkillS to Maritime Education and Training	Soft skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practice-oriented through a case-study methodology, ▪ Exchange of best practices, ▪ Promoting cultural awareness.

- ✓ During the project “Innovative SOft SkillS to Maritime Education and Training”, the “[Maritime Case study Handbook](#)” has been developed including:
 - The analysis of appropriate case studies that were collected throughout the project lifecycle,
 - The development of teaching guidelines,
 - Presentation of assessment tools.

The She4Sea partners are highly encouraged to consult the handbook when designing the She4Sea training.

Concerning the training preferences of participants, the following aspects were deliberated:

- The online delivery of training is very popular among women, especially those working onboard. Emphasis was placed on on-demand trainings with prerecorded material, allowing flexibility for learners to engage at their convenience.
- It is recommended that training modules are interactive, including practical insights and case studies.
- Reflective learning was proposed as an effective training mode.
- Adding an assessment method, such as quizzes, was highlighted as a means to enhance comprehension.

Bulgaria

Below is the table featuring training programs in Bulgaria, with input gathered from both Ms. Siyana Lutzkanova, the HR expert who participated in the development meeting in Athens, and the national report compiled by the NVNA team.

Training Programme	Targeted Skills & Knowledge / Programme's Objective	Key features
MENTORESS	Reduce the gender gap in the maritime industry and naval security and defense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorporation of the gender aspect into cultural considerations within the workplace. ▪ Awareness raising actions on the gender quality in maritime.
Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities	Compliance with safe working practices (incl. basic organizational and leadership skills)	Special attention is paid to the human factor (e.g. the human factor in shipping, human-centred shipping, human relationships on-board ship)
Crew Resource Management	Provide knowledge on effective and efficient use of all available resources for ship crew personnel to ensure safe operation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Emphasis on communication, situational awareness, teamwork, decision-making, social and cultural diversity awareness. ▪ Adaptability and people management skills are specifically highlighted as being particularly suitable for times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
Leadership and Teamwork	Leadership and teamwork skills at the operational level onboard	Particularly important for job positions at operational and managerial levels.

Regarding the training preferences of participants, the following aspects were discussed:

- Introducing mentorship programs and presenting successful women in the maritime sector as role models inspire and motivate young professionals in pursuing education and training in the field. Emphasizing their accomplishments and sharing their experiences can offer valuable insights and encouragement.
- Flexibility in learning options, such as online courses or part-time programs, accommodate the needs of women with other responsibilities or commitments. This flexibility allows them to balance education and training with other aspects of their lives.
- It is important to showcase success stories, highlighting the diverse career paths available, and emphasizing the potential for growth and advancement.
- Participants appreciate having the opportunity to stay updated on the latest developments in the maritime industry and other blue sectors via following maritime industry experts on social media and joining a maritime professional network.
- Offering scholarships and financial support specifically targeted at women in maritime education and training can help alleviate financial barriers and make these opportunities more accessible.

Finally, the Bulgarian national report concludes that the disparity between the knowledge and skills imparted through education and the anticipated knowledge and skills demanded by the market, particularly affecting women, needs to be bridged.

Spain

The primary research conducted in Spain revealed shortcomings in both the quality and quantity of educational materials and programs within maritime education. This issue is exacerbated for women, as there is a notable absence of national projects and initiatives specifically addressing gender-related aspects in the maritime sector.

The table below presents the two relevant training programmes identified through the primary research and consultation with the HR expert, Ms Carme de Castro.

Training Programme	Targeted Skills & Knowledge / Programme's Objective	Key features
She of the Sea	Combine the resources and network of the shore side industry, with the wealth of experience, knowledge, and journeys of the women working at sea	Recognize and emphasize the value of women's experience in training
Capacity Building Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marine and tourism related policies ▪ Digital Competences 	Flexibility in delivery: online course consisting of 6 autonomous learning modules, each focusing on a different area (e.g. international visibility, digital skills, and promotion.)

Concerning participants' preferences for training, the following matters were deliberated:

- Online training emerged as the most widely used delivery mode, offering learners the flexibility to engage in both theoretical and practical sessions at their convenience.
- A few participants showed some level of discomfort with the online learning, arguing that face-to-face courses enhance the learning process by creating a comfortable and open space for education.
- The combination of theory and practice was underscored as crucial for an effective learning experience.
- Internships, whether conducted online or in-person, were highlighted as vital for learners, providing them with a substantial understanding of working environments in the blue economy.
- The role of videos and multimedia images was discussed, with participants particularly noting that explanatory videos facilitate comprehension compared to lengthy and challenging text.
- Introducing a friendly and humorous approach to learning was suggested as a way to make theoretical concepts "more enjoyable and entertaining".

Conclusions

This section compiles the country-specific findings and draws relevant conclusions. The She4Sea Competence Framework and Compendium will, then, selectively integrate these conclusions considered appropriate for designing the She4Sea learning approach and structure.

The following table summarises the key points discussed by research participants and HR experts. The information is organised into two groups, with the first one encompassing points discussed by participants, while the second one comprises conclusions drawn based on the existing programs presented in the previous section.

Conclusions based on participants' insights
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Despite some discomfort expressed by a few participants, the online delivery of training is highly favoured among participants, especially for women working on board. 2. On-demand trainings with prerecorded materials provides learners with the flexibility to engage at their convenience. 3. Flexibility is further achieved through part-time programmes, enabling learners to balance other responsibilities alongside their education. 4. The combination of theory and practice is considered the most efficient approach for learners. 5. When available, the practical part of learning shall include case studies and real-life scenarios. 6. Showcasing success stories of women in the maritime sector could inspire and motivate young professionals. These stories shall include not only accomplishments but also challenges women faced during their career. 7. Reflective learning stands out as another effective training mode. 8. Adding assessment methods, such as quizzes, enhances learners' comprehension. 9. Videos and multimedia images facilitate comprehension. 10. Introducing a friendly and humorous approach to learning is a way to make theoretical concepts "more enjoyable and entertaining". 11. Encouraging learners to follow maritime industry experts on social media and join a maritime professional network could address their need to stay updated on the latest developments in the maritime industry and other blue sectors. 12. Providing free-of-charge training ensures the participation of interested parties, irrespective of their financial situation.
Conclusions based on the existing programs presented
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The training program should address real-life challenges encountered in the workplace and be responsive to market needs. Therefore, active collaboration with business experts is strongly encouraged during the design phase. 2. Trainees greatly benefit from the sharing of knowledge and experiences by active professionals. 3. Trainees find a practice-oriented training, incorporating a case-study methodology, more effective than one that solely focuses on theoretical components. 4. Trainees value delivery flexibility, such as an online course featuring self-paced learning modules. 5. Approaches that consider the gender aspects contribute to increased awareness among trainees. 6. Developing multicultural awareness is essential for a successful career in the maritime industry.
<p>Skills and knowledge encompassed in the training programs, as discussed by participants and HR experts, include:</p>

1. The human factor (e.g. (e.g. the human factor in shipping, human-centred shipping, human relationships on-board ship).
2. Skills on communication, situational awareness, teamwork, decision-making, and awareness of social and cultural diversity.
3. The adaptability and people management skills, particularly important in crisis situations.