



Marine and Inland Waters Research Symposium

former Panhellenic Symposium on Oceanography & Fisheries

2022

PROCEEDINGS

AKS Porto Heli Conference Center, Porto Heli, Argolida, Greece
16-19 September 2022



Supported by the
HCMR Researchers Association and the
Panhellenic Association of the HCMR Employees



Under the auspices of the
Hellenic Centre for Marine Research

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THE BLUE CHALLENGE FRAMEWORK: A GUIDE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF BLUE CHALLENGES AT SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The core principles of the Erasmus+ BlueS_Med project, namely co-construction and co-design of the Blue Challenges, interaction and proactivity, inclusiveness, and sustainability, guided the drafting of its first deliverable, The Blue Challenge Framework. This framework, based on the collection and validation of existing Ocean Literacy experiences and practices in “bringing the sea” to school, serves as guidance for the process of defining the Mediterranean Blue Challenges. Priorities, resources, and initiatives already available at the EU and international level are considered. Criteria for monitoring and evaluating the Blue Challenges to bring out their added value and benefits are proposed.

The application of this framework critically reflects on the pros and cons that Mediterranean teachers/schools consider before choosing, whether or not, to join the EU Blue Schools Network (EUBSN). Main obstacles that should be removed to facilitate the process of schools joining EUBSN were identified, while recommendations on how to eliminate them were provided. Finally, a first analysis of the resources and tools currently available at the European level was made. The EUBSN, based on this framework, is expected to encourage and help schools join in, and to consolidate an educational path to foster Ocean Literacy within the next 10 years and thus the ongoing Ocean Decade*.

Keywords: Ocean Literacy, EU Blue Schools Network, Marine Education, Mediterranean Sea, Sustainable development.

1. Introduction

To achieve the goal of bringing Ocean Literacy (OL) into the European school system in the short and long run, teachers' involvement is necessary. In order to get and keep European teachers engaged, the EU citizens, through the DG MARE, should increasingly support them, recognize their efforts and give them something in return. Schools in the EU in general, and in some Mediterranean countries in particular, are more and more charged with additional requests, commitments, and educational activities, often without adequate investment in human and economic resources, as well as without enough time to cope with all these new overall challenges and tasks. Incentives, professional development training, educational resources, and recognition for them are therefore needed.

The Erasmus+ project entitled “Supporting the development of socially-inclusive Blue Challenges in schools in the Mediterranean Sea basin” (BlueS_Med) aims to develop, implement, and evaluate innovative approaches to integrate ocean/marine sciences, issues and challenges into school curricula, through educational activities, in four Mediterranean countries (i.e., France, Greece, Italy, and Malta), working side by side with the teachers of 14 pilot “blue” schools. Through these projects, the pupils

consider global vs. local contexts, while it will prepare them to discuss important issues and values in such a way that they can take enlightened positions and implement thoughtful actions.

Since we have just entered the Decade for the Education for Sustainable Development dedicated to Ocean Sciences, within all the European funds planned from now on (e.g., Recovery Fund, Green Deal, Next Generation EU, etc.) we strongly suggest to dedicate funding schemes directly to schools that partner with scientific institutions and want to join the EU Blue Schools Network. Some suggestions about possible EU incentives, among others, are a) an annual funding scheme to schools that have undertaken the Blue School pathway, commensurate with their commitment (e.g., number of involved classes/pupils/teachers); b) an annual/biennial/triennial recognition (economic and/or academic) to teachers who are proactive within this path, commensurate with their commitment and innovation; c) a one-time award to the country/European Marine Regional Area that has the highest number of Blue Schools.

5. Acknowledgements

The BlueS_Med project (“Supporting the development of socially-inclusive Blue Challenges in schools in the Mediterranean Sea basin”, <https://www.blueschoolsmed.eu/>) is supported by funding of the Erasmus+ French Agency program.

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