



D3.1. First Regional Hub report of yearly activity

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List of Acronyms

Acronym	Full name
CH	Country Hubs
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GA	Grant Agreement
NEBS	Network of European Blue Schools
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
YTÜ	Yildiz Technical University
KUW	Vienna University Children's Office
GSNE	Global Skills Network
BME	Budapest University of Technology and Economics
UniPD	University of Padua
WP	Work Package



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Background about the SHORE Project

SHORE strives to increase ocean literacy by engaging students and teachers to implement the EU Mission Ocean's objectives through activities and collaborative projects in schools.

Within this project, the partners will craft training and educational materials in line with blue curricula for schools located in the Baltic Sea, Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Danube River, and Rhine River. Participating schools will secure grants to support the implementation of their blue projects. The most outstanding school project will be awarded "Ocean Ambassador of the Year". Beyond awarding grants, SHORE serves as a comprehensive resource hub and a bridge between researchers, local stakeholders, and schools in the regional areas.

Executive summary

This document is a deliverable of the SHORE Project, funded under the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under the grant agreement No 101112815.

This deliverable reports the activities undertaken by the Country Hubs in the first year of the project as part of Work Package 3 Blue Skills: Education, Learning and Mobilisation Activities (Learn, Act, Mobilize) overview.

WP 3 aims to facilitate the implementation of project schools, increase awareness within local communities about ocean-related issues, and empower students from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds to serve as catalysts for positive change. To accomplish this goal, the country hubs (YTU, GSNE, Mare Nostrum, UNIPD, KUW, BME, WSB) offer mentoring services to the selected schools, guiding them on the integration of educational resources into their educational systems and ensuring the high - quality implementation of their blue projects. Additionally, the hubs disseminate ocean literacy practices, advocate for Ocean Schooling initiatives, organize community engagement activities, and provide information about the European Network of Blue Schools and support the application, if this has not already been done through SHORE's funding.

The document is being prepared by Mare Nostrum NGO (leader WP3 activities and tasks), with inputs from partners and Country Hubs involved in WP3.



1. Country Hubs presentation



Figure 1 - Country Hubs localization

1.1. Yıldız Technical University

The Turkish Country Hub (CH), led by the Yıldız Technical University (YTÜ) and in collaboration with Turkish Marine Research Foundation (TUDAV) under the SHORE Horizon Project focuses on enhancing ocean literacy, supporting schools in developing blue projects, and facilitating their inclusion in the Network of European Blue Schools. The CH engaged with various stakeholders, organized courses, webinars, and participated in national and international forums to promote ocean education and citizen science. The primary objective is to promote ocean literacy and citizen science among teachers and students by facilitating the implementation of blue education initiatives in schools across Türkiye.

Yıldız Technical University (YTÜ) has established itself as a leading force in promoting ocean literacy in Türkiye. Their commitment to public outreach and education extends beyond traditional academic boundaries, encompassing a wide range of initiatives designed to engage the community and foster a deeper understanding of the marine environment and its importance.

Yıldız Technical University (YTÜ) is deeply committed to promoting ocean literacy through a variety of engaging activities. They regularly host public events, including seminars and workshops, designed to educate and inspire diverse audiences about the importance of the ocean and the need for its conservation. These events serve as platforms for knowledge sharing, discussion, and collaboration among experts, students, and the wider community.

YTÜ also develops and disseminates a range of educational materials, both online and in print, to make information about the ocean accessible to a broader audience. These resources include brochures, articles, videos, and interactive learning tools,

all aimed at increasing understanding and appreciation of the marine environment. Furthermore, YTÜ is establishing an Ocean Literacy Action Center to serve as a central hub for research, education, and outreach activities related to ocean literacy. This center will further solidify YTÜ's position as a leader in promoting ocean awareness and stewardship.

YTÜ's focus extends to both the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, recognizing the interconnectedness of these vital bodies of water and the need for comprehensive approaches to their conservation. By actively engaging with the public and providing accessible educational resources, YTÜ is playing a crucial role in fostering a more ocean-literate society and inspiring action to protect these precious marine environments.

1.2. Mare Nostrum NGO

Mare Nostrum NGO is a leading environmental non-governmental organization (NGO) located in Constanta, Romania, on the Black Sea coast. With a rich history spanning nearly three decades, Mare Nostrum has established itself as a prominent force in addressing critical environmental issues, including biodiversity conservation, waste management, citizen science, and education for sustainable development. Its geographical location on the Black Sea coast provides a strategic advantage for coordinating activities and engaging with stakeholders in the region. Mare Nostrum's commitment to addressing transboundary environmental challenges is further exemplified by its involvement in the Danube River Area and its support for other key regions, including the Baltic Sea, Mediterranean Sea, and Rhine River Area.

Through its strong networks and partnerships, Mare Nostrum will facilitate collaboration and knowledge exchange among stakeholders across different regions, contributing to a comprehensive and coordinated approach to addressing the project's objectives. Mare Nostrum's dedication to citizen science and education for sustainable development will also play a vital role in empowering communities and fostering environmental stewardship.

1.3. Global Skills Network

SHORE's Estonian Country Hub has been transformed into a nonprofit organization. The Baltic Sea Region Living Lab is envisioned as a dynamic space for experimentation and collaboration, designed to tackle the growing issue of ocean blindness – the lack of awareness and understanding about the ocean's importance in mitigating the challenges posed by climate change caused by human activity – through innovative open-schooling methodologies. By integrating students, educators, scientists, public bodies and local community organizations and NGOs, The Baltic Living Lab fosters hands-on learning and active participation in conservation efforts of both marine and freshwater ecosystems in support of the EU Mission Ocean “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030”.

Baltic Living Lab' work is aimed at deepening public awareness and understanding of the hydrosphere's critical role in our ecosystem while promoting sustainable solutions to challenges faced in the Blue Economy, which refers to the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs, while preserving the health of ocean ecosystems. The Blue Economy encompasses a wide



range of activities related to oceans, seas, and coastal areas, including sectors like fisheries, aquaculture, maritime transport, renewable energy (e.g., offshore wind farms), tourism, marine biotechnology, and seabed mining – all important for Baltic Region industrial ecosystems. The concept of the Blue Economy emphasizes the balance between economic development and environmental sustainability, recognizing that oceans are critical for supporting the global economy, food security, and climate regulation. An overarching goal is to promote economic opportunities without depleting the ocean's natural resources or degrading its ecological health, ensuring that ocean-based industries can thrive for future generations. It aligns closely with efforts to combat climate change, protect marine biodiversity, and reduce ocean pollution.

To engage in the work, The Baltic Living Lab has sought to establish formal relationships with various actors in the Blue Economy. To date, we have MOUs to codify a shared common interest in supporting a competitive and sustainable Blue Economy for Estonia to collaborate towards promoting innovation and participating in European projects that will advance cooperation between public, private, academic and nonprofit sectors throughout Europe. The main objective is to co-create strategies for increasing public awareness of Baltic Blue Economy challenges and support blue literacy in both formal education – i.e. the public school system – and non-formal learning environments, as seen in recent activity:

- Engaging actors in the Blue Economy industrial ecosystem in the living lab's hackathon and virtual escape rooms that highlight operational challenges faced towards adaptation to the Twin Transition of decarbonization and digitalization;
- Expanding education/industry partnerships in possible blue school projects that can be supported via SHORE's open calls for funding;
- Requesting sponsorship for initiatives such as beach cleanups that engage young people as Agents of Change, and hackathons that bring students together under the tutelage of a teacher to develop creative tools, projects, or resources that enhance education about marine ecosystems and address pressing ocean-related challenges, such as pollution, climate change, or biodiversity loss,

Promote the work of academia/research centers, startups and SMEs via The Baltic Living Lab's blog (<https://bluebalticecosystem.com/>) to spotlight innovation taking place in areas like biotechnology/bioeconomy, data analytics for ocean health, energy-efficient shipping technologies, as well as promotion of Horizon-funded projects taking place in the Baltic Region; this blog is aimed at fostering synergies and networking while enhancing collaborations that enable co-participation in European projects, including active participation in the SHORE project.

1.4. WSB Academia

The WSB University, Polish Country Hub is headquartered in Dąbrowa Górnicza (Poland) with a strong network and mentors' participation in Kraków and Cieszyn. This is situated in Silesian Province on the South of Poland, near the Czech and Slovak border. WSB departments are located near three rivers connected with the Baltic Sea – Wisła (Kraków), Przemsza (Dąbrowa Górnicza) and Olza (Cieszyn). Researchers and mentors support school projects and students in developing ideas and preparing projects.



Hub mentors will support schools, youth and teachers in preparing project activities and adapting project ideas to the call requirements. Mentors are experts in ocean literacy, pedagogy, economics, management, sustainability, and social innovation. They support projects and ensure their feasibility. Mentors also provide educational activities and SHORE promotion among local communities, stakeholders, schools, youth and children under temporary protection. Mentors are also supported by external experts for special events done by the Polish SHORE Country Hub.

WSB University provides a range of valuable resources and expertise, including expert mentorship and research expertise. It offers a team of experienced people, with different backgrounds to guide and support schools throughout the project lifecycle. During SHORE implementation WSB University is cooperating with ocean literacy experts from institutions like: Today we have (NGO), Institute of Oceanology of Polish Academy of Sciences, Experiment Science Center in Gdynia and Save the Rivers Coalition. They offer valuable insights and assistance in project development and implementation support. In addition, WSB University brings research expertise to the project, connecting schools with researchers who contribute with their first-hand perspective and support on topics related to ocean literacy, blue economy, and sustainability. This collaboration between schools and researchers fosters a deeper understanding of marine and riverine issues and encourages evidence-based project development.

Through its comprehensive support system and expert guidance, WSB University empowers schools and students to become active contributors to the sustainable development of the Baltic Sea region. Their dedication to fostering blue skills and knowledge ensures that future generations are equipped to address the challenges and opportunities presented by the blue economy.

1.5. Vienna University Children's Office (KUW)

The Vienna University Children's Office (KUW) has a long-standing reputation as a key player in promoting early engagement in STEAM fields (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics), bridging the gap between science and society. KUW offers a diverse range of non-formal educational programs, encompassing academic outreach, democracy literacy, climate change education, sustainable development, and media education.

KUW is widely recognized for its flagship initiative, "KinderuniWien" (Vienna Children's University), which has successfully engaged countless young minds in the wonders of science and learning. Through this program and its other offerings, KUW has become deeply embedded in the regional education ecosystem, fostering strong collaborations with schools and educational authorities at both provincial and national levels.

The Vienna University Children's Office (KUW) is responsible for the German speaking part of the Danube River Area and puts furthermore emphasis on the Rhine River, to promote SHORE amongst schools in Germany. In Austria, a landlocked country, the importance of ocean literacy and blue school may not be immediately



apparent. However, the Danube River gives the interconnectedness of worldwide water ecosystems. Therefore, ocean literacy is still relevant in a broader context, since local and regional lakes and rivers play an important role globally. These water bodies are affected by issues such as pollution, littering, climate change, and natural disasters. Additionally, biodiversity in a changing world is under pressure, with invasive species posing further challenges. Despite being landlocked, Austria's freshwater ecosystems are integral to large scale environmental health, linking local actions to broader environmental concerns.

Although Germany with its coastline and the well-known ports have a different situation, the effect of rivers and lakes on the local areas and communities are as important to consider. Because of the SHORE approach, KUW is building networks in local communities across the Danube and Rhine regions to promote the importance of water-related issues at local and regional levels, ultimately incorporating a global perspective for a comprehensive approach. Additionally, KUW refers to the learnings and relies on (international) networks established in a variety of projects to promote SHORE beyond Germany and Austria.

KUW's expertise and experience make it an invaluable resource for the SHORE project, particularly in the Rhine and Danube River Area, west of Vienna. Their ability to connect with schools and communities, combined with their diverse educational programs, will be instrumental in promoting ocean literacy and empowering young people to become agents of change for a sustainable future. KUW's dedication to fostering scientific curiosity and promoting education for sustainable development makes it a valuable partner in the SHORE project, contributing significantly to the project's goals of increasing ocean literacy and empowering future generations to protect our marine environments.

1.6. Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME)

The Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME) is a prestigious institution with a long history of excellence in engineering and technology education. As the largest and oldest technical university in Hungary, BME boasts eight faculties and a student body of over 20,000, making it a significant contributor to the country's scientific and technological advancement. BME's expertise in water-related research and development is particularly relevant to the SHORE project. The university actively participates in numerous R&D projects focused on water resources, water facilities, and water protection, demonstrating its commitment to addressing critical challenges related to this resource.

Beyond its research activities, BME is also deeply involved in promoting STEM education among young people. The university organizes various events, including the popular Children's University program, which aims to spark curiosity and inspire a passion for science and technology in children.

BME's commitment to education and research makes it a valuable partner in the SHORE project, particularly in supporting schools in the Rhine and Danube River Area. Their expertise in water-related issues and their experience in engaging young audiences will be instrumental in promoting ocean literacy and empowering future generations to become stewards of our aquatic environments.



1.7. University of Padua

The University of Padua (UniPD), situated in a geographically significant location near Venice and its lagoon, the Po River delta, and the Dolomite mountains, is a prominent Italian institution with a strong commitment to environmental research and education.

The Italian Country Hub is coordinated by the Department of Comparative Biomedicine and Food Science at the University of Padua and involves the active participation of EXPLORA, the children's museum in Rome. The two project partners are located in two different parts of Italy, the first in the Veneto region and the second in the Lazio region, the region of Italy's capital city. In this initial phase of the project, coinciding with the first call, the two partners began to activate and create a shared contact database to interpret and reach out to for establishing national relationships. To do this, a shared and updated database of institutional actors, non-profit sector associations, museums, and other schools potentially interested in blue literacy and education themes has been developed.

Creating institutional and non-institutional engagement around the project was not easy, as typically knowledge communities and those focused on awareness or activism do not collaborate consistently on water-related issues. Therefore, facilitating dialogue between the university and associations through schools of various levels was challenging. Despite some entry barriers, active dialogue between the two project partners led to the implementation of various activities and an understanding of how to improve and share their strengths. For example, while the department has advantages in scientific knowledge and connections with local and national institutional bodies from scientific and outreach collaborations, EXPLORA has benefited from direct contact with schools and teachers due to its main activity.

In addition to the relationship between project partners, the Country Hub has also sought to engage with schools on a national and regional level. This journey has included an initial attempt to contact the Ministry of Education, with hopes of establishing collaboration in the second call period, as well as with regional and provincial school offices. Nowadays, we can say that in addition to the SHORE partners, including those associated, the CH is in a phase of opening and development and hopes to engage as many schools, regional and national associations, and other public and private actors interested in blue education as possible.

UniPD's expertise and experience make it a valuable partner in supporting schools' efforts to join the Network of European Blue Schools and develop impactful projects with direct ties to the territory and up-to-date science. They offer a range of resources and guidance, not only for schools, but a large spectrum of stakeholders. UniPD's strategic location and its department's active involvement in ocean and water literacy initiatives make it an asset in promoting the Network of European Blue Schools and supporting schools in developing impactful projects that contribute to the sustainable management of the Mediterranean Sea.



In addition, activities of the Country Hubs in Türkiye and Italy are supported by consortium members located in the same area, TUDAV and EXPLORA.

2. Country Hubs' roles and responsibilities

The selection of Country Hubs for the SHORE project was a strategic decision based on several key factors. Firstly, each hub possesses a strong foundation in sustainable development and climate change education, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to effectively promote ocean literacy and empower schools in their regions. Secondly, the hubs have established deep roots within their local communities, maintaining strong connections with schools, educational authorities, and other relevant stakeholders. This network enables them to effectively disseminate project resources and foster collaboration. Lastly, the hubs are actively involved in ongoing projects related to ocean literacy, sustainability, or education, demonstrating their commitment to these areas and their capacity to contribute meaningfully to the SHORE project.

The overarching aim of establishing these Country Hubs is to cultivate lasting **networks and partnerships** within each region, ensuring the project's impact extends beyond its timeframe. By serving as central points of contact and support, the hubs will continue to promote ocean literacy and facilitate collaboration among stakeholders even after the project concludes.

The consortium will leverage Country Hubs' diverse expertise and local knowledge to build a **comprehensive support network**. This network will offer a range of services to various stakeholders, including teachers, museum educators, outreach groups, and citizens. For teachers, it will provide training, resources, and guidance on integrating ocean literacy into their curricula. The consortium will collaborate with museums to develop engaging exhibits and educational programs on ocean-related themes. It will also support community-based organizations in their efforts to promote ocean literacy and environmental stewardship and offer educational resources and opportunities for public engagement in ocean conservation to citizens.

The Country Hubs are responsible for documenting and disseminating information about their community initiatives and workshops, as well as promoting the project's open calls to a wider audience. By actively engaging with regional and local stakeholders, the Country Hubs enhance SHORE's influence and foster collaboration within their respective communities. Furthermore, the Country Hubs provide essential support to schools throughout the project implementation process. They offer guidance, resources, and expertise to help schools develop and execute successful blue projects. Their strong connections with local schools and communities enable them to effectively disseminate information and promote participation in the project's activities and outcomes.

Another crucial function of the Country Hubs is to actively involve regional blue economy stakeholders in community events and school projects. By bringing together diverse actors, including businesses, policymakers, researchers, and NGOs, the hubs foster collaboration and knowledge exchange, creating a more



interconnected and engaged community dedicated to promoting ocean literacy and sustainable development.

Country Hubs actively promote **community involvement** through various events like exhibitions, workshops, training sessions, seminars, and interactive discussions to increase awareness of ocean literacy among the public. To actively engage their communities and promote ocean literacy, each Country Hub will organize a variety of public events throughout the SHORE project. During each open call period, they will host at least four community activities, such as workshops, webinars, symposiums, or discussions, designed to raise awareness and involve the public in ocean-related issues.

In addition to these regular activities, the Country Hubs will also organize **larger-scale public events, including workshops, seminars, exhibitions, and Mission Ocean Nights**. These events will serve to further increased awareness about the importance of the ocean and inspire action to protect our marine environments. By offering a diverse range of engaging activities, the Country Hubs will create opportunities for learning, collaboration, and community building, ensuring the SHORE project has a lasting impact on ocean literacy in their respective regions.

School initiatives under the SHORE project are designed to run for six months, during which each approved project will receive dedicated support and guidance. A mentor will be assigned to each project to monitor its progress and offer guidance. Additionally, Country Hubs will provide localized support within their regions, helping schools with submissions to the Network of European Blue Schools, facilitating community activities, and overseeing the implementation of school projects. To ensure transparency and track progress, comprehensive reports outlining the activities undertaken during each phase of the school projects will be prepared at the end of each implementation period.

Country hubs will play a crucial role in **supporting educators** by helping in understanding blue curriculums, creating projects, and implementing them successfully. All relevant materials will be accessible to the public on dedicated platforms. Furthermore, an open-source learning and education management system will be developed through collaboration with partners in the consortium. This system will track student and school projects, ensuring their alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Mission Ocean objectives.

Special attention will be given to students under temporary protection from Ukraine, building upon existing cooperation between Country Hubs and partners in Poland, Romania, and Türkiye (Mare Nostrum - The Civic Resource Center; WSB, YTU) who are actively supporting immigrant children and families from Ukraine. The SHORE project aims to engage at least 600 migrants from Ukraine through these established connections. Their involvement will include participation in various community activities such as workshops, webinars, meet-and-talk sessions, symposiums, festivals, and more, organized by these Country Hubs.



Country Hubs are essential for the SHORE project's success, acting as key communicators and facilitators within their regions. They will regularly report their activities to the Ocean Literacy Action Center at YTU and the WP3 lead, Mare Nostrum. This reporting will encompass community activities, workshops, and support provided to schools applying to the EU Blue Schools Network and responding to open calls. By collaborating with regional and local stakeholders, the Country Hubs will extend SHORE's impact and foster a strong network of ocean literacy advocates. They will also provide crucial guidance to schools throughout project implementation and ensure effective dissemination and communication within their respective areas.

Other responsibilities:**Management/Monitoring:**

- Fill in a pre-set template for necessary information on their activities for the WP leader to use in the deliverable's development, interim reports, and final report. These should give a concise overview of the outcome of all initiatives/events at national/regional level such as meetings organized and attended, including relevant feedback received, difficulties encountered and recommendations to be considered, etc.
- Participate in internal meetings with other Country Hubs.
- Attend and provide support to the organisation, if required, of joint regional meetings.
- Provide information on the blue project implementation in the region, to support the WP3 leader (Mare Nostrum), in terms of monitoring and evaluation.

Communication/events

- Translate and deliver the information to the potential school institutions interested in applying for blue projects.
- Maintain themselves aware of events in their respective countries and attend them (if required) to promote the Network of European Blue Schools and the open calls.
- Preparation and organization of events in the respective country and online regional webinars, etc.

National/regional stakeholder's engagement/support

- Establish and develop contacts for the Network of European Blue Schools at national/regional level in view of facilitating the application and implementation of a blue project. This involves connecting with schools, educational authorities, research institutions, NGOs, and other relevant actors to foster collaboration and create a supportive network for promoting ocean literacy and the blue economy.



Effective communication is the cornerstone of successful project management in the SHORE project, especially given its collaborative nature and the geographical spread of the Country Hubs. Clear and consistent communication ensures everyone is aligned on project goals, simplifies coordination when tasks become complex, and fosters a sense of shared purpose among team members.

Recognizing the importance of information flow, the SHORE project will utilize a variety of communication channels and platforms to facilitate effective internal communication among Country Hubs:

➤ **Email:**

Email will remain a primary mode of communication for sharing documents, reports, and important updates. Dedicated email addresses specifically created for the SHORE project will be used to ensure efficient and organized communication. While email is excellent for formal correspondence and documentation, its limitations for real-time interaction are acknowledged.

➤ **Videoconferencing:**

To foster more interactive and dynamic communication, videoconferencing will be actively employed for meetings, discussions, and collaborative problem-solving. Two primary platforms will be utilized:

- ✓ **Zoom:** A widely used and reliable platform for video conferencing, offering features such as screen sharing, recording, and breakout rooms to facilitate engaging virtual meetings.
- ✓ **SHORE Project Management Platform:** This dedicated platform will serve as a central hub for communication, task management, and progress tracking. It will allow for seamless information sharing, efficient task allocation, and transparent monitoring of project activities.

3. Stakeholders' engagement

Country Hubs act as critical links between regional and local implementation, providing ground-level insights and feedback while receiving guidance and support from regional stakeholders. This communication often occurs through regular reporting mechanisms, participation in regional meetings and workshops, and dedicated communication channels for sharing updates and addressing challenges. However, potential barriers can include differing priorities between regional and local levels, limited resources at the country level, and potential communication gaps due to geographical distance or language differences.

Effective liaising required clear communication (table 1), active listening from regional stakeholders, and capacity building at the country level to ensure smooth information flow and successful implementation of regional initiatives.

Table 1 – Stakeholders engagement

Stakeholder Group	Engagement Level	Communication Channels
Students	Involve	Interactive workshops, online learning platforms, competitions
Teachers	Collaborate	Training programs, curriculum development workshops, online communities of practice
Community Members	Consult	Public meetings, local media outreach, public events
Policymakers	Involve/Collaborate	Policy briefs, workshops, presentations at conferences

3.1. Austria

The KUW approach uses both a top-down and bottom-up strategy, working with stakeholders at the national and regional levels. From the top-down perspective, SHORE and especially the Open Calls have been facilitated through official channels, such as newsletters sent by the Federal Ministries of Education in Austria and Germany, the Agency of Education and Internationalization in Austria, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in Germany. Additionally, KUW reached out to all 16 German and 9 Austrian ministries of education at the federal state level to promote SHORE and the associated funding opportunities. This ensures broad outreach and visibility at an official level.

From the bottom-up approach, direct communication with key stakeholders, particularly school leaders, has been essential. Existing contacts and established cooperation frameworks were leveraged to strengthen collaboration. The KUW newsletter further enhanced engagement.

As stated, KUW has established a broad network with regional (e.g. the Municipality Department Vienna Water), national partners (e.g. the Science Center Netzwerk) and even European wide stakeholders in international projects (e.g. the Open Schooling partners of the PHERECLOS project and the related OS Together network or the European Children's Universities Network - eucu.net). These networks, consisting of formal and non-formal educational institutions, NGOs, companies and institutions on the governmental level.

Barriers and challenges have occurred during the project on the one hand related to the term "Ocean Literacy". A lot of effort is needed for explaining the concept of ocean literacy before promoting SHORE, its benefits and importance. On the other hand, fostering networks with institutions is challenging, given the fact that we are not based in their regional areas and therefore they are reluctant to offer SHORE.

Furthermore, many teachers and school heads are not familiar with applying for grants and even writing the SHORE application is seen as a high threshold by many of the teachers. Although they see the opportunity provided by the SHORE grants,

they hesitate to write and submit the application as an unknown and additional effort besides their daily school tasks.

3.2. Estonia

Despite efforts to share updates on our activities with the Estonian Ministries of Education and the Interior as well as communicating directly with municipalities, GSNE share the fate of other SHORE partners unable to secure an endorsement or facilitate a top-down approach to engaging policymakers for support because Global Skills Network is not a school or public entity. Therefore, the Estonian Country Hub has concentrated on a bottom-up approach with direct communication with key stakeholders; to date MOUs have been executed with:

- Estonian Maritime Cluster <https://maritimecluster.ee/>
- Lootusmaja Nature Center www.pernova.ee/loodusmaja/en/
- In progress: Tartu University Marine Research Center, Tallinn University Estonian Business School, the Association of EcoSchools, Alpa Kids, Parnu Escape Rooms, Education Estonia.

Direct contact with a database of 90+ public schools in Estonia, curated from attendance at various sponsored events, was an essential factor in the success to elicit interest in SHORE activities and joining the Network of European Blue Schools. They have on boarded a Director of Outreach for Estonian School Engagement, who has initiated several direct email campaigns, hosted several webinars, and spent considerable energy engaging schools to take part in the Baltic Region Hackathon, an initiative of <https://digieduhack.com/> aligned with the EU Digital Education Plan 2021-2027.

Numerous challenges have been faced during the first year of operating as the SHORE Estonian Country Hub, the most significant being that the prospect of funding alone is not enough to attract teachers who are already busy and find it difficult to dedicate time to new initiatives that take them away from their teaching responsibilities. Secondly, not all schools have admin support that can serve as liaison to SHORE activities or participate in the open calls for funding as they initially see the process as overwhelming; thus, we have made extensive efforts to demystify both programming and funding SHORE can offer. Thirdly, formal contracts for schools to work with community entities are not used in Estonia, thus meeting the parameters SHORE has proposed for third parties applying on behalf of schools is difficult even for NGOs who have had long-term relationships with their local schools.

Finally, and perhaps of importance for overall programming coherence, there is a disconnect between SHORE's goal of supporting the EU Mission Ocean "Restore Our **OCEANS** and **WATERS** BY 2030" and its emphasis on raising awareness by promoting "ocean literacy", which overlooks freshwater ecosystems and related activities within the five topic areas. This is particularly important for the Estonian Country Hub, as a lack of coherence in programming meant to address both marine and freshwater ecosystems can significantly reduce its effectiveness and impact.



If we focus solely on marine environments as prompted by the use of “ocean literacy” verbiage throughout SHORE’s communication mechanisms while ignoring the ecological challenges facing rivers and lakes, an incomplete approach to sustainability is created, especially in view of the fact that SHORE has included the Danube and Rhine Rivers as areas of interest, and Estonia has several important rivers both within its territory and along foreign borders.

Such fragmentation can lead to missed opportunities for holistic solutions, where the health of interconnected water systems—like rivers feeding into seas—can benefit from the open-schooling actions promoted. When coherence in the narrative supporting messaging is lacking, we are destined to fail to address the root causes of ecological destruction in freshwater ecosystems, which could exacerbate the overall degradation of the Baltic Sea which are fed by such systems. This gap diminishes our ability to create a comprehensive impact, leaving critical areas, such as pollution control, habitat destruction and biodiversity loss, nutrient runoff contributing to eutrophication, etc., unaddressed; the Baltic Sea is the site of Europe’s largest dead zone of a vicious circle, its hypoxic zone covers up to 100,000 km², making it one of the largest dead zones in the world. The low oxygen levels make it difficult for fish and other marine organisms to survive, leading to significant biodiversity loss and altering the ecosystem. The decline in fish populations can impact commercial fisheries, adversely affecting the Blue Economy.

3.3. Hungary

Communication has been initiated mainly through electronic means. Hungarian schools were contacted by email and letters through the school districts. Although many schools got news of the project, not all of them did. They have switched to contacting the headmasters of the schools directly about the project.

The online meetings were organized on the MS Teams platform. The Country Hub came to each meeting with a prepared presentation, including the most up-to-date information. Participants also communicated frequently via direct email and phone. The online meeting proceeded with minimal technical difficulties, allowing for smooth communication as everyone was able to log in successfully.

3.4. Italy

The CH has sought to establish connections with regional and national stakeholders by leveraging the existing networks of the two project partners. These prior contacts were pooled together, activated, and managed by the respective organizations. For the department, activating its own network was more challenging, as it encompasses a wide range of expertise, with only a portion actively involved in aquatic and marine research, and usually linked to punctual events or projects.

Therefore, the BCA team had to work diligently to create synergies across the department’s various fields (veterinary science, agriculture, ethics, biology, chemistry) to integrate the project into pre-existing networks and relationships. Most of the network is local and involves entities such as national parks and



museums. However, some key figures included NGOs from previous outreach activities and projects such as MareVivo or Legambiente.

One of the additional barriers the CH may have encountered is the compartmentalization of knowledge, which remains prevalent. Researchers often have limited dialogue with educators and those involved in public outreach and awareness efforts. As such, these bridges-to-be-built constitute priority goals to central offices in the University of Padova. SHORE's approach aims precisely to bridge these gaps by involving a variety of stakeholders, promoting collaboration between researchers, educators, and awareness professionals.

Moreover, another significant challenge was establishing connections with schools. Often, schools are perceived as single entities, but the driving force behind their participation in networks and initiatives like SHORE comes from singular or small groups of teachers. It is the teachers who initiate engagement. Many of the contacts were made through schools, but through experience—particularly from sharing methodologies with EXPLORA—it became clear that establishing direct relationships within schools, such as with project coordinators, is crucial. These individuals serve as key points of contact and help maintain a personal connection through which information and updates can be shared. However, the channels to be used to reach individual teachers are much more difficult to establish.

Similarly, the CH realized that building such relationships with regional and provincial educational authorities, which act as ministerial contact points, would be equally useful in facilitating broader engagement and ensuring the project's reach extends throughout the educational system. This, however, came with peculiar challenges. Overall, official channels were found to be slow, often hard to find and opaque in their vetting procedures, while largely based on individual contacts in specific offices, rather than through transparent applications on open forums.

In terms of communication with stakeholders, efforts were made before events and then reinforced during the events and activities we carried out. The objective was to open communication channels in advance and later activate and stimulate them in conjunction with the events themselves, ensuring continued engagement and participation, such as the Museum of Natural History of Venice, or the Museum of Fluvial Navigation in Battaglia Terme. Here too, some hurdles came up, such as the fact that events not directly organized by Museums, or in which they are direct partners, are not usually promoted for legal or policy reasons, as that of some public libraries for example.

Additionally, the department faced the challenge that, on a national level, universities in Italy are still largely viewed as high-level research institutions, with their broader societal mission often under-recognized. The SHORE project supports a shift in this perception by helping researchers build connections with local communities and civil society, ensuring that even the most technical and hard science expertise reaches private beneficiaries and the general public.

In terms of schools, the Italian CH has reached out to 6,806 schools, mostly via official school emails, and phone calls, but also through events and webinars, in all regions of Italy.



3.5. Poland

Polish HUB is communicating with 241 schools in the Central Silesian Region and around 20 schools from mountain areas near the Polish Czech Slovak border in Cieszyn. Since September 2024 Polish HUB will extend network to the North and Central Poland, thanks to cooperation with Izabela Kotyńska - Zielińska and experts from thematic institutions from the Tricity (Gdańsk, Gdynia and Sopot).

These schools are reached with SHORE mailing and are always invited to SHORE activities like training in schools, Mission Ocean and Waters Night, Researchers Nights, webinars and trainings. HUB is also supporting teachers by providing individual consultations for SHORE Open CALLS, but also training on how to teach about ocean literacy in schools – ie. WEBINAR – Online meeting with teachers and pedagogy students – 02 March 2024.

The main barrier to promote the SHORE project was the location of WSB University departments, all of them are in the South of Poland. The National Network was extended thanks to the Polish National Contact Point for Horizon Europe – Global Challenges Section which organized a Webinar on the EU Mission Restore our oceans, seas and waters (7 May 2024 on 12.00-13.30 CEST). WSB University was a speaker and promoter of SHORE good practices under Mission Ocean. Thanks to this meeting WSB and Polish National HUB started to cooperate with The Experiment Science Center in Gdynia and with Today we have (NGO from Sopot) promoting ocean literacy among Polish citizens and working on the North part of Poland. Thanks to these contacts HUB adds to the Polish SHORE network experts in ocean literacy like Institute of Oceanology of Polish Academy of Sciences and Gdynia Aquarium – a zoo operating within the structures of the Marine Fisheries Institute.

That connection gives the second SHORE OPEN CALL the opportunity to inform and reach schools from all over the country with special focus on the Northern schools. SHORE also networks with Mr. Goodfish 3.0 project aquaculture products. The project will aim to provide consumers with accurate information on aquatic food: The Experiment Science Center in Gdynia.

SHORE WSB HUB also cooperates with WSB Third Age University, and they are working together for ocean literacy promotion, ie. Meeting with citizens and seniors in Władysławowo (SHORE promotion in Northern Poland) – Event date – 18/06/2024 which main goal was to enable European consumers to make more informed choices when buying and consuming seafood, as well as other aquaculture products. The project will aim to provide consumers with accurate information on aquatic food: The Experiment Science Center in Gdynia.

3.6. Romania

Stakeholder management is a crucial aspect of the SHORE project in Romania, aiming to create a robust network of engaged partners dedicated to advancing ocean literacy. This aligns with the broader goals of the EU Mission Ocean "Restore Our Oceans and Waters by 2030," which emphasizes the importance of collaborative action and stakeholder engagement in achieving a healthy marine environment.



Within the Black Sea region, this is particularly relevant due to the unique ecological challenges and the need for transboundary cooperation.

The SHORE project's stakeholder management approach involves a dynamic process of identifying and mapping stakeholders at national and local levels within the Black Sea region. This includes not only those directly involved in marine education, such as schools and educators, but also policymakers, NGOs, community groups, and industries with ties to the ocean. This ongoing effort ensures that all relevant actors, including those contributing to the EU Mission Ocean's goals in the Black Sea, are included and their perspectives considered throughout the project's duration.

The Romanian CH established some communication protocols, meaning to share best practices for collaboration, and providing resources for organizing stakeholder workshops and meetings. By equipping the Country Hub with the necessary tools and knowledge, the project ensures consistent and impactful stakeholder management across different contexts, contributing to the collaborative spirit of the EU Mission Ocean.

Active involvement of national and local stakeholders is a cornerstone of the SHORE project in the Black Sea region and Romania. This is achieved through a variety of activities, including ocean literacy workshops, public events, meetNtalks, consultations, etc. These initiatives foster a sense of ownership among stakeholders and promote the integration of local knowledge and perspectives into project activities. This participatory approach ensured that the project's outputs are relevant, engaging, and tailored to the specific needs of each community within the Black Sea region.

The Romanian Country Hub played an important role in this stakeholder management framework, particularly in contributing to the EU Mission Ocean's objectives within the Black Sea and Romania. They actively mapped and engaged local stakeholders, building connections with schools, universities (Ovidius University), research institutions (National Institute for Marine Research and Development "Grigore Antipa", National Institute for Research and Development on Marine Geology and Geo-ecology), local authorities, and NGOs involved in marine education and conservation.

Through organizing workshops and meetings, the Romanian Country Hub facilitated dialogue and collaboration among these diverse actors, fostering a shared understanding of ocean literacy challenges and opportunities within the Romanian context and contributing to the broader goals of restoring the Black Sea ecosystem. Furthermore, the Romanian Country Hub took the lead in adapting and disseminating SHORE project resources to the local context. This includes translating educational materials, sharing best practices, and developing targeted initiatives to promote ocean literacy within Romanian communities.

By actively engaging with local stakeholders and tailoring project outputs to their specific needs, the Romanian Country Hub ensured the project's relevance and



effectiveness in promoting ocean literacy across the country, ultimately supporting the EU Mission Ocean's vision for a healthy and resilient Black Sea.

3.7. Türkiye

Effective communication with national and regional stakeholders was established through several channels, including formal presentations, webinars, and ongoing support to schools. Major collaborations included national universities, maritime research centres, and schools from various cities. Barriers encountered during these communications were mostly related to the lack of familiarity with the European Blue Schools Program and confusion between different blue education initiatives.

- ✓ Meetings with stakeholders: four major conferences were attended, and three webinars were conducted.
- ✓ Barriers: Confusion between different initiatives such as the European Blue School Network and the SHORE Project.

One of the key events was organized in collaboration with the Coast Guard Command (figure 2), which included collecting samples from four points in the Marmara Sea to analyze the environmental state. This event was also integrated into the 'Plastic Pirates' activity to engage young participants in marine conservation efforts.

As part of the SHORE project, the Country Hub, in collaboration with the Coast Guard Command, collected samples from four different points in the Marmara Sea. These samples will facilitate a comprehensive analysis of the sea's current state. This collaborative effort marks a significant step towards better understanding and protecting the ecosystem and environmental health of the Marmara Sea. The event was added to the Plastic Pirates activity (<https://www.plastic-pirates.eu/en/summit/event-details>).



Figure 2 - Activity with Coast Guard (Türkiye)

4. Project support activities

This section focuses on the support activities provided to schools during the open call for project proposals. It outlines the efforts made to assist schools in developing and submitting strong project applications. This included workshops, training sessions, one-on-one consultations, or the provision of resources and guidance materials. The goal was to detail the proactive steps taken to facilitate the project development process for schools and encourage their participation in the open calls.

In **Austria**, during the first SHORE Open Call, proactive support was provided to schools through targeted outreach and informational sessions. The initiative prioritized direct communication with educational institutions to facilitate their participation. Activities involved live and online meetings with schools, teachers and experts. To support and unburden the application process, the essential Open Call materials were translated into German language, including all information about the main aspects of how to submit a successful proposal.

Besides these activities, specially designed and implemented to promote SHORE and Open Calls, KUW built on the experience gained in national and international projects. SHORE has been integrated into existing networks, exploiting the cooperation with schools and stakeholders.

In supporting the development of school projects – especially during the open call – KUW placed strong emphasis on leveraging the experience of previous successful projects as well as integrating SHORE into ongoing activities. In doing so, the added value of SHORE for schools is always a key aspect. Linking schools and SHORE, KUW is keen to highlight the potential of additional opportunities created and explain the benefits for the school when applying for SHORE.

As for example, a school which took part in the DOCK4Change climate education project of KUW will apply for the OC#2. The school already has an active climate club and is eager to use the funding to further develop their existing projects. For another school that KUW is in contact with as part of the Vienna Children's University, SHORE is the long-awaited spark to finally initiate a water-related project.

In addition, our contacts at conferences such as the ECSA Conference (European Citizen Science Association, 3-6 April 2024, Vienna/Austria) or the Eusea Conference (European Science Engagement Association, 15-16 May 2024, Tbilisi/Georgia) have been useful in promoting the opportunities for schools in the SHORE project. Also first contacts have been established to the Horizon Restore4Life-Project (<https://restore4life.eu/>) and the Danube4Life Project (<https://www.danube4allproject.eu/>) to expand the information to other partners and find additional synergies. Contacts with the University College for Agricultural and Environmental Education (HAUP) – a Competence Centre for Green Pedagogy in Vienna (<https://www.haup.ac.at/en/>) have been established for bigger awareness of Ocean Literacy and potential implementation into the curriculum.



In **Estonia**, during SHORE's first open call, expended a lot of effort towards "breaking into" the school system as a new entity represented by Global Skills Network by partnering with well-established community organizations to host our different events.

Despite efforts to disseminate information on social media and direct email campaigns, the hosted events (meet & greets / webinars) were poorly attended, resulting in zero applications from Estonia. Education remains a very traditional field, also in Estonia. Therefore, a building up of trust is needed for successful partnerships such as promoting membership in the NEBS and participating in a funding scheme that requires collaboration with third parties in the community for co-creating blue school projects.

The Estonian Hub has made significant progress in developing the relationships with schools by bringing Piret Liv Stern Dahl on board to lead our initiatives in this area. With an MSc in Environmental and Natural Resource Economics and a Bachelor's in Agricultural Production and Marketing, she connected with teachers effectively by fostering a collegial approach without the interference of English being a possible barrier to communication, as everything is done in the Estonian language. They have also gained a lot of traction in developing relationships with Blue Economy actors and community members because of their involvement and dedication to the tasks of relationship-building.

To encourage robust participation in the Network of European Blue Schools, **Hungary (CH)** implemented a comprehensive support program for schools during the open application period. This initiative focused on providing clear and accessible information, individualized guidance, and resources tailored to the needs of Hungarian schools.

A series of meetings were conducted to ensure schools were well-informed about the application process. Large-scale gatherings, open to all Hungarian schools, provided a broad overview of the Blue School concept, accreditation criteria, and application procedures. These were complemented by smaller, more focused sessions with 1-2 schools, allowing for in-depth discussions and personalized guidance on project themes and application strategies.

Recognizing that language accessibility can be a barrier, a dedicated effort was made to develop support materials in Hungarian. A key resource was the "Joining the Blue School Network" guide, which provided step-by-step instructions on navigating the application process and online interface. Additionally, the "Application Submission Help" guide offered practical assistance with the F6S platform, ensuring schools could confidently complete and submit their applications. To further enhance comprehension, all relevant open call materials were translated into Hungarian. Throughout the open call period, continuous support was available to schools. This included regular reviews of draft applications and prompt responses to any emerging questions. This proactive approach ensured that schools felt supported and empowered throughout their journey towards becoming accredited Blue Schools.



In **Italy**, a series of webinars were promoted both in Rome and in the Padua area, either directly during physical events or through emails. The webinars were attended moderately, with a handful of teachers present after working hours, and were recorded (with the agreement of the attendees) to be then sent out in campaigning emails. It is therefore impossible to know exactly how many watched it. During the webinars, translated guides to Italians were discussed together with the attendees, answering directly any potential question on the procedure of both SHORE and the Network of European Blue Schools submission. Eventually the translated guides were sent out as well.

Another initiative was to involve two financed Italian schools in the webinars so that they could share their success story and answer queries as well. The performance of guiding through schools that wanted or were interested in submitting a project is a very intimate one, and some convincing is inherently needed, since a lot of the actual effort falls on dynamic teachers rather than a whole school often.

In rare cases teachers asked for stakeholder contacts, but in most cases the schools already had several options and simply needed time and clarity to write a project. There were several cases in which the schools simply called to ask whether a project was ambitious enough, or a good idea, and did not require any help offered.

In **Poland**, active measures were taken to support schools during the first SHORE open call. A key focus was direct engagement with schools through informational meetings. Two sessions were held at Nicolaus Copernicus High School in Zyrardow on 22 February 2024, reaching a total of 180 participants. These meetings, along with a similar session conducted at Paweł Stalmach High School in Wisła on 12 March 2024, with 150 participants, provided detailed information about the SHORE Open Call and promoted ocean literacy among students and educators.

To further expand outreach and provide support to a wider audience, a webinar was organized on 2 March 2024. This online session targeted teachers and pedagogy students, offering them an opportunity to learn more about SHORE and the open call process. The webinar successfully engaged 26 participants, contributing to the overall effort to increase awareness and encourage project submissions. These activities aimed to raise awareness about SHORE, encourage project development, and support schools in navigating the application process.

In **Romania**, the CH took a proactive approach to supporting schools during the SHORE open call. Recognizing the importance of facilitating participation and ensuring the submission of high-quality project proposals, a series of activities were undertaken. National workshops were conducted to introduce the SHORE initiative and guide teachers through the project development process. These workshops and webinars focused on ocean literacy, but also tackling areas of interests for the open calls, aligning project ideas with SHORE objectives, developing effective project plans, budgeting. A total of more than 200 teachers from Romanian schools participated in these workshops and webinars.

Individual consultations were offered to schools seeking personalized guidance on their project ideas. These consultations allowed teachers to receive tailored feedback and support in refining their project proposals. The Romanian Hub experts



provided guidance on clarifying eligibility criteria, strengthening project design, identifying potential twinning schools, etc.

To facilitate the application process, the open call announcements were translated into Romanian language outlining the key aspects of project development and submission (key contents, e.g., step-by-step instructions, templates for project proposals, etc. In addition to the above, were organized webinars focusing on topics relevant to project development, such as successful fundraising strategies for school projects, integrating ocean literacy into the curriculum, etc. These featured teachers from schools that were already part of NEBS, or representatives of regional institutions, that attracted numerous participants from across the country.

These support activities aimed to empower Romanian schools to actively engage with the SHORE initiative, develop impactful projects, and contribute to the advancement of ocean literacy in their communities.

In **Türkiye**, the CH provided support to several schools throughout the open call period, aiding them in developing project proposals to become part of the Network of European Blue Schools. This included providing guidance on the European Blue Schools application process and offering feedback on proposals before submission. Specific examples of support include assistance with project proposal drafts, recommendations on blue education initiatives, and feedback sessions with educators.

- **50 teachers** participated in the **Ocean Literacy Course for Teachers in Türkiye**, which educated them on the European Blue Schools program and project development processes.
- **33 teachers** participated in a second **Ocean Literacy Course for Teachers** receiving similar guidance.
- In addition, **45 teachers** attended a **webinar on Ocean Literacy and Blue Curriculum**. The webinar provided detailed insights into the application process, key differences between the European Blue Schools Network and the Shore Project, and project development support.

5. Blue School Network Support

According to the [official web page of the Network](#), this is “an initiative of EU4Ocean, the European Ocean Coalition that connects diverse organizations, projects and people contributing to ocean literacy and the sustainable management of the ocean.





Figure 3 – European Blue Schools across sea basins

(Source: https://maritime-forum.ec.europa.eu/theme/ocean-literacy-and-blue-skills/ocean-literacy/network-european-blue-schools_en)

This Network of European Blue Schools aims to inspire teachers, school directors or staff of education services, to challenge their students, from kindergarten, primary, lower and upper secondary, technical or vocational schools, to develop a “Find the Blue” project that links them to the ocean or the sea. By successfully completing the project and sharing its results, schools will receive the European Blue School label” (figure 3).

As part of the WP3, a dissemination plan was developed in order to increase the number of applications and thus the number of potential applicants to the SHORE call for projects.

The plan contained efficient ways to do the dissemination as:

- **Direct e-mail/message to schools.** The Country Hubs, but also the consortium partners approached the schools from previous collaborations directly. If there is no such history of collaboration, contacts can be collected from public databases. As an incentive or as a way to increase motivation for applying to NEBS, a teaser was offered about the first SHORE call for projects.
- **Top-to-bottom dissemination.** Either ministries or local structures with responsibilities in the educational system (such as inspectorates or directorates) were contacted for disseminating the opportunity of applying to NEBS. Considering the amount of time this might take, it is recommended to engage local structures, as they might react faster than a ministry. However, getting the ministries on board could prove to be very useful for further steps.
- **Engaging existing networks & communities of schools/ teachers/ educators.** Since there are already established networks for schools and/or teachers &

educators that might have an interest in the topic of Blue Schools, synergies can be created together with them, in order to engage their members to apply. The European Marine Science Educators Association (EMSEA) is a great example, since they were actively involved in establishing and managing NEBS from the beginning. Also, the communities formed around Erasmus+ programme could be a good start (such as [European School Education Platform eTwinning](#), which has a system of [National Support Organisations](#)).

- **Social media.** On social media platforms, there was a general dissemination of NEBS on the official SHORE accounts and on those of the consortium partners. Also, for a more specific approach, posts were made in dedicated groups/chats, with the help of Country Hubs and the SHORE PR team.

In **Austria**, the participation in the transformative initiative of the Blue Schools has been relatively limited so far, with only two schools actively involved, namely the Gymnasium Draschestrasse Vienna Bilingual School - Junior High School - Vienna and the BRGORG15.at - Senior High School - Vienna. Additionally, one middle school joined the network since the start of the SHORE project. Alongside the possibility of insufficient awareness about the importance of ocean and blue literacy in a global context, there seems to be little knowledge regarding the Network of the European Blue Schools.

According to statements from local networks of schools and non-formal educational providers, this is most probably caused by a general absence of public awareness and visibility of the network. The presumption of insufficient knowledge about the establishment of a Europe-wide network of blue schools was confirmed as SHORE project representatives in Austria (Austrian Country Hub) informed immediate partner schools about the possibility of becoming a member. They expressed a strong interest in joining and the possibility of networking with other European schools in order to strengthen ocean literacy in Austria and abroad.

Since being a NEBS member is a prerequisite to receive SHORE funding, KUW introduces and promotes the NEBS in every webinar and talks with schools and when promoting ocean literacy and SHORE. As a result, many schools in the Rhine and Danube area expressed their interest in starting the application process in the upcoming months. Nevertheless, more efforts are required to promote the Network of European Blue Schools within Austria and Germany and to explain the benefits of membership to those responsible.

In **Estonia** were three schools that applied to join the Network of European Blue Schools during the past open application process that ended in December – the only Estonian school admitted as a member of the NEBS is one Global Skills Network tutored during the application process (Kohila Gymnasium), and they had applied and received ProBleu funding so were not eligible for SHORE; the other two were rejected because their projects were proposed and had not advanced to being in operation by the time the deadline came. There are currently five schools active in the application process of applying to SHORE as well as the two other “sister”



projects to the Horizon initiative. The CH has scheduled extensive activity for Open Call #2 that ends on 20 November 2024, always including a component dedicated to explaining what the NEBS is, its benefits, and what the application process implies. They also produced a “brainstorming template” for the design of application projects to SHORE’s Open Call 2 in English and Estonian.

Recognizing the integral role of the European Network of Blue Schools in achieving the objectives of the SHORE project, a strategic emphasis was placed on encouraging **Hungarian** schools to join the network. This commitment stemmed from the understanding that Blue School accreditation provides a valuable framework for integrating ocean literacy into the curriculum and fostering a sustainable mindset within the school community. From the outset, promoting Blue School membership was prioritized. During the initial informational meeting, schools were actively encouraged to join the network, highlighting the benefits of participation both within the context of the SHORE project and beyond. This proactive approach yielded positive results, with 12 schools submitting applications during the first open call, marking a significant step forward in expanding the network's reach within Hungary. It is anticipated that this increased participation will foster greater collaboration and knowledge sharing among schools committed to ocean literacy.

To further facilitate the application process, a suite of supportive materials was developed. These resources, translated into Hungarian to ensure accessibility, provided step-by-step guidance on navigating the application procedures and online interface. By simplifying the process and addressing potential language barriers, these materials aimed to encourage greater participation in the Blue School Network, ultimately benefiting both individual schools and the broader educational landscape. The development of these resources reflects a commitment to empowering schools to embrace ocean literacy principles and contribute to a more sustainable future.

In **Italy**, to facilitate participation in the SHORE calls as well as in the Network of European Blue Schools, the CH proceeded without a strict separation between these two initiatives due to the unique nature of enrolment in the network, and the fact that it became a prerequisite to win a SHORE project application. Consequently, during the entire call period and even afterward, the following activities were implemented:

- Webinars for teachers to provide information and guidance, specifically on the 12 December 2023.
- Participation in teacher training sessions to present the SHORE project and highlight the opportunities it offers.
- Meetings with schools during the academic year to discuss SHORE and its initiatives, often after visits to the Veterinary Medicine Museum on the campus.
- Collaborative meetings with non-profit organizations and museums to co-design activities and explore potential synergies.



Furthermore, in support of the submission process for blue proposals, both for the network and SHORE calls, the CH partners remained consistently available to offer guidance. Whether through email or with phone calls, they provided ongoing support to teachers interested in applying. This proactive approach ensured that educators had access to the necessary resources, guidance, and personalized feedback to strengthen their applications. The CH along with its partner translated the material provided by the consortium to Italian, which was requested by most of the potential applicants, to familiarize with the process before making the effort to write the project in English. By fostering a direct, hands-on approach to communication, the CH partners played a pivotal role in demystifying the application process, empowering teachers to confidently engage in the opportunities presented by SHORE and the Blue Network.

Additionally, during all events and occasions—such as museum open days—the initiative was consistently promoted to a specific audience of professors and teachers. Targeted outreach efforts during these public events ensured that the initiative reached the key educational figures who could act as multipliers within their institutions, spreading awareness and encouraging further participation. This consistent promotion helped expand the project's visibility within educational circles, making the SHORE and Blue Network opportunities more accessible to a broader audience of educators.

These initiatives aimed not only to raise awareness of the project but also to create deeper connections within the educational community and the broader Blue School Network. By offering continuous support and engagement opportunities through these channels, the CH actively encouraged participation, fostering collaboration between educators, schools, and external organizations. This strategy proved essential for aligning the diverse actors involved and integrating their efforts into the SHORE project's goals.

In **Poland**, to effectively promote the Network of European Blue Schools and encourage participation, a comprehensive dissemination strategy was implemented, utilizing a variety of channels and engaging diverse audiences. This strategy encompassed both in-person events and online platforms, ensuring broad reach and accessibility.

Information sessions were conducted at schools to raise awareness about the Blue School Network and its benefits. These sessions provided detailed information on the application process, criteria, and resources available to support schools in their journey towards accreditation. Notable events included:

- 22 February 2024, in Żywiec: A presentation on the Blue School Network was delivered to 180 participants, including teachers, school administrators, and students.



- 12 March 2024, in Wisła: An information session was held for 150 participants, focusing on the practical steps involved in becoming a Blue School and showcasing successful case studies.

Webinars were organized to engage a wider audience and provide a platform for interactive discussions on the Blue School Network. These online sessions targeted various stakeholders, including teachers, pedagogy students, and experts in the field of ocean literacy. Key webinars included:

- 2 March 2024: A webinar for teachers and pedagogy students, attracting 26 participants, explored the pedagogical approaches to integrating ocean literacy into the curriculum and highlighted the role of the Blue School Network in supporting these efforts.
- 7 May, 2024: In collaboration with the Polish National Contact Point for Horizon Europe, a webinar on the EU Mission "Restore our Oceans, Seas and Waters" was conducted, engaging 22 experts and potential applicants. The webinar highlighted the synergies between the EU Mission and the Blue School Network, encouraging participation in both initiatives.
- 14 May 2024: A webinar targeting European Universities working with pedagogy students and cooperating with schools attracted 32 participants. This session promoted ocean literacy and the SHORE project, emphasizing the role of higher education institutions in fostering a new generation of ocean-literacy educators.

To further enhance accessibility and provide personalized guidance, online consultations were offered to schools interested in the SHORE project and the Blue School Network. Additionally, the "Mission Ocean and Waters Night" event held in Kraków, Cieszyn, and Dąbrowa on 7 June 2024, engaged 151 participants in interactive discussions and activities promoting ocean literacy and showcasing the Network of European Blue Schools as a key initiative in this field. This multi-faceted approach ensured that information about the Network of Blue Schools reached a diverse audience, encouraging greater participation and contributing to the growth of the network.

The Network of European Blue Schools was intensely promoted in **Romania**, as an opportunity for schools to align with a European movement, to improve their portfolio of projects and activities, and to connect with schools with similar interests in Europe.

Several means of promotion were used:

- Mass-mailing details about NEBS and how to become a part of it. The Romanian CH has a database with almost 1500 contacts of teachers from all over Romania. They received at least 3 different communications, to encourage them to apply for the Blue School label.
- During the webinars and national workshops that were conducted to promote the open call, the NEBS was presented, and the most important aspects were highlighted. All schools were offered support for application if needed, from the Romanian CH.



- In the framework of the almost 60 blue lessons organized with teachers and students, in WP2, RO CH took the opportunity to also mention the opportunity of becoming a Blue School, as a follow-up of those activities. Around 150 teachers were involved in the blue lessons, and with some of the teachers, 1-to-1 discussions were organized (via Whatsapp, phone call, Zoom meetings). This also helped in creating more effective synergies and a coherent connection between SHORE WPs.
- During other workshops or meetings with teachers, conducted in other projects or contexts, the NEBS was introduced and schools were invited to contact RO CH for further details and support.
- Lastly, all social media channels of the Romanian CH were used to create posts about the NEBS.

To facilitate the integration of schools into the Network of European Blue Schools, comprehensive support was provided throughout the open call period, in **Türkiye**. This support encompassed guidance on the European Blue Schools application process, feedback on project proposals, and specialized training on ocean literacy and project development.

Schools received individualized support in developing competitive project proposals. This included:

- Assistance in drafting and refining project proposals.
- Recommendations on relevant and impactful blue education initiatives.
- Feedback sessions with educators to address specific questions and challenges.

Two dedicated Ocean Literacy Courses for Teachers were conducted, equipping educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and implement effective ocean literacy programs. These courses started in December 2023 and will continue in 2024, engaging 83 teachers. Furthermore, a webinar on "Ocean Literacy and Blue Curriculum" was held on March 20th, 2024, with 45 teachers in attendance. This webinar provided in-depth insights into the European Blue Schools application process, clarified distinctions between the Network of European Blue Schools and the SHORE Project, and offered targeted support for project development.

These initiatives reflect a commitment to empowering educators and schools to embrace ocean literacy principles and actively contribute to the Network of Blue Schools. By providing tailored guidance, training opportunities, and accessible resources, the project fostered a supportive environment for schools to develop and implement impactful ocean literacy programs.

6. Guidance and resource utilization

Schools received comprehensive guidance on implementing blue education activities, leveraging the resources and training materials developed within WP2. This support encompassed pedagogical strategies, activity ideas, and best



practices for integrating ocean literacy into various subjects and extracurricular activities.

The **Austrian CH** reported that the development of the Baseline Report in WP2 played a crucial role in understanding the Austrian context and is essential for guiding targeted actions. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the existing conditions, helping to tailor blue education activities to the specific needs of different regions. This, in turn, supports the effective implementation of activities in schools.

A strategic shift has been made in WP2: Rather than developing entirely new training materials, the WP members are reviewing and annotating existing materials and resources related to blue education, ensuring that all available tools are assessed for their relevance and use scenarios. These scenarios illustrate how the existing materials can be optimally integrated into classroom teaching, offering practical examples and guidance to schools on how to implement blue education in a meaningful way.

The shift from WP2 towards assessing existing materials enables the Austrian CH to address an apparent gap for teachers. In semi-structured interviews conducted as part of the Baseline Report, several teachers indicated that ready-to-use teaching materials in German on the global water aspect were needed.

The **Estonian Country Hub** mentioned that as demonstrated by the EU Schoolnet report, “Ocean Literacy for All – Curriculum Analysis”, European school curricula reflect the general “ocean blindness” of society, which uncovers three major flaws in formal education’s acceptance of material prepared by an outside entity like SHORE:

- Education remains compartmentalized and taught in silos, following a model where subjects, especially in secondary education, are structured around specific academic disciplines with teachers who are specialists in their fields, leading to isolated teaching of subjects without much integration across disciplines; there is often little overlap in how these interconnected concepts like ocean literacy can be taught. There is also little opportunity that classroom instruction testing can include content from other subject areas than discipline-specific content being tested, discouraging students from applying knowledge across disciplines.
- Instructional material for a school cycle is usually prepared 2-3 years in advance and submitted to a rigorous process of review at the national level. This gives us little opportunity to implement any instructional material that is designed during the course of the SHORE project into formal education classrooms within the lifespan of the project.
- Teacher training and school systems’ departmental structure currently in use reinforce a disciplinary approach. Teachers are usually trained in one specific subject, which they then teach in isolation from other subjects. Additionally, schools at the secondary-education level are often organized into departments (e.g., science department, humanities department), creating silos within the school itself. This fragmentation in formal education – the primary audience targeted by SHORE – hinders comprehensive



understanding and problem-solving of real-world challenges like climate change. The process of curating resources aligned with SHORE's five themes revealed a major obstacle in fulfilling our responsibilities of creating teaching routes: many resources are only available in English. This raises a critical question—how can teachers effectively incorporate blue literacy into courses taught in their native language if the materials are not accessible in that language? While English proficiency is generally high in Estonia, it is unreasonable to expect teachers to teach unfamiliar subjects in a language they may not fully grasp. Even more problematic is expecting children to comprehend complex concepts like ecosystem interconnectivity, habitat destruction, biodiversity loss, or the impact of microplastic pollution when the educational materials are not provided in their native language.

In **Hungary**, to ensure the accessibility and dissemination of key resources developed within WP2, a dedicated effort was made to translate and distribute these materials to Hungarian schools. This initiative aimed to overcome language barriers and empower educators with valuable tools and knowledge to effectively implement blue education activities.

Specifically, selected WP2 materials were translated into Hungarian and made available on the project's Hungarian website. This online platform served as a central repository for resources, providing easy access to valuable information for teachers and school administrators. Furthermore, to ensure these resources reached the target audience, relevant information and links to the translated materials were disseminated directly to teachers via email. This direct communication channel facilitated awareness and encouraged the utilization of these valuable resources in educational settings. This proactive approach to translating and disseminating WP2 materials reflects a commitment to supporting Hungarian schools in their efforts to integrate ocean literacy into their curricula. By providing accessible resources in their native language, the project aimed to empower educators to effectively implement blue education activities and foster a deeper understanding of the marine environment among students.

The **Italian CH** supported schools during the phases of presenting their project proposals, providing training for educators on Blue Education and various methodologies that can be applied. Additionally, they have engaged in direct meetings with schools to facilitate collaboration and understanding of the initiative's objectives.

Moreover, they were actively supporting the approved projects through mentoring activities. This mentorship includes one-on-one guidance and resources to help educators effectively implement their projects, ensuring they are equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to achieve their goals. By fostering a supportive environment, the aim was to enhance the quality and impact of the projects while encouraging a culture of innovation and sustainability in Blue Education.

The ongoing efforts to provide vetted material from the WP2 to all schools has prompted the Italian CH to focus on modules following the themes promoted by WP2 and come up with class experiments which could be easily implemented (EXPLORA). These will be promoted and updated in the coming time. Additional material such as



the ViverAcqua Academy (<https://academy.viveracqua.it/>) were promoted as easy ready tools for teachers.

The **Polish CH** actively promoted ocean literacy by utilizing existing materials created by Polish experts and leveraging data from SHORE content partners. A key resource in this endeavor is the "NON-Guidebook for Ocean Literacy," (<https://oceanliteracy.pl/category/niepodrecznik-oceaniczny/>), a series of YouTube videos designed to engage and educate audiences on various aspects of ocean literacy (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GcYj_25vdl0&list=PLkobaySTd7ilznqJ01wRLJZaJaaihyTg0). These have proven to be valuable tools for teachers, particularly in biology and geography lessons, due to their accessibility and relevance to the Polish curriculum.

To further disseminate ocean literacy knowledge and promote the SHORE project, the Polish CH has organized a diverse range of activities. These include in-person events, such as a meeting with citizens and seniors in Władysławowo and the "Mission Ocean Night" held in Kraków, Cieszyn, and Dąbrowa Górnicza, which engaged students, children, and seniors in interactive activities. Additionally, WSB has conducted webinars targeting European universities and collaborating with the Polish National Contact Point for Horizon Europe to promote ocean literacy and the EU Mission "Restore our Oceans, Seas and Waters."

Recognizing the importance of direct engagement with educators, WSB has facilitated online meetings with pedagogy students and teachers, offered open consultations with one-on-one meetings, and promoted the SHORE open call among students in South Poland. These efforts have highlighted the value of communicating directly with teachers who are passionate about ecology and interested in innovative educational projects. By fostering these connections, WSB aims to increase awareness and utilization of SHORE materials and encourage participation in open calls, ultimately contributing to the advancement of ocean literacy in Poland.

Similarly **Romanian CH** has used all means at its disposal, in order to encourage as many teachers as possible to implement blue education and ocean literacy activities. Not only were teachers provided with and encouraged to use the materials developed in SHORE WP2, but also to value the implemented activities in their application for the Network of European Blue Schools. Thus, a consistent and coherent message was delivered.

All the teachers in the RO CH database, almost 1500 contacts, received by e-mail all the materials and resources developed and/or gathered in SHORE WP2, together with all the necessary implementation & logistic details. Specific guidance has been requested by at least 50 different teachers, from various parts of Romania, either by e-mail, Whatsapp or even phone call. Every time, Romanian CH has analysed the request and provided adapted support and additional information, from case to case. The number of teachers that offered feedback and reported to have used the SHORE materials exceeds 150, and for sure there are more that didn't necessarily come back to RO CH with this information.



Another means of reaching out to teachers and providing support is represented by the webinars and national workshops that have been organized. During these events, invariably the materials developed in SHORE WP2 were promoted, either as a good practice example, as useful tools, or simply because they were related to the topic and the project.

In **Türkiye**, the CH prioritized ongoing support for educators in implementing blue education activities through structured courses and workshops. Two comprehensive Ocean Literacy Courses were conducted, equipping a total of 83 teachers with the knowledge and skills to effectively integrate ocean literacy into their curricula.

These courses, provided a blended learning experience, incorporating:

- **Project Preparation Guidance:** Teachers received step-by-step guidance on developing and implementing ocean literacy projects, including defining project objectives, designing activities, and incorporating assessment strategies.
- **Curriculum Development Support:** The courses offered practical support in integrating ocean literacy concepts into existing curricula, aligning activities with learning objectives, and adapting materials to different age groups and learning styles.
- **Application Support for the European Network of Blue Schools:** Dedicated sessions focused on guiding teachers through the application process for the European Blue Schools program, providing insights into the criteria and helping in preparing compelling applications.

To ensure practical application of the acquired knowledge, teachers were tasked with developing blue projects with their students. These projects provided opportunities for hands-on learning, student engagement, and creative exploration of ocean-related themes. The projects were then presented and evaluated, fostering a collaborative learning environment and encouraging peer-to-peer feedback.

The Ocean Literacy Courses utilized a variety of resources, including materials from the IOI Ocean Academy and expert presentations, enriching the learning experience and providing access to valuable insights from leading practitioners in the field of ocean literacy. By providing this structured support and fostering a community of practice, the project empowered teachers to become agents of change in promoting ocean literacy and creating a more sustainable future.

7. Community platform engagement

SHORE Community Platform is a valuable tool for enhancing ocean literacy and effectively implementing the Blue Curriculum (figure 4). It provides a rich repository of educational resources specifically designed for teachers and students. Educators can access comprehensive training materials and professional development resources to strengthen their teaching methodologies and confidently deliver



engaging lessons on ocean topics. Students, in turn, benefit from interactive activities and educational games that make learning about the ocean and water conservation an enjoyable and enriching experience. This platform fosters a deeper understanding of the ocean's importance and empowers the next generation of ocean stewards.

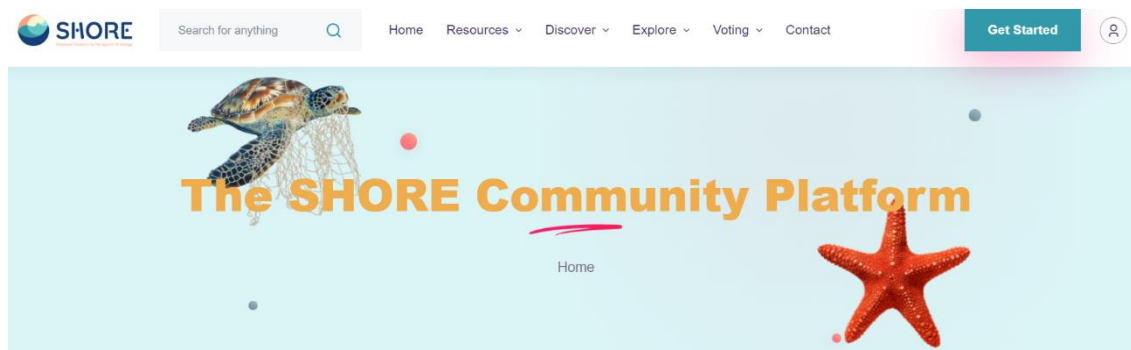


Figure 4 - SHORE Community Platform

(<https://shoreedu.com/>)

The CHs collaborated closely with developers, providing crucial insights from our on-the-ground experience and understanding of the specific needs and challenges faced by schools in the target regions. This included contributing to the platform's design and functionality, ensuring it was user-friendly and accessible for educators and students alike. The CHs also played a key role in populating the platform with relevant and culturally appropriate resources and guidance materials.

The **Austrian CH** provided consistent feedback to our consortium partner throughout the platform development process, focusing on usability and feasibility. While the platform was under development and being populated with resources, KUW limited promotional activities. Now that the platform is fully operational and accessible to schools, with all materials uploaded, KUW is actively promoting it across their network.

As previously communicated by the **Estonian CH**, the curated resource repository is intended for dissemination via the SHORE Community Platform. However, the official platform launch is pending, and they await the upload of materials before initiating promotional activities targeting Estonian schools.

The **Hungarian CH** has been actively involved in testing and providing feedback on the SHOREEDU platform. Initial assessments indicate that while the platform demonstrates promise, some technical challenges remain. Specifically, the CH has identified inconsistencies in platform access across different schools and has diligently documented and reported any encountered interruptions or usability issues to contribute to ongoing platform development and optimization efforts.

The **Italian CH** contributed to the platform's development by creating teacher training modules enriched with practical examples. These modules are designed to equip educators with actionable insights and strategies for effectively integrating Blue Education concepts into their curricula. The inclusion of real-world

applications and case studies aims to enhance the learning experience, making it more relevant and engaging for both teachers and students. This hands-on approach supports educators' professional development and fosters a deeper understanding of Blue Education principles, ultimately benefiting the broader educational community. Further development of the modules is possible.

The **Polish CH** gathered feedback from teachers regarding the usability of proposed tools and SHORE open calls. However, a primary interest expressed by teachers was access to the SHORE platform, which was not yet available at that time. The anticipated availability of the SHORE platform, games, and materials in national languages is expected to increase accessibility for students and teachers who may lack English proficiency or confidence. Furthermore, WSB obtained international feedback during a webinar held on 14 May 2024, aimed at promoting ocean literacy and the SHORE project among European universities involved in pedagogy student training and school collaborations. Pedagogy teachers indicated a strong interest in ocean literacy and expressed their intent to utilize and promote the SHORE platform among their students. This interest in interactive tools for promoting ocean literacy across various European regions highlights the need for a second round of webinars and meetings to promote the platform upon its public launch. WSB contributed to the development of the community platform by preparing materials for the resource repository. The community platform was showcased to youth and teachers throughout SHORE activities in Poland, with particular emphasis during Mission Ocean and Waters Night events.

The **Romanian CH** has been actively engaged in the pilot implementation of the SHOREEDU platform within Romanian schools. Initial observations suggest that platform accessibility and functionality are not yet consistent across all participating schools. They have diligently documented and reported instances of technical difficulties and usability challenges encountered by teachers and students. This feedback aims to assist in ongoing platform refinement and ensure optimal user experience for all.

One main issue reported was that the community platform presented difficulties in accessing certain features or resources and this limited the ability of educators to fully utilize the platform's potential.

Despite the identified challenges, Romanian CH will continue to collaborate with developers and provide ongoing feedback to contribute to the platform's successful implementation and widespread adoption across Romanian schools.

To further enhance the platform's educational impact and foster deeper engagement, RO CH plans to implement several strategies. These include creating challenges and rewards systems to motivate students, such as awarding badges or points for completing quests or activities. Additionally, they will support teachers in developing structured activities that utilize the platform's resources and games, providing clear learning goals and supplementary instructions. Finally, RO CH will collaborate with teachers to create accompanying lesson plans and worksheets that seamlessly integrate the platform's materials into existing curricula. These initiatives aim to maximize the platform's potential as a valuable tool for promoting ocean literacy in Romanian schools.



In **Türkiye**, the community platform served as an important resource for teachers navigating the application processes for both the European Blue School Network and the SHORE Project. Teachers were actively encouraged to utilize the platform, particularly its "frequently asked questions" section, which proved valuable in clarifying application procedures and minimizing potential misunderstandings among project partners and applicants. This proactive approach facilitated a smoother and more efficient application process.

8. Mentoring activities

Recognizing the critical link between ocean literacy and the planet's well-being, the SHORE blue projects represent a pioneering approach to fostering ocean literacy within educational institutions. As we embark on this journey, clear procedures and guidelines are essential to empower educators and students in exploring the vast realm of ocean knowledge.



Figure 5 - Mentoring process

(Source: <https://andersonmagazine.com/learning-and-growing-through-mentorship/>)

The blue projects, initiated through SHORE Open Calls, are designed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the ocean's complexities, encompassing its diverse facets, including critical issues, human impacts, environmental challenges, and potential threats. By fostering a deep understanding of these interconnected aspects, the project aims to cultivate a sense of responsibility among students, inspiring them to take proactive steps towards protecting and sustainably managing this vital ecosystem.

Furthermore, the SHORE project encourages students to actively engage with their school community and explore their connections to the ocean or sea, regardless of their physical proximity to the coast. By promoting inclusivity and fostering a sense of shared responsibility, the project aims to create a generation of ocean literate citizens who are equipped to address the challenges and opportunities facing our marine environments.

A key priority was to establish robust methods and criteria for monitoring and evaluating the blue projects implemented in schools. This monitoring (mentoring) process is crucial for identifying best practices and establishing benchmarks for future open calls, ensuring continuous improvement and maximizing the project's impact. Also, this process is facilitated by a comprehensive mentoring system. To facilitate this process, the WP3 lead developed standardized templates for all Country Hubs to utilize when evaluating each activity. These templates serve a dual purpose: they enable consistent evaluation across all WP3 members, providing a clear framework for assessing project outcomes, and they offer a valuable foundation for adapting and refining future activities based on lessons learned. By implementing this structured approach to monitoring and evaluation, the project aims to ensure that blue projects are effectively implemented, their impact is accurately measured, and best practices are identified and shared to enhance future initiatives.

Roles of mentors:

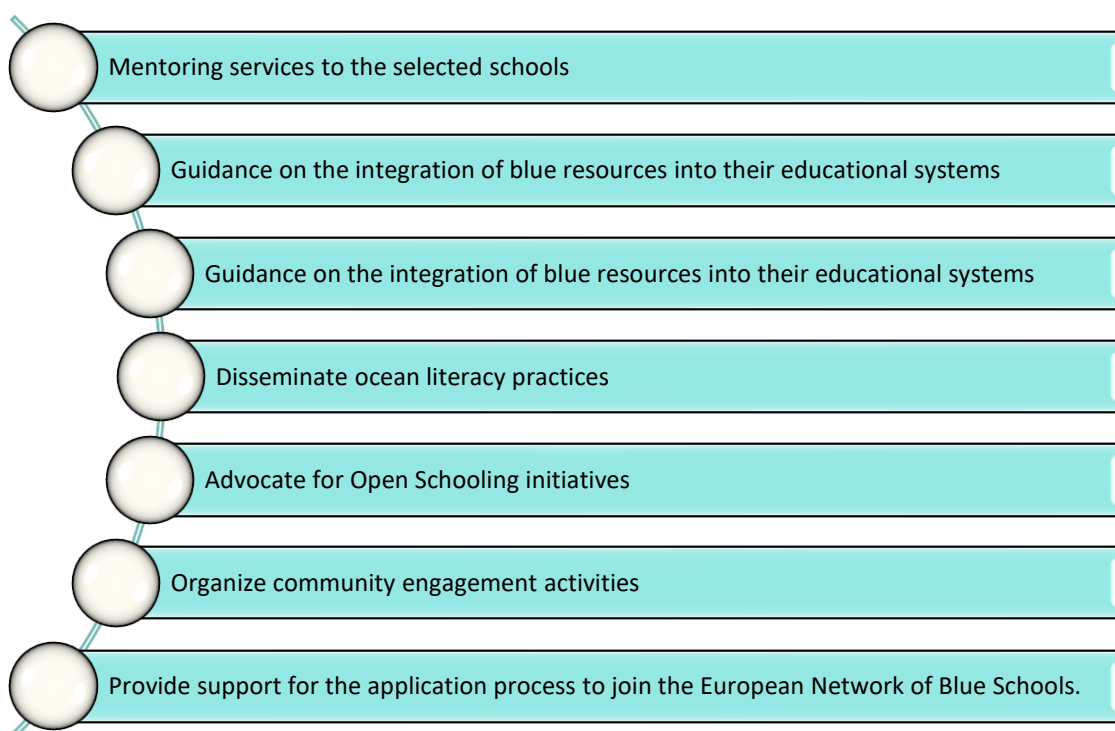


Figure 6 – Roles of mentors

The main responsibilities of the mentors will be:

- **Clear objectives:** it is crucial for mentors to **collaborate closely** with those responsible for implementing the project to establish clear and measurable objectives.
- **Regular meetings:** should hold **regular meetings**, ideally on a **monthly basis**. During these sessions, mentors can review progress, assess achievements, and identify any challenges. These meetings also provide a valuable opportunity to provide constructive feedback.

- **Monthly progress reports:** prepare a summary after each monthly meeting that will be held with the schools. These will include observations of challenges faced and recommendations for future directions.
- **Monitoring communication and dissemination:** Effective monitoring, communication, and dissemination strategies are essential for ensuring success and maximizing the impact of the blue projects undertaken through the SHORE initiative.
- **Evaluating feedback from project team:** By systematically collecting, analyzing, and acting upon feedback, mentors can create a supportive work environment where team members feel valued and empowered to contribute to the project's objectives.
- **Budget and resource monitoring:** The schools will be awarded their grant in the form of a lump sum payment. Mentors will primarily serve as a support system for schools, offering guidance and assistance upon request, rather than monitoring budget and resources. However, it's important to emphasize that all schools must adhere to their national financial regulations when making expenditures. Additionally, the entire requested amount must be utilized within the 6-month project implementation period. Moreover, each mentor can monitor their project using the community platform: <https://shoreedu.com/>
- **Applying to The Network of European Blue Schools:** To be eligible for SHORE grants, schools must obtain Blue School accreditation. Some winning schools currently lack this accreditation. Mentors will guide their mentee schools through the accreditation process, ensuring completion within 6 months of the project start. For comprehensive information, please visit: https://maritime-forum.ec.europa.eu/theme/ocean-literacy-and-blue-skills/ocean-literacy/network-blue-schools/how-develop-project_en.

In this first yearly activity, the team of mentors was established within all 7 CHs, as follows (table 2):

Table 2 – SHORE mentors

No.	Name	Organisation	CH
1	Andreea Ionascu	Mare Nostrum NGO	RO CH
2	Anca Panait	Mare Nostrum NGO	RO CH
3	Michał Szyszka	WSB	PL CH
4	Izabela Kotynska-Zielinska	WSB & Today We Have	PL CH
5	Edyta Nowak - Żółty	WSB	PL CH
6	Sandra Lund	Global Skills Network	EE CH
7	Piret Dahl	Global Skills Network	EE CH
8	Chris Gary	KUW	AU CH
9	Cyril Dworsky	KUW	AU CH
10	Thomas Troy	KUW	AU CH
11	Afşin ÇETİNKAYA	YTÜ	TK CH
12	Elifnaz UNAY	YTÜ-Technopark	TK CH
13	Gamze DALGIÇ	YTÜ	TK CH
14	Eszter Roxána TÓTH	BME	HU CH
15	László FARKAS	BME	HU CH



16	Martina Bortoletti	UNIPD	IT CH
17	Luca Melotti	UNIPD	IT CH
18	Cinzia Centelleghes	UNIPD	IT CH

The blue school projects resulting from SHORE's Open Call #1 have been awarded during months 1-12 but they were scheduled to be implemented afterwards.

The KUW team (**Austrian CH**) is mentoring four schools in total.

- Primary School in Piraeus, Greece
- Primary school in Bodrum, Türkiye
- High school in Antalya, Türkiye
- High school in Vienna, Austria

Every school has been contacted and first meetings were held to discuss the project, the timeline and to see if there are challenges occurring. All the schools were excited to start the projects and for each school monthly meetings are envisaged.

Global Skills Network (**Estonian CH**) was assigned mentoring responsibilities during SHORE's YR2 to four schools awarded funding during SHORE's open call #1:

- The only Baltic-region school, Gullmarsgymnasiet primary school (Sweden)
- Institut Antoni Ballester (Spain)
- Escola Perez Sala (Spain)
- S.E.A Huseyin Boyacı İlkokulu (Türkiye).

A system for monitoring the schools' progress has been implemented. This includes regular communication and data collection to track accomplishments and proactively address any challenges that may arise.

The **Hungarian CH** is mentoring four schools, as follows:

- Gokceli Ortaokulu (Türkiye)
- Kecskeméti Lánchíd Utcai Sport Általános Iskola (Hungary)
- Mosonmagyaróvári Kossuth Lajos Secondary Grammar School and Student Hostel (Hungary)
- Şehit Ömer Cankatar İlkokulu (Türkiye)

The mentoring program is in its early stages, with several meetings conducted to date. Initial communication challenges with the Turkish schools have been resolved, ensuring the timely exchange of information and addressing of inquiries. Monthly online meetings and frequent email correspondence maintain ongoing communication.

The **Italian CH** is mentoring the following winners of the first open call:

- Zeina Alkaraki
- Theodoropoulos School (Greece)
- Istituto Comprensivo Vicenza 5 - School Primary Giuseppe Giusti (Italy)
- Gymnasium of Kanithos (Greece)
- Isis Michelangelo Buonarroti (Italy)

Junior and Senior Researchers from the partnering department of the University of Padua serve as dedicated mentors, offering expert guidance and support. This approach aims to foster capacity building within the schools, enabling them to



effectively implement their projects and sustain engagement in Blue Education initiatives beyond the program's timeframe.

The reporting period concluded with the selection of blue projects for funding. In preparation for the second year of SHORE implementation, mentors were assigned to the participating schools. This ensures that schools have dedicated support as they begin implementing their blue projects.

The **Polish CH** is mentoring:

- Recep Ahmet Mercan Secondary School (Türkiye)
- IES Serra d'Espadà (Spain)
- Elementary school Šime Budinić (Croatia)
- Primary School Bartula Kašića Zadar (Croatia)

Mentors were assigned to schools. First actions were related to verification if mentored schools are members of The Network of European Blue Schools. Certificates for IES Serra d'Espadà (Spain) and Primary School Bartula Kašića Zadar (Croatia) were checked and verified as valid and eligible with SHORE 1st Open Call requirements. The rest of the schools will receive support and mentoring related to submission of project in next BSN open call.

The **Romanian CH** is mentoring:

- Montessano Elementary School (Romania)
- Düzce Borsa İstanbul Mesleki ve Teknik Anadolu Lisesi (Türkiye)
- Yenişakran Yunus Emre Ortaokulu (Türkiye)
- Platon Schools (Greece)

In **Türkiye**, mentoring was a key aspect of the CH's support, especially during the Ocean Literacy Courses, where teachers were guided through project development and curriculum implementation. A final session was dedicated to the presentation and evaluation of activities in schools, ensuring that projects were aligned with the goals of the Blue Schools network. Moreover, an outcome as the impact of the ocean literacy courses on raising awareness on ocean literacy can be observed through activities carried out in schools.

The **Turkish CH** is mentoring:

- Topçular Secondary School (Türkiye)
- Konak Mersinli Mesleki Teknik ve Anadolu Lises (Türkiye)
- Hatay Fen Lisesi (Türkiye)
- Bahçelievler 15 Temmuz Şehitleri İmam Hatip Ortaokulu (Türkiye)
- Lale Kemal Kılıç Secondary School (Türkiye)

9. Events and activities

9.1. Community events

WP3 focuses on supporting the successful implementation of school projects, fostering ocean literacy within local communities, and empowering students to become agents of change. To enhance public awareness and engagement with ocean issues, WP3 implemented a robust program of community activities. This initiative delivered a diverse range of activities, including workshops, webinars,



symposia, and "Meet & Talk" sessions. Furthermore, public events such as workshops, seminars, exhibitions, and Mission Ocean Nights were organized throughout the SHORE project to further promote ocean literacy.

A total of 53 events (figure 7) were conducted across all participating countries (Austria, Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, and Türkiye) during the first year of the program.

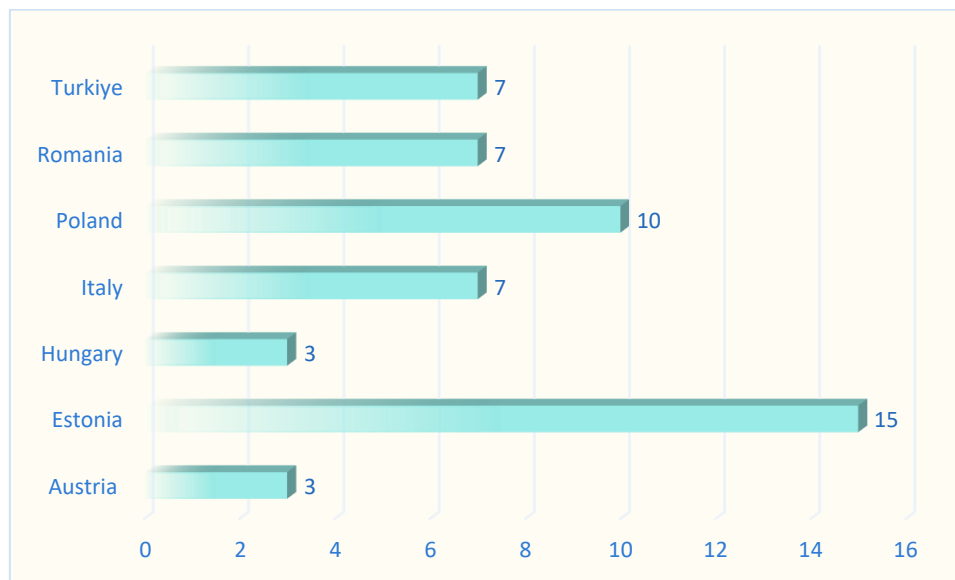


Figure 7 - Number of events by CH

These events, delivered through a combination of in-person and online formats, engaged a diverse audience of approximately 5,500 individuals (figure 8), highlighting the strong level of participation and interest.

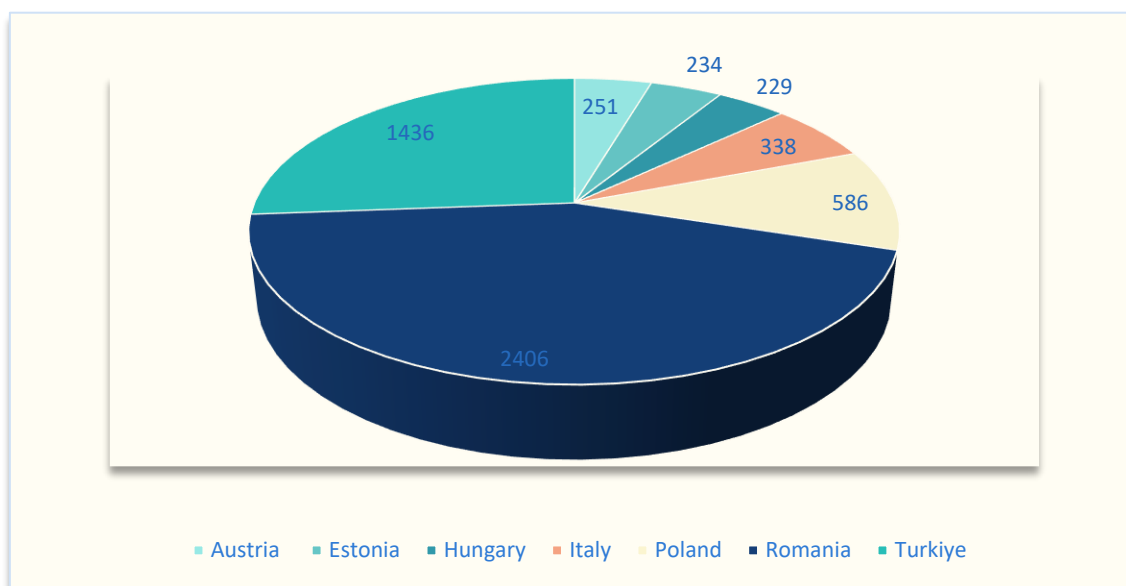


Figure 8 - Number of participants per CH

Table 3 – Community events by CH

No.	Country	Event name	Date	Location	No. participants
1.	Austria	School quiz – Corals and Oceans	20.12.2023	Vienna	114
2.	Austria	Webinar to promote OC#1	12.02.2024	Online	17
3.	Austria	School quiz – Environment and water	27.06.2024	Online	120
4.	Estonia	Promoting the SHORE project and open call	22.11.2023	Online	19
5.	Estonia	Promoting the SHORE project and open call	06.12.2023	Online	112
6.	Estonia	Promoting the SHORE project and open call	05.01.2024	Tallin	3
7.	Estonia	Promoting the SHORE project and open call	11.01.2024	Tallin	7
8.	Estonia	Promoting the SHORE project and open call	30.01.2024	Online	N/A
9.	Estonia	Promoting the SHORE project and open call	8.02.2024	Online	N/A
10.	Estonia	Promoting the SHORE project and open call	19.02.2024	Online	N/A
11.	Estonia	Promoting the SHORE project and open call	27.02.2024	Online	N/A
12.	Estonia	Promoting the SHORE project and open call	06.03.2024	Tallin	5
13.	Estonia	Promoting the SHORE project and open call	04.04.2024	Online	N/A
14.	Estonia	Promoting the SHORE project and open call	17.04.2024	Online	N/A
15.	Estonia	Promoting the SHORE project and open call	24.04.2024	Online	N/A
16.	Estonia	Promoting the SHORE project and open call	02.05.2024	Online	88
17.	Estonia	Promoting the SHORE project and open call	15.05.2024	Tallin	N/A



18.	Estonia	Promoting the SHORE project and open call	20.05.2024	Online	N/A
19.	Hungary	SHORE Webinárium – jelentkezés	07.02.2024	Online	11
20.	Hungary	SHORE Webinárium – jelentkezés	21.02.2024	Online	18
21.	Hungary	Gyerekegyetem	08 – 12.07.2024	Budapest	200
22.	Italy	Online webinar for SHORE and EBSN	12.12.2023	Online	15
23.	Italy	Co-organization of the Open Day at the “Giants of the Sea” Museum in Padova	01.03.2024	Padova	20
24.	Italy	Co-organization of the Turtle Conference in Venice	13.03.2024	Venezia	20
25.	Italy	Organization of the First Community Event: “Discover the Sea and Its Protection”	24.03.2024	Rom3	167
26.	Italy	Organization of the Second Community Event on Invasive Species in Rovigo	24.05.2024	Rovigo	46
27.	Italy	Meeting with SHORE Doctoral Students	31.05.2024	Padova	20
28.	Italy	Organization of the First Water Night in Chioggia	09.06.2024	Chioggia	50
29.	Poland	Daily Actions for OCEAN LITERACY	22.02.2024	Żywiec	180



		and SHORE OPEN CALL info session for Nicolaus Copernicus High School in Zywiec			
30.	Poland	Open online consultation for schools interested in SHORE 1st Open call	22.02.202 4	Online	3
31.	Poland	Daily Actions for OCEAN LITERACY and SHORE OPEN CALL info session for Paweł Stalmach High School in Wisła	12.03.202 4	Wisła	150
32.	Poland	Webinar for teachers and pedagogy students	02.03.202 4	Online	26
33.	Poland	Speech during Webinar on the EU Mission Restore our oceans, seas and waters by to Polish National Contact Point for Horizon Europe - Global Challenges Section	07.05.202 4	Online	22
34.	Poland	Webinar to promote ocean literacy and SHORE project among European Universities working with pedagogy students and cooperating with schools	14.05.202 4	Online	32



35.	Poland	Mission Ocean and Waters Night	07.06.2024	Kraków	36
36.	Poland	Mission Ocean and Waters Night	07.06.2024	Cieszyn	28
37.	Poland	Mission Ocean and Waters Night	07.06.2024	Dąbrowa	87
38.	Poland	Meeting with citizens and seniors in Władysławowo (SHORE promotion in Northern Poland)	18.06.2024	Władysławowo	22
39.	Romania	Promoting the SHORE project and open call to the Black Sea Cetacean Network (Ukraine and Bulgaria)	27.01.2024	Online	3
40.	Romania	Promoting SHORE project and open call to Romanian potential applicants	15.02.2024	Online	46
41.	Romania	Consultance for "Ion Cotovu" Highschool in Hârşova for applying to the Open Call (meetNtalk)	05.02.2024	Online	2
42.	Romania	Promoting the SHORE project and open call (public event)	27.02.2024	Constanta	900
43.	Romania	Earth Hour (figure 9)	23.03.2024	Constanta	1200
44.	Romania	Mission Ocean Night	07.06.2024	Tulcea	241
45.	Romania	Attracting funds for schools	08.07.2024	Online	14
46.	Türkiye	Ocean Literacy Course (1)	11.12.2023	Online	50
47.	Türkiye	OCEAN LITERACY AND	17.02.2024	Istanbul	750



		BLUE CURRICULUM WORKSHOP			
48.	Türkiye	Wave of Change Conference	14.05.2024	Istanbul	190
49.	Türkiye	Mission Ocean Night	07.06.2024	Istanbul	150
50.	Türkiye	Ocean Literacy Course (2)	26.08.2024	Online	33
51.	Türkiye	Webinar on Ocean Literacy and Blue Curriculum	20.03.2024	Online	45
52.	Türkiye	Marmara Sea Sample Collection Coastal Cleanup & marine Workshop	25.08.2024	Marmara Sea	15
53.	Italy, Poland, Romania , Türkiye	Mission Ocean Night	07.06.2024	Istanbul and online	203



Figure 9 - Earth Hour (public event in Romania)

9.2. Mission Ocean Night & Waters Night: Empowering Students through Enhanced Communication

Mission Ocean & Waters Night aimed to foster connections between research and education communities, engaging the public, and highlighting the pivotal role of school projects and ocean science research. The event served as a platform to facilitate interaction between students, communities, and practicing scientists, fostering a deeper understanding of ocean science and its significance.

The event has provided a unique opportunity for students and the wider community to interact directly with practicing scientists, gaining insights into their work, and discovering the real-world applications of ocean science. Through engaging presentations and discussions, attendees learnt about the latest developments in ocean research, environmental conservation efforts, and the interconnectedness of marine systems.



Figure 10 - Mission Ocean & Waters Night visuals

By bringing together researchers, educators, students, and the public, Mission Ocean & Waters Night has sought to foster a sense of community and collaboration in addressing the challenges facing our oceans (figure 10). Through shared knowledge, passion, and commitment, participants were empowered to make a positive impact on ocean conservation and contribute to building a more sustainable future for generations to come.

The proposed activities were updated to the local audience:

- **Interactive Workshops:** workshops covered topics such as marine biology, oceanography, marine conservation techniques, and sustainable fishing practices. Participants engaged in hands-on activities such as conducting water quality tests or learning how to identify different species of marine/riverine life.

- **Educational Presentations:** experts in the field of ocean science delivered informative presentations on various aspects of marine research, including climate change impacts on marine ecosystems, biodiversity conservation, ocean pollution, and the importance of marine protected areas.
- **Hands-on Demonstrations:** Demonstrations included experiments or simulations illustrating scientific concepts related to oceanography and marine biology. For example, participants learnt about marine mammal behavior through virtual reality experiences, interactive games adapted to the age of participants, etc.
- **Panel Discussions:** Panels featuring scientists, educators, and community leaders facilitate discussions on pressing issues facing the world's oceans. Topics could include sustainable seafood consumption, the role of citizen science in marine research, and strategies for mitigating the impacts of plastic pollution.
- **Exhibitions:** Exhibitions showcased innovative research projects conducted by students/scientists/schools, as well as displays of marine artifacts, photographs, and artwork inspired by the ocean.
- **Community Engagement Activities:** Community members participated in beach clean-up events, or marine life surveys organized in collaboration with local environmental organizations. These activities provided hands-on opportunities for participants to contribute to ocean conservation efforts in their own communities.
- **Meet-the-Scientist Sessions:** Informal sessions where attendees interacted directly with practicing scientists, asked questions, and learnt about their research interests and career paths. These sessions inspired young students to pursue careers in marine science and provided valuable networking opportunities for aspiring researchers.
- **Film Screenings:** Screenings of documentaries or short films highlighting important ocean-related issues, such as the impacts of climate change, the role of marine protected areas in conservation, or the beauty and diversity of marine life around the world. These screenings sparked meaningful discussions and inspired action among attendees.

The event began with a high-level session (figure 11) bringing together global leaders and marine science/environmental policy experts, followed by a diverse range of local activities in four of the Country Hubs: Romania, Türkiye, Poland, and Italy. The event featured a distinguished lineup of speakers, including Prof. Dr. Afşın Yusuf Çetinkaya (Yıldız Technical University), who set the stage by outlining the SHORE project's ambitions for collaborative marine ecosystem protection. International perspectives on marine conservation were provided by Prof. Yaşar Öməröv (Azerbaijan), Prof. Shahmaran Seilov (Kazakhstan), and Prof. Usmanov Batir Shukurillayevich (Uzbekistan).



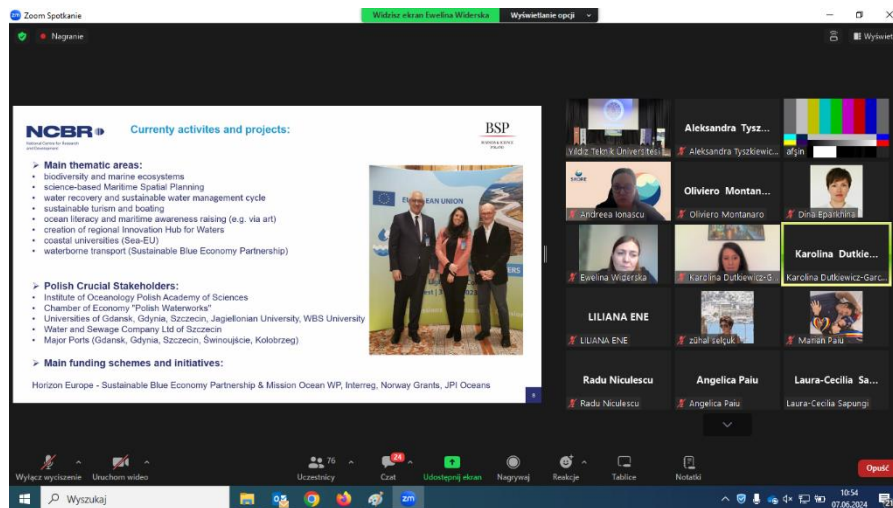


Figure 11 – Mission Ocean & Waters Night online session

European Union policy advisors Carolina Dutkiewicz-Garcia and Veronica Manfredi emphasized the vital role of international cooperation in addressing environmental challenges. Further presentations highlighted EU initiatives in marine protection, maritime innovation, climate science, and environmental policy, underscoring Europe's dedication to sustainable development.

The event concluded with a resounding endorsement of Türkiye's commitment to environmental management through scientific and technological advancement, delivered by YTU Rector Prof. Dr. Tamer Yilmaz and TUBITAK President Prof. Dr. Hasan Mandal.

The event was attended by 203 participants (123 in person, 80 online) (figure 13).



Figure 12 – Mission Ocean & Waters Night (High-level session, Türkiye)

9.2.1. Citizenship of the sea and the Venice Laguna (Italy)

The G. Olivi Museum in Chioggia recently hosted the event of Mission Ocean & Waters Night events dedicated to empowering future generations to become stewards of the sea and agents of change. Through a diverse program of panel discussions, meetings with scientists, poster sessions, and a museum tour, participants explored the complex challenges facing our marine environments and discussed strategies for promoting ocean health and sustainability.

A key highlight was the morning panel session (figure 13), which brought together a range of experts, including scientists, coast guard representatives, environmental activists, and local fishermen. Each panelist offered unique insights into the current state of our seas. Scientists presented detailed analyses of marine ecosystems, emphasizing the impacts of pollution and climate change. Coast guard representatives discussed their crucial role in monitoring and protecting maritime areas, enforcing regulations, and responding to environmental emergencies. Activists highlighted ongoing campaigns and initiatives focused on conserving marine biodiversity and advocating for sustainable practices. They also emphasized the power of communication and social media in raising public awareness about the condition of our waters. A local fisherman provided a compelling firsthand account of the changes he has witnessed in the marine environment, particularly the introduction of invasive species and the lack of public knowledge about native marine life.



Figure 13 - Mission Ocean & Waters Night (Italy)

The panel discussion served to illuminate the multifaceted nature of marine conservation, underscoring the need for collaboration and collective action. It reinforced the message that everyone, from policymakers to ordinary citizens, has a vital role to play in ensuring the health and sustainability of our oceans.

A complimentary guided tour of the G. Olivi Museum provided visitors of all ages with an opportunity to explore its extensive collection of marine organisms, a collection that has been curated since the mid-19th century. This experience served to enhance understanding of the lagoon's rich biodiversity and its historical significance. The afternoon session focused on the Venetian lagoon, a complex ecosystem facing numerous challenges. A panel of local engineers involved in water management, policymakers, Chioggia city officials, local editors, and engaged

citizens convened to discuss the historical changes, current pressures, and potential solutions related to the lagoon's health.



Figure 14 – Mission Ocean & Waters Night (Italy)

The discussion highlighted various factors impacting the lagoon, including climate change, industrial activities, and tourism. Panellists emphasized the crucial role of citizen engagement in conservation efforts, encouraging residents to participate in activities such as community cleanups, advocacy initiatives, and the adoption of sustainable living practices. The session underscored the importance of individual responsibility in safeguarding the lagoon's health and resilience for future generations. The event concluded with a screening of the acclaimed documentary "Po," directed by renowned filmmaker Andrea Segre, known for his work on "Welcome Venice." This poignant film further enriched the day's theme of environmental awareness and responsibility.

Overall, the event successfully fostered a dialogue about the multifaceted challenges facing the Venetian lagoon and emphasized the importance of integrated, collaborative action, beginning with education and awareness-building among students of all ages (figure 14).

9.2.2. Three rivers – One Sea (Poland)

The "Three Rivers – One Sea" event, an Ocean and Water celebration held in Poland, successfully engaged over 150 participants, including seniors, high school students, and children (including children under temporary protection). This initiative highlighted the interconnectedness of three major Polish rivers – Biała Przemsza in Dąbrowa Górnicza, Olza in Cieszyn, and Wisła in Kraków – with the Baltic Sea, fostering awareness of the importance of freshwater ecosystems.

In Kraków and Cieszyn, high school students participated in interactive workshops conducted on the riverbanks. These workshops included hands-on activities (figure 15) such as water quality measurement and lectures exploring the historical transformation of riverbanks since the industrial revolution. In Dąbrowa Górnicza, citizens and local communities attended open lectures focused on the Biała Przemsza River and regional water resources. The program incorporated a special focus on senior citizens, while also providing educational opportunities for children, including lessons on water quality assessment.



Figure 15 - Mission Ocean & Waters Night (Italy)

Furthermore, two public exhibitions enriched the initiative. One exhibition showcased the history and ecological significance of the Biała Przemsza River, while the other featured a fascinating display of ammonites from the Zagłębie region. These exhibitions provided valuable insights into the region's geological and natural heritage (figure 16).



Figure 16 - Ocean & Waters Night (Poland)

9.2.3. Hands-on demonstrations and meet-the-scientists' sessions (Romania)

In Romania, the event started with an interactive session dedicated to hands-on science demonstrations (figure 17). Participants were invited to engage with scientific concepts through interactive games and experiments, fostering active learning and exploration. Alternatively, attendees could opt to attend a film screening showcasing the unique ecosystems of the Danube Delta and Black Sea, providing a visually immersive experience of these vital natural environments.

The second session focused on cultivating connections between young people and scientists from prominent organizations involved in Danube Delta research and conservation. This "meet-the-scientist" format facilitated direct interaction and knowledge exchange, offering participants valuable insights into the ongoing efforts to understand and protect this ecologically significant region. By fostering dialogue and engagement between scientists and the next generation, the session aimed to inspire future stewards of the Danube Delta.

Mare Nostrum successfully engaged approximately 250 teenagers in a series of educational activities designed to foster environmental awareness and promote responsible action. By sharing knowledge, passion, and commitment, the organization empowered these young individuals to become agents of change and contribute to a more sustainable future.



Figure 17 - Mission Ocean & Waters Night (Poland)

The program incorporated a variety of hands-on learning experiences. Students participated in water analysis experiments, gaining practical skills in assessing water quality and understanding key factors such as pH levels (figure 18). Another experiment explored planetary phenomena, stimulating discussions about climate change and its far-reaching impacts. Additionally, students delved into the world of physics through interactive explorations of electric circuits, discovering various related phenomena.



Figure 18 - Mission Ocean & Waters Night (Poland)

Interactive worksheets featuring engaging questions and games introduced participants to the diverse species inhabiting the Danube Delta and the ecological challenges this unique ecosystem faces. Furthermore, students learned about Mare Nostrum's dolphin conservation efforts, acquiring valuable knowledge about dolphin identification, observation techniques, and the threats these marine mammals encounter in the Black Sea.

Through these diverse activities, Mare Nostrum effectively fostered scientific literacy, environmental stewardship, and a sense of responsibility among the participating teenagers, empowering them to make informed decisions and contribute to the preservation of the region's natural heritage.

9.2.4. Exhibition and interactive workshops on marine conservation (Türkiye)

The YTU Davutpaşa Campus hosted a dynamic event dedicated to marine ecosystems and environmental responsibility, successfully engaging 150 primary and secondary school students and teachers. Through a diverse program of interactive workshops, presentations, and hands-on activities, participants were immersed in the wonders of the marine world and inspired to embrace sustainable practices.

The event featured a range of engaging learning opportunities. Interactive workshops covered key topics such as marine conservation, recycling, and practical strategies for sustainable living. A central attraction was the Marine Debris Exhibit, which captivated audiences with informative displays on the devastating effects of plastic pollution while also highlighting inspiring conservation success stories.

Interactive stations brought environmental issues to life, fostering a tangible connection to the importance of ocean protection.



Figure 19 - Mission Ocean & Waters Night (Türkiye)

Among the highlights were the unique "Ocean Yoga" session (figure 19), which integrated mindfulness practices with marine education, and the creative "Create Your Ocean" workshop, where students were empowered to build models of the marine world. These innovative activities fostered a deeper understanding of marine ecosystems and encouraged active participation in environmental stewardship.

The event's significant educational impact was underscored by the enthusiastic engagement of students and teachers alike. By fostering awareness, knowledge, and a sense of responsibility, the program effectively empowered participants to become advocates for marine conservation and contribute to a more sustainable future.

10. Communication and dissemination

Communication with stakeholders, particularly schools, necessitated a strategic approach focused on building trust and fostering genuine collaboration.

Recognizing that effective communication is a long-term endeavour, the **Austrian CH** implemented a multifaceted strategy to engage schools in the SHORE project. KUW extended its communication network beyond official representatives to include teachers' unions and parents' associations in Austria and Germany, ensuring broader dissemination of information about SHORE and its Open Calls. Furthermore, KUW leveraged its international network, including organizations such as the European School Head Association (ESHA), European Children's Universities

Network (EUCU.NET), and Stichting IPA – Parents International, to promote SHORE across Europe.

The project acknowledged the diverse communication channels and tools required to effectively link various stakeholders, particularly in bridging the gap between academia/research and schools. Mindful of the distinct norms and practices within these sectors, KUW prioritized a collaborative and thoughtful approach, avoiding any forceful or intrusive measures. This strategy ensured that schools felt respected and valued as partners in the project, fostering a foundation of trust and mutual understanding.

Building trust and fostering effective communication with stakeholders, particularly schools, was crucial to the project's success. A personalized approach proved most effective in engaging schools, with direct invitations extended to teachers and administrators to participate in various events and webinars.

Similarly, the **Estonian CH** invited stakeholders to participate in hackathons and virtual escape rooms, encouraging collaboration with schools and fostering a sense of shared purpose. The Baltic Living Lab actively utilized its website blog (<https://bluebalticecosystem.com/>) to highlight activities within the Baltic Blue Economy that aligned with the SHORE mission, facilitating connections with stakeholders and promoting broader awareness. A key initiative was the project's participation in DigiEduHack 2024, with both online and in-situ hackathons planned (<https://digieduhack.com/challenges/blue-escape-develop-systems-thinking-skills-through-virtual-escape-rooms-2>). This provided secondary school students with opportunities to explore various aspects of the blue economy and water literacy, developing critical systems-thinking and problem-solving skills. This initiative aligns with the European Union Joint Research Centre's (JRC) "Green Competency Framework," which offers valuable examples of sustainability skills and competencies in practice, particularly in its chapter on "Embracing complexity in sustainability".

The project secured sponsorship from ten stakeholders for DigiEduHack, demonstrating strong support for this initiative. As part of the EU Digital Education Initiative (<https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan>), DigiEduHack aims to support the digital transformation of education and training systems, aligning perfectly with the project's teacher training objectives and its mission to promote blue education in schools.

For the communication, the **Hungarian CH** relied primarily on online channels, though telephone conversations were frequently employed to facilitate more direct and immediate exchanges. Email served as the primary mode of communication, enabling efficient dissemination of information to stakeholders. Online meetings, conducted via Microsoft Teams, provided a platform for real-time collaboration and discussion. A dedicated Hungarian SHORE Facebook page further expanded outreach and engagement efforts.

While all communication channels generally functioned as intended, occasional instances of email filtering by recipient mail systems presented a minor challenge. A more significant obstacle was ensuring the reliable delivery of information to end-



users, particularly when communication involved multiple intermediaries. For instance, when disseminating information to schools through school districts, there were concerns that not all target schools consistently received the intended messages. This highlighted the need for more streamlined communication pathways and strategies to verify successful information delivery, especially when engaging a large and diverse network of stakeholders.

The **Italian CH**, mainly EXPLORA's experience and expertise played a central role in guiding communication activities with teachers and other stakeholders. In addition to managing translations and creating graphic materials for nationwide distribution, EXPLORA effectively led and oriented the broader project team. Communication encompassed various channels, including official websites, newsletters, social media, and emails. However, direct engagement proved particularly valuable, with strong one-on-one relationships cultivated through phone calls, in-person meetings, and events organized with teachers.

Despite these efforts, challenges remained. Limited information dissemination at the national level, particularly through ministries and other relevant stakeholders, hindered broader outreach. School calendars and potential disruptions to teaching schedules also presented constraints.

An initial attempt to leverage Ministry of Education channels for wider dissemination and enhanced legitimacy faced unexpected obstacles. EXPLORA's request to promote SHORE through these channels was declined, as only public institutions were eligible to make such requests. A subsequent attempt by the University of Padova team met a similar fate, with bureaucratic hurdles related to a vacant director position preventing approval. Given the uncertainty surrounding the director appointment and the lack of a clear timeline for resolution, promoting SHORE through the Ministry of Education became increasingly unlikely. In response to these challenges, the project shifted its focus towards engaging with regional offices, recognizing the potential for greater receptivity and more localized impact.

The **Romanian Country Hub** implemented a comprehensive communication strategy that prioritized both online engagement and personalized interaction. Using social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, alongside its official website and regular newsletters, the CH ensured a consistent flow of information about project activities, resources, and events. Email communication facilitated direct and targeted messaging to stakeholders and schools, while virtual platforms like Zoom enabled real-time interaction through online meetings, webinars, and training sessions.

Recognizing the value of face-to-face communication, school visits and in-person meetings were prioritized to foster strong relationships with teachers, administrators, and students. Regular phone calls provided personalized support and addressed individual needs, while active participation in educational conferences and workshops facilitated networking and collaboration. The CH further strengthened engagement through collaborative events such as interactive workshops, training sessions, conferences, and seminars. These events provided opportunities to equip teachers and the local community with the knowledge and



skills to implement blue education principles, disseminate project findings, share best practices, and foster collaboration among stakeholders.

This multifaceted approach ensured effective communication and fostered a strong network of stakeholders dedicated to advancing the goals of the SHORE project in Romania. By promoting open communication, collaboration, and knowledge sharing, the Romanian Country Hub successfully integrated blue education principles within the national education system.

The **Turkish CH** employed a diverse range of communication channels to maintain active engagement with stakeholders and schools. Social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, served as valuable tools for disseminating information about blue schools and promoting project activities. Dedicated WhatsApp groups facilitated real-time communication with schools, providing a platform for updates, support, and quick responses to queries. Webinars and online courses, conducted via Zoom, further enhanced engagement and knowledge sharing.

Despite these efforts, certain challenges emerged. Reaching schools in remote areas proved difficult due to technological limitations and connectivity issues. Additionally, some confusion arose among teachers regarding the distinction between the Network of European Blue Schools and the SHORE Project. This ambiguity was proactively addressed in a dedicated webinar held in March 2024, clarifying the unique objectives and activities of each initiative.

The **Polish CH** communication strategy was based on the network of high and primary schools that WSB University is working on a daily basis. Next step was to use networks of organizations that are experts on ocean literacy, so WSB University communicated with organizations like: Today we have, Sister Rivers, Save the Rivers Coalition, Gdynia Aquarium and many others. Information about the SHORE project and activities were posted in WSB University social media (Facebook) and WSB Webpage (Polish and English version). Additionally, information about the project yearly is added to WSB annual publication called “Science and Business” which is prepared in Polish and widely promoted among WSB stakeholders in paper and pdf version.

11. Enhancing SHORE: Lessons learned and recommendations

This final chapter reflects on the SHORE project's experiences and outlines key recommendations for improvement and future initiatives. It delves into the successes and challenges encountered, extracting valuable lessons learned throughout the first year of WP3's implementation. By critically examining the various facets of SHORE – from stakeholder engagement and open calls to workshops and conferences – this chapter identifies key areas for improvement and proposes concrete recommendations for future initiatives.



✓ **Engaging seniors in ocean literacy**

Seniors represent a valuable, often untapped resource in promoting ocean literacy. With their free time and established community connections, they can become effective ambassadors for sustainable practices. Encouraging seniors to adopt and advocate for ocean-friendly behaviours, like reducing plastic use and conserving water, can create a ripple effect within local communities, as came from the Polish activities.

✓ **Optimizing open calls for schools**

To enhance the effectiveness of future SHORE open calls, several key adjustments should be considered. Firstly, recognizing the demanding schedules of high school students, open calls should be announced and promoted well in advance, ideally months ahead of the deadline. This provides students with ample time to develop project ideas, collaborate with peers, and prepare strong applications.

Secondly, the timing of open calls should be strategically planned to avoid conflicts with school holidays, exams, or other major academic periods. By aligning the call schedule with the academic calendar, SHORE can maximize participation and ensure that students have the time and mental bandwidth to engage fully in the application process.

Clear and comprehensive guidelines regarding eligible institutions are also essential. Ambiguities, such as the classification of "Revalidation and Education Centers" in Poland, should be explicitly addressed to ensure that all eligible organizations are aware of their potential to participate. This clarity will prevent confusion and encourage a wider range of institutions to apply.

Furthermore, the option for third parties to apply on behalf of schools should be officially communicated and facilitated. This is particularly important for schools facing funding restrictions, such as primary schools in Austria, as it allows them to access valuable resources and participate in SHORE initiatives. By enabling third-party applications, SHORE can broaden its reach and foster greater inclusivity.

Finally, providing comprehensive application support is crucial. User-friendly resources, such as workflow diagrams and sample applications, can empower schools to navigate the application process with confidence. Additionally, recognizing the challenges faced by rural schools with limited technological access, increased in-person support should be provided to ensure equitable opportunities for participation.

✓ **Strengthening Open Schooling and stakeholder engagement**

To further enhance its impact, SHORE should place a stronger emphasis on the Open Schooling approach. This involves moving beyond simply including stakeholders to actively engaging them in the project. Implementing measures to proactively reach out to and collaborate with all relevant local actors, both formal and non-formal, is crucial. This means going beyond schools and engaging with community groups, environmental organizations, local businesses, and even individual citizens who have a stake in ocean literacy and sustainability. SHORE should continue to promote



and enhance its community platform. This online space serves as a vital hub for fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing among schools and stakeholders. By actively encouraging the use of the platform, SHORE can facilitate communication, resource sharing, and the development of joint initiatives. Investing in features that make the platform more engaging and user-friendly will further encourage its adoption and contribute to a thriving online community dedicated to ocean literacy.

✓ **Enriching events and workshops**

First and foremost, events should adopt a more interactive and practical focus. This can be achieved by incorporating more hands-on activities, breakout sessions, and workshops that delve into practical solutions for ocean-related challenges, such as waste management and recycling. By providing participants with tangible skills and knowledge, SHORE events can empower them to become active agents of change in their communities.

Building strong partnerships is also crucial. Collaborating with environmental organizations can enrich the content of events, provide access to additional resources, and expand the reach of SHORE's message. By leveraging the expertise and networks of these organizations, SHORE can create more impactful and comprehensive events that resonate with a wider audience.

Networking opportunities should remain a central component of SHORE events. Fostering deeper collaborations among diverse stakeholders – educators, researchers, policymakers, and community members – is essential for driving collective action towards ocean sustainability. Events should be designed to facilitate meaningful interactions and create spaces for participants to connect, share ideas, and build lasting partnerships.

Continuing to engage experts from various fields is equally important. By involving scientists, educators, policymakers, and industry leaders, SHORE events can offer a rich tapestry of perspectives and enhance the depth of discussions. This multidisciplinary approach broadens participants' understanding of ocean-related issues and fosters a more holistic approach to problem-solving.

Incorporating interactive elements into events can significantly enhance participant engagement and knowledge retention. Interactive quizzes, polls, games, and group activities can create a more dynamic and stimulating learning environment, ensuring that participants remain actively involved and retain key information more effectively.

Finally, systematically gathering participant feedback is crucial for assessing the impact of events and informing future planning. Collecting feedback through surveys, evaluations, and informal discussions provides valuable insights into participant experiences, identifies areas for improvement, and ensures that future events are tailored to meet the evolving needs and interests of the SHORE community.



✓ **Addressing administrative barriers**

Recognizing that limited administrative support can be a significant barrier to participation for some schools, SHORE should implement strategies to address this challenge. Moreover, exploring alternative strategies to facilitate communication and participation for schools with limited administrative staff is essential. This could involve assigning dedicated SHORE liaisons to provide direct support, organizing workshops specifically tailored to these schools, or creating simplified communication channels to streamline information sharing. By proactively addressing the unique needs of these schools, SHORE can ensure that all institutions, regardless of their administrative capacity, can benefit from the project and contribute to the broader goals of ocean literacy and sustainability.

By implementing these recommendations, along with the other suggestions outlined in this chapter, SHORE can further enhance its impact, foster stronger collaborations across diverse communities, and effectively promote ocean literacy and sustainable practices. This commitment will ensure that the project's benefits reach a wider audience and contribute to a more ocean-literate society.





SHORE

Empower students as the agents of change



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