



Preparing the Research & Innovation Core for Mission Ocean, Seas & Waters

Deliverable D1.5

Report 1 on actions accomplished for synergies and links
under Tasks 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4

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Executive Summary

This deliverable, *D1.5 “Report 1 on actions accomplished for synergies and links under Tasks 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4”* is part of Tasks 1.2 (*T1.2 “Liaison with Mission Ocean, Seas and Waters Bodies, the Mission Core Network & other Missions”*), 1.3 (*T1.3 “Creation of synergies with European Initiatives and organisations”*) and 1.4 (*T1.4 “Contribution to the EU Agenda for International Ocean Governance, focusing on the UN Decade on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the UN Decade of Ecological Restoration (2021-2030)”*).

T1.2 is responsible for collaborating with Mission’s governance bodies and will ensure appropriate flexibility of the project activities to accommodate the evolution of the Mission. Engagement with Mission Core Network (TRAMI project) is ensured. This collaboration should contribute to alignment and cooperation at national level and with other four missions (Climate Change, Soil, Cities and Cancer).

The aim of T1.3 is to identify collaboration potential with relevant initiatives and organisations that can contribute to the Mission development, with a particular focus on making links between Ocean and Water actors for R&I.

T1.4 ensures a close connection between the Mission and the UN Decades (Ocean Decade & Ecological Restoration Decade). T1.4 contributes and exchanges on best practices, funding, monitoring through participation with the *Task force on ocean, seas and inland waters*.

Throughout the first period of the project (M1-M18), Prep4Blue has identified and built synergies with relevant initiatives, projects and organizations. Prep4Blue’s coordination team (Coordinator and Project Managers) attended at least 131 synergies meetings (classified in four different categories) between June 2022 and November 2023: 8 “International – UN Ocean Decade”, 28 “LH-MIP Mission Ocean”, 59 “Mission Ocean” and 18 “Other Missions”.

Particular focus was given to building bridges with the Mission Ocean and Water bodies (59 “Mission Ocean” meetings of Coordination Team); the Mission Implementation Platform and the LH CSAs (28 “LH-MIP Mission Ocean” meetings of Coordination Team). By its presence in major European instances, such as the Mission LH launch, Mission Annual Forum, the European Maritime Days and the EurOcean conference, Prep4Blue has managed to establish bridges with European Partnerships and other EU-funded projects and consortiums (CSAs, IAs and RIAs). Through its presences at high-level events and conferences, Prep4Blue also spread the word about the Mission, its charter and to attract more interested parties. Engagement with the “Other Missions” has been ensured as Prep4Blue is a member of the TRAMI project Sounding Board and also through cross-mission workshops. This represented 18 “Other Missions” meetings of Prep4Blue Coordination Team.

Prep4Blue, through its partners and Coordination Team have been involved at the international level (8 “International – UN Ocean Decade” meetings), mainly in the UN Ocean Decade initiatives at strategic and operational levels: Decade National Committees, Decade Collaboration Office and Centres, Decade endorsed Implementing partners and programmes. One of the partners, CSIC, is also co-organiser of the UN Ocean Decade conference in Barcelona and has submitted several side-events.

This deliverable goes into more details on the accomplished actions to build and maintain synergies between Prep4Blue and the Mission Ecosystem on the European level, but also at the international level.

Acronyms & Abbreviations

Table 1. Table of abbreviations and acronyms used in Prep4Blue and the document

Acronym / Abbreviation	Signification
BMAA	BlueMissionAA (Blue Mission Atlantic-Arctic)
BMB	BlueMissionBANOS (Blue Mission Baltic-North Sea)
BMM	BlueMissionMED (Blue Mission Mediterranean)
CSA(s)	Coordination and Support Action project(s)
EcoDaLLi	ECOSystem-Based Governance with DANube Lighthouse Living Lab for Sustainable Innovation Processes (Blue Mission Danube)
IA(s)	Innovation Action project(s)
LH(s)	Light House(s)
MIP Ocean	Mission Implementation Platform for the Mission “Restore Our Ocean and Waters by 20230”
Mission (Ocean & Waters)	(the) Mission “Restore Our Ocean and Waters by 2030”
(the) Mission	(the) Mission “Restore Our Ocean and Waters by 2030”
P4B	Prep4Blue
RIA(s)	Research and Innovation Action project(s)
SPEB	Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership
UN Ocean Decade	UN Decade on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

1 Introduction

Through new forms of collaboration and governance, stakeholder and citizen engagement, the five EU Missions (Ocean and Waters; Climate Change; Cancer; Cities; Soil) will deliver concrete solutions to some of our greatest challenges (Figure 1).



Figure 1. The five EU Missions of Horizon Europe

The emphasis on collaboration of the EU Missions at large is reflected in the three objectives and structure of the Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030” (the “Mission”):

1. Protect and restore marine and freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity, in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030;
2. Prevent and eliminate pollution of our ocean, seas and waters, in line with the EU Action Plan Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil;
3. Make the sustainable blue economy carbon-neutral and circular, in line with the proposed European Climate Law and the holistic vision enshrined in the Sustainable Blue Economy Strategy.

Prep4Blue is a *Coordination and Support Action (CSA)* project and is considered as the overarching CSA of the Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters” (hereafter the Mission). It helps the European Commission, through DG MARE and DG RTD and the Mission Secretariat, to implement the Mission in this first “development and piloting” phase (2021-2025). Prep4Blue is present both at the European but also at the international level of the Ocean governance.

At the European level, Prep4Blue is the representative of the Mission Ocean & Waters with the other Horizon Europe missions (Climate Change, Cities, Soil & Cancer) in the TRAMI project¹. Prep4Blue is also the linking agent between the four Mission LH CSAs (BlueMissionAA², BlueMissionMed³, BlueMissionBANOS⁴ and EcoDaLLi⁵), but also between

¹ TRAMI project: National Core Network for all Missions, coherence and alignment of programs and resources (<https://www.trami5missions.eu/>)

² BlueMissionAA: <https://bluemotionaa.eu/>

³ BlueMissionMed: <https://bluemotionmed.eu/>

⁴ BlueMissionBANOS: <https://bluemotionbanos.eu/>

⁵ EcoDaLLi: <https://ecodalli.eu/>

the LH CSAs and the MIP Ocean⁶ as well as with the Mission Secretariat⁷. Prep4Blue helps to align the expectations and efforts of all the CSAs with the MIP Ocean and the Mission Secretariat and it implements synergies with various European initiatives and organisations and is involved in the whole Mission stakeholder network. The Prep4Blue team also co-organises “Mission Ocean project drop-in” networking meetings 4 times per year to allow all the Mission-funded IAs to gather, synergise, and disseminate their results to each other.

At the international level, through partner representatives, Prep4Blue ensures a close connection and alignment of the Mission with both the UN Ocean Decade and the UN Decade of Ecological restoration objectives. This is done through sharing and exchanging on best practices, funding and monitoring in order to create synergies and seek coherence in the areas where the Mission and the UN Decades can be mutually strengthened.

This deliverable, *D1.5 “Report 1 on actions accomplished for synergies and links under Tasks 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4”* is part of Tasks 1.2 (*T1.2 “Liaison with Mission Ocean, Seas and Waters Bodies, the Mission Core Network & other Missions”*), 1.3 (*T1.3 “Creation of synergies with European Initiatives and organisations”*) and 1.4 (*T1.4 “Contribution to the EU Agenda for International Ocean Governance, focusing on the UN Decade on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the UN Decade of Ecological Restoration (2021-2030)”*).

One of T1.2 aims is to design an action plan for communication and collaboration with the Mission’s governance bodies. This includes the development of a network of LHs, which will take into consideration the other Mission’s components contributing to its coordination. Engagement with other Missions is also assured. Engagement with the Mission Core Network, already initiated, will be continued to bridge the mapping activities from the projects and the events related to citizens/stakeholder participation.

The aim of T1.3 is to identify collaboration potential with relevant initiatives and organisations that can contribute to the Mission development, with a particular focus on creating links between Ocean and Water actors for R&I.

The aim of T1.4 is to ensure a close connection between the Mission and the UN Decades (Ocean Decade & Ecological Restoration Decade). T1.4 contributes and exchanges on best practices, funding, and monitoring through participation with the *Taskforce on ocean, seas and inland waters*.

This deliverable aims at reporting the accomplishment done in Task 1.2 (see section 2.1), Task 1.3 (see section 2.2) and Task 1.5 (see section 2.3) at Month 18 (November 2023) of the project.

⁶ MIP Ocean launch: <https://www.technopolis-group.com/new/the-launch-of-mission-restore-our-oceans-and-waters-by-2030-implementation-platform/>

⁷ Mission Secretariat: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/restore-our-ocean-and-waters_en#contact

2 Accomplished actions for synergies and links under Tasks 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4

Since before its official launch, Prep4Blue’s consortium has actively engaged with the Mission Ocean and Waters bodies, the Mission Core Network and the other Missions. Throughout the first period of the project (M1-M18 / June 2022 – November 2023), Prep4Blue has continued the identification and collaboration with relevant initiatives, projects and organizations. Particular focus has been given to building bridges with the Mission Ocean and Water bodies; the Mission Implementation Platform (MIP Ocean⁸) and the LH CSAs (BlueMissionAA⁹, BlueMissionMed¹⁰, BlueMissionBANOS¹¹ and EcoDaLLi¹²). The constant coordination of the CSAs has resulted in several working groups (further explained in section 2.1.1) that includes the LH CSAs and sometimes also the LH specific (R)IAs (Research and Innovation Actions) projects. The Mission LH CSAs and the MIP Ocean are constantly building synergies to avoid duplication of effort on common objectives and to amplify their forces.

Moreover, Prep4Blue by its presence in major European instances such as the Mission LH launch, Mission Annual Forum, the European Maritime Days and the EurOcean conference, has managed to establish bridges with European Partnerships (*i.e.*, EU4Ocean Coalition) and other EU-funded projects and consortiums (CSAs, IAs and RIAs).

Prep4Blue’s coordination team (Coordinator and Project Managers) attended at least 131 synergies meetings between June 2022 and November 2023 (Figure 2). These synergies meetings have been classified in four different categories (Table 2):

- **Mission Ocean:**
Meetings happening in the general Mission Ocean and Waters ecosystem, excluding the specific LH CSA and MIP Ocean meetings. These “Mission Ocean” meetings include meetings where Prep4Blue was presented to Mission Stakeholders (Networks, Projects, Conferences, *etc.*), the *launch of the LHs* meetings as well as the *LHs in action* meetings, DG MARE events, DG RTD Ocean events.
Example: Mission Annual Forum; SPEB meetings; Blue4All meeting; European Maritime Days; National Mission Ocean Coordination meetings; Associated regions Ocean funding event, *etc.*
- **LH-MIP Mission Ocean:**
Meetings with the MIP Ocean and/or one or all the LH CSAs.
- **International – UN Ocean Decade:**
Meetings about the UN Ocean Decade or the Ocean at an international level.
Example: Ocean Prediction Decade Collaborative Centre; Preparation of the UNOC conference in 2025; National UN Ocean Decade Conference; *etc.*
- **Other Missions:**
Meetings with the involvement of some of the other Horizon Europe Missions (Climate Change, Soil, Cancer & Cities).
Example: TRAMI meetings; Science for policy workshop “Biodiversity and Climate Change”; *etc.*

⁸ MIP Ocean: [https://www.technopolis-group.com/new/the-launch-of-mission\[...\]implementation-platform/](https://www.technopolis-group.com/new/the-launch-of-mission[...]implementation-platform/)

⁹ BlueMissionAA: <https://bluemissionaa.eu/>

¹⁰ BlueMissionMed: <https://bluemissionmed.eu/>

¹¹ BlueMissionBANOS: <https://bluemissionbanos.eu/>

¹² EcoDaLLi: <https://ecodalli.eu/>

Table 2. Number of synergy meetings per category type attended by Prep4Blue's Coordination team (Coordinator & Project Managers) from June 2022 to November 2023.

Categories of synergy meetings	Number of meetings
International - UN Ocean Decade	8
LH-MIP Mission Ocean	28
Mission Ocean	59
Other Missions	18
Total	113

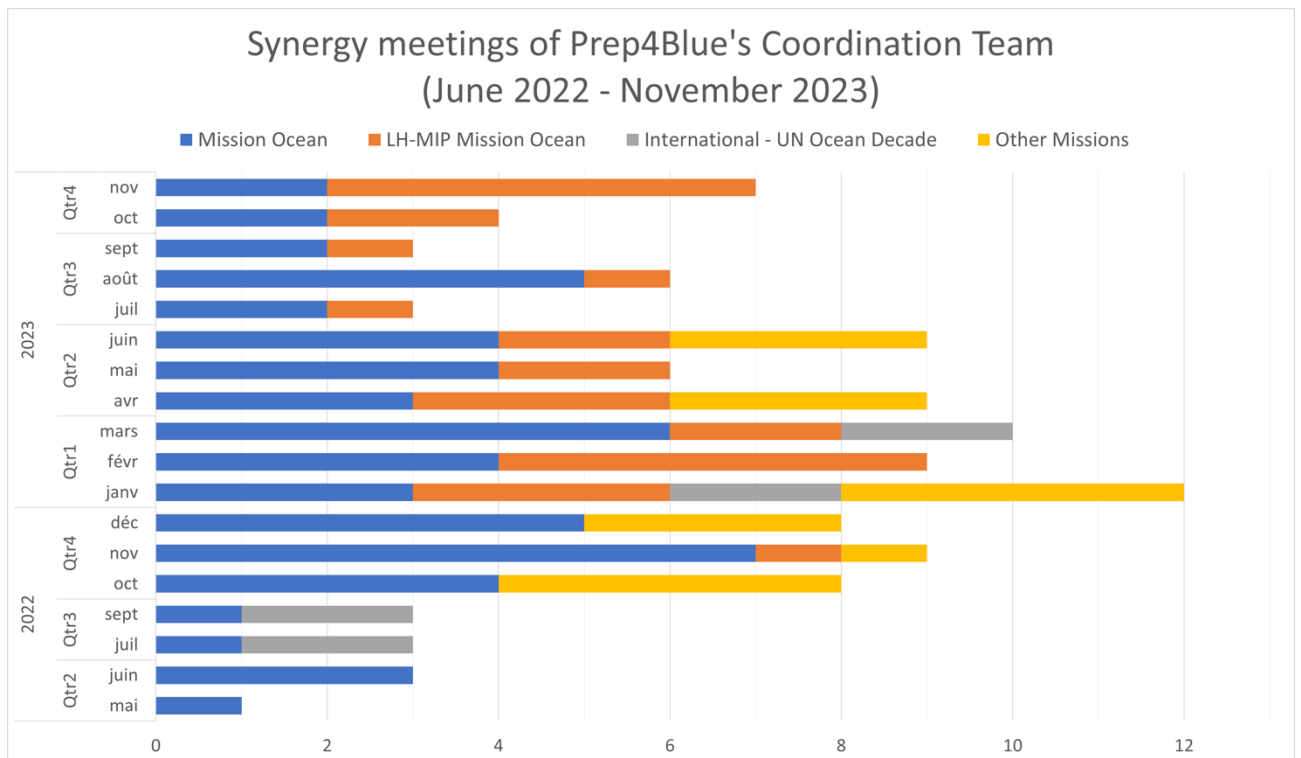


Figure 2. Synergy meetings of Prep4Blue's Coordination Team sorted by Year-Month and category type (Mission Ocean; LH-MIP Mission Ocean; International - UN Ocean Decade; Other Missions) from June 2022 to November 2023. This represents a total of 113 synergies meetings classified in four category types: Mission Ocean; LH-MIP Mission Ocean; International - UN Ocean Decade; Other Missions.

2.1 Liaison with Mission Ocean, Seas and Water Bodies, the Mission Core Network & Other Missions (Task 1.2)

T1.2 is responsible for collaborating with the Mission's governance bodies and ensures appropriate flexibility of the project activities to accommodate the evolution of the Mission. This is done in tight collaboration with the Executive Committee (WP leaders) of Prep4Blue. This includes the development of a network of LHs. Engagement with Mission Core Network (TRAMI project¹³) is ensured as Prep4Blue is a member of the TRAMI Sounding Board. This collaboration (TRAMI project) contributes to alignment and cooperation at national level and with other Missions.

¹³ TRAMI project: <https://www.trami5missions.eu/>

2.1.1 Mission Ocean and Waters bodies and stakeholders

Prep4Blue has been present in all Mission related major events and online workshops. These represents 87 synergy meetings (59 “Mission Ocean” meetings & 28 “LH-MIP Mission Ocean” meetings) of Prep4Blue’s Coordination team (see Table 2 above).

Representatives of the Prep4Blue consortium have been present in-person and/or online at each of the LH launch events and LH in action events. This is to ensure that Prep4Blue attends to the evolution of the Mission, as it is steered by the Commission through the Mission Secretariat, DG MARE and DG RTD representatives.

These events also allowed Prep4Blue to meet and build links with partners of other projects involved in the Mission, create synergies within the Mission Ecosystem, *etc.* The links and synergies were more easily built when the meeting was attended in person, however some of the online events (*e.g.*, BlueMissionAA’s lunchtime lecture series) also brought in new contacts.

In particular Prep4Blue attended:

- **Launch of the Charter for the Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030” – 30th June 2022 (Lisbon, Portugal)**

The project was represented, at the Mission Charter launch, by several partners including the Coordinator (Ifremer), KDM, JPI Ocean.

During the event the project representatives had the chance to interact with participants to the event and initiate links with Mission stakeholders.



Figure 3. Prep4Blue Coordinator (Natalia Martin Palenzuela) at the Mission Charter launch on the 30th of June 2022 in Lisbon (Portugal). ©Wendy Namisnik (KDM)

From left to right: Sigi Gruber (DG RTD, European Commission), Natalia Martin Palenzuela (Prep4Blue Coordinator / Ifremer), Andreea Strachinescu (DG MARE, European Commission).

- **Launch of the Atlantic and Arctic Lighthouse – 24th and 25th of November 2022 (Cork, Ireland)**

The project was represented at the launch of the Atlantic and Arctic Lighthouse, by several partners including Ifremer, KDM, JPI Ocean, CRPM, MaREI-UCC, SDU, CPMR.

During the event the project representatives had the chance to interact with the Atlantic-Arctic LH CSA Consortium (BlueMissionAA) and other Atlantic-Arctic Ocean Stakeholders. Prep4Blue’s representatives also had the chance to finetune some elements and harmonise concepts across the two CSAs (*e.g.*, citizen engagement, database, *etc.*).



Figure 4. BlueMissionAA kick-off meeting, side event of the launch of the Atlantic-Artic LH launch. Prep4Blue partners attending the Atlantic-Artic LH launch: Ifremer, KDM, JPI Ocean, CRPM, MaREI-UCC, SDU, CRPM.

- **1st annual Mission Ocean Forum – 17th February 2023 (Brussels, Belgium)**

Prep4Blue attended the First Mission Ocean forum in Brussels on the 17th February 2023. The project was represented by several partners including the Coordinator and Manager (Ifremer and EuroMarine), JPIO, KDM, s.Pro, CNR, CPMR, VLIZ, SDU.

During the event the project representatives had the chance to interact with the 300 participants to the event, showcase the objectives and outcomes of Prep4Blue and attend a side meeting with the Mission Managers.



Figure 5. Mission Annual Forum – 17th February 2023 (Brussels, Belgium): Charlina Vitcheva (Director General of DG MARE) surrounded by the Mission CSAs coordinators and representatives (Prep4Blue, BlueMissionAA, BlueMissionMED, BlueMissionBANOS & EcoDaLLi).

From left to right: Susanna Albertini (BlueMissionMED), Angela Schultz-Zehden (BlueMissionBANOS), Iuliana Nichesu (EcoDaLLi), Charlina Vitcheva (DG MARE), Natalia Martin Palenzuela (Prep4Blue), Jose Luiz Mountinho (BlueMissionAA).



Figure 6. Prep4Blue partners at Prep4Blue's booth at the Mission Annual Forum (17th February 2023 – Brussels, Belgium).

From left to right: Eirini Apazoglou (Project Manager of Prep4Blue / EuroMarine), Natalia Martin Palenzuela (Coordinator of Prep4Blue / Ifremer), Wendy Namisnik (KDM)

- Launch of Danube & Black Sea Lighthouse – 3rd and 4th of April 2023 (Bucharest, Romania)**
The project was represented by several partners including in-person both CPMR (Justine Brossard, *CPMR project and policy officer* & Stavros Kalognomos, *Executive Secretary of the CPMR Balkan and Black Sea Commission*) and CNR (Elisa Conti) and online the Coordinator Ifremer.
During the event, the project representatives had the chance to interact with the 200 participants, showcasing the objectives and outcomes of Prep4Blue.



Figure 7. Participants in the Danube Lighthouse launch event including Prep4Blue's partners CPMR (Justine Brossard and Stavros Kalognomos) and CNR (Elisa Conti). ©2023 Danube Delta National Institute for Research and Development.

- The Baltic and North Sea Lighthouse in action – 25th and 26th of April 2023 (Hamburg, Germany)**
The project was represented by several partners including s.Pro (in-person), KDM (in-person) and Ifremer (online).
During the event the project representatives had the chance to interact with the participants to the event, showcase the objectives and outcomes of Prep4Blue.
- The Mediterranean Lighthouse in action – 30th and 31st of May 2023 (Palermo, Italy)**
The project was represented by several partners including CNR (in-person), KDM (in-person) and Ifremer (online).
During the event the project representatives had the chance to interact with the Mission stakeholders in the Mediterranean, showcase the objectives and outcomes of Prep4Blue.

Prep4Blue through its implementation role in this first phase "development and piloting" (2021-2025) of the Mission is considered as the overarching CSA of the Mission Ocean and Waters. As such, Prep4Blue is the linking agent between the four Mission LH CSAs (BlueMissionAA, BlueMissionMed, BlueMissionBANOS and EcoDaLLi), but also between the LH CSAs and the MIP Ocean as well as with the Mission Secretariat (Figure 8). Prep4Blue helps to align the expectations and efforts of all the CSAs with the MIP Ocean and the Mission Secretariat. Prep4Blue also creates synergies with various European initiatives and organisations and is involved in the whole Mission stakeholder network.

Several collaborative working groups have been initiated and/or attended by Prep4Blue with other Mission projects and the MIP Ocean:

- Communication Collaborative (monthly meetings): to discuss all Communication aspects linked to the Mission with Mission projects, DG MARE, CINEA and MIP Ocean.
- Citizen engagement Collaborative: community of practices on citizen engagement with Mission projects.
- Mission Ocean and Waters funded project quarterly “Drop In” sessions.
- Mission Ocean and Waters Lighthouses Working Group (monthly meetings), initiated by BlueMissionAA, but to be taken over by Prep4Blue. It’s a meeting with all the Mission CSAs project Coordinators and their Project Manager(s) and it aims at exchanging the advancements of each other's projects and discuss the evolution of the Mission as well as the links and relationships with MIP Ocean, Mission Secretariat and the Commission.
- Mission Ocean and Waters LH and MIP Ocean Working Group (monthly meetings starting November 2023). It’s a meeting with all the Mission CSAs project Coordinators and their Project Manager(s) and the MIP Ocean Coordinator and MIP task leader(s). It aims at exchanging the advancements of each other's projects and discuss the evolution of the Mission.
- Database Working Group: to discuss all databases aspects linked to the various databases developed by the CSAs for the mission (SH database, SHEMA database, Mission Ecosystem, Projects, etc.).
- Knowledge outputs Working Group: to discuss the identification and transfer of the Mission Knowledge and Solutions.

Prep4Blue has also been present in several Mission meetings and online workshops with various stakeholders of the Mission Ocean & Waters Ecosystem (Figure 8).

Examples include the working groups and events coordinated by the SBEP, events by the coordinators of the European infrastructure for the Digital Twin of the Ocean DTO and the Digital Ocean Forum, the sea basin Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas, Blue Invest events, and some of the larger programmes that operate under the Ocean Decade within a European scope (Decade Implementing Partners, Decade Collaborative Centres, meetings of the National Decade Committees NDCs.).

In spring 2023, 17 of the 21 then-funded Mission projects attended bespoke Prep4Blue training and networking sessions. As of this autumn, Prep4Blue has also contacted the 39 now-funded Mission Ocean CSA and (R)IA projects and has held meetings with the vast majority of these to start synergy (e.g., Nettag+¹⁴, CLIMAREST¹⁵, DALIA¹⁶, MPA Europe¹⁷, etc.).

¹⁴ Nettag+ : <https://nettagplus.eu/>

¹⁵ CLIMAREST : <https://climarest.eu/>

¹⁶ DALIA project: <https://dalia-danube.eu/>

¹⁷ MPA Europe : <https://mpa-europe.eu/project/>

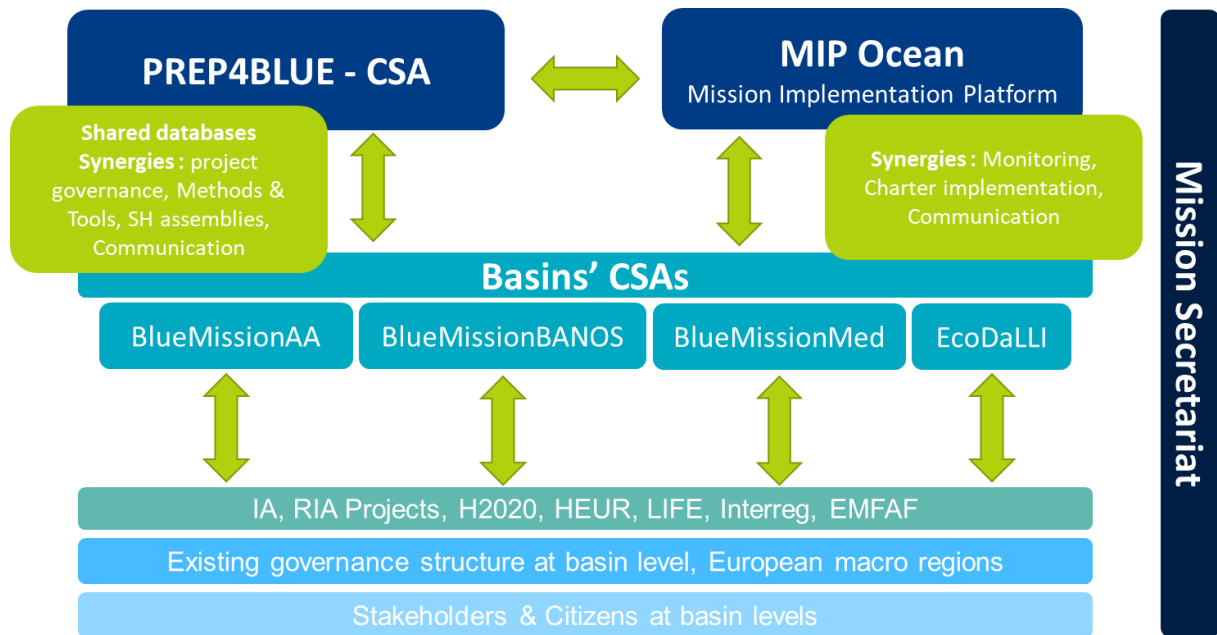


Figure 8. Ecosystem of the Mission Ocean & Waters

2.1.2 Mission Core Network & Other Missions

Engagement with Mission Core Network (TRAMI¹⁸ project) is ensured as Prep4Blue is a member of the TRAMI Sounding Board. The TRAMI project is there to foster synergies and best practice exchange between the five missions (Figure 1) with regard to governance models.

Prep4Blue also attended a Horizon Europe Forum as well as a Science for Policy workshop that was attended by other Mission representatives. During these meetings several exchanges happened between Prep4Blue (Mission Ocean and Waters representative) and the other Mission representatives.

These represents 18 synergy meetings (category “Other Missions” in Table 2 above) of Prep4Blue’s Coordination team between June 2022 and November 2023.

2.2 Creation of synergies with European initiatives and organisations (Task 1.3)

The task 1.3 (T1.3) has been modified since the beginning of the project. T1.3 now focuses on identifying and engaging relevant stakeholders through the Mission Charter. More specifically, T1.3 identifies relevant initiatives and organisations with potential for collaboration and for becoming part of the Mission development, *e.g.*, by cross-referencing contributors to the UN Ocean Decade with actions already submitted to the Charter, with a particular focus on making links between Ocean and Water actors for R&I.

T1.3 is working to boost the outreach of the Mission Charter and its Stakeholder Network through a social media campaign and through direct targeted outreach to identified relevant stakeholders to become part of the Charter’s inclusive network of European initiatives and organizations by submitting

¹⁸ **TRAMI**: National Core Network for all Missions, coherence and alignment of programs and resources (<https://www.trami5missions.eu/>)

actions to the Charter. Highlighting the network benefits and explaining why and how to submit actions is at the core of the campaign and outreach activities. A series of resources related to the Mission Charter has already been developed and uploaded to the [Prep4Blue website](#)¹⁹ and shared with the other CSAs and the MIP Ocean through the Mission Ocean Communication Collaborative, initiated by the task to coordinate and facilitate regular exchange of information between those involved in communicating the Mission.

As one of the partners of this task, the CPMR encouraged regional authorities to submit actions to the Charter portal through various communications sent to its member regions and notably organised an online Q&A with the European Commission, represented by Claudia Pecoraro, Policy Officer at the European Commission DG RTD, during which she addressed regions' inquiries regarding the Mission Charter and the potential benefits for them. This online event also served to provide further information to the regions on the concept of associated regions, and presented the open calls. This online event, opened to all CPMR member regions, was conducted in the framework of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission General Assembly, working group meeting on Transport and Integrated Policy, on Thursday 29 June 2023.

Prep4Blue is also a member the EU4Ocean coalition and has participated to their meetings. Prep4Blue also is a member of the MPA Europe stakeholder network²⁰ and has links, through WP3, with the European Solidarity Corps.

Prep4Blue also participated in the following high-level events and conferences to spread the word about the Mission and to attract more interested parties:

- iWatermap event – 15th of November 2022 (European Committee of the Regions, Brussels, Belgium)
CPMR attended the event.
- VLIZ Mission Charter endorsement event in Belgium – 25th November 2022 (RV Simon Stevin, Brussels, Belgium)
Signature, in the presence of DG MARE and DG RTD, by the Governor of West-Flanders and the SG of Science Economy and Innovation of Flanders during the RV Simon Stevin expedition in Brussels November 2022.
VLIZ (Flanders Marine Institute) organised and attended the event.
- Innovazul event – 29th of November to 2nd of December 2022 (Cádiz, Spain)
EuroMarine attended the event.
- EuroMarine Open Science Day 2023 – 1st & 2nd of February 2023 (Lisbon, Portugal)
Prep4Blue was presented in a specific EU Mission session by the coordinator Ifremer.
- European Maritime Days 2023 – 24th and 25th of May 2023 (Brest, France).
Prep4Blue coordinator and partners Ifremer, EuroMarine, CRPM/CPMR, JPI Ocean, S. Pro, KDM and ERINN Innovation were present (Figure 11).
- Ocean Practices: OBPS Workshop VII – 9th to 13th of October 2023 (Online).
OBPS Focus Session on Best Practices on Storytelling and the Restoration of Ecosystem
Prep4Blue (CPMR & CNR) together with BlueMissionAA.
- The inaugural EMB ECOP Networking Forum – 8th and 9th October 2023 (Santiago, Spain).
- EuroOcean Conference 2023 – 10th and 11th of October 2023 (Vigo, Spain).

¹⁹ Mission Charter Resources on Prep4Blue website: <https://prep4blue.eu/mission-charter/>

²⁰ MPA Europe stakeholder network: <https://mpa-europe.eu/stakeholder-network/>

Prep4Blue partners Ifremer, EuroMarine, JPI Ocean, MaREI - University College Cork and CETMAR were present at the conference (Figure 12).

- EcoMondo – 7th to 10th of November 2023 (Rimini, Italy).
Prep4Blue (CPMR) together with BlueMissionMed did a presentation in the session *Sustainable technologies for Marine litter removal and recycling: the experience of the H2020 MAELSTROM project*.
- *European Maritime Days 2024 – 30th and 31st of May 2024 (Svendborg, Denmark)*.
SDU, as Prep4Blue partner, is involved in the organisation of the EMD2024.



Figure 9. Delilah Al Khudairy (DG MARE) with the Charter signed by the governor of West-Flanders and the SG of Science Economy and Innovation of Flanders © Mariya Gabriel (European Commissioner)



Figure 10. Charter signature by the governor of West-Flanders and the SG of Science Economy and Innovation of Flanders on the RV Simon Stevin © Mariya Gabriel (European Commissioner)
From left to right: Delilah Al Khudairy (DGMARE), Carl Decaluwé (Governor of West-Flanders), Philip van Avermaet (Flanders Economy Science and Innovation); Louise Haxthausen (UNESCO liaison office Brussels)



Figure 11. Prep4Blue partners present at the European Maritime Days on the 24th and 25th of May in Brest (France) : CRPM/CPMR, JPI Ocean, S. Pro, Ifremer, KDM, EuroMarine and ERINN Innovation.



Figure 12. Prep4Blue representatives at the EurOcean Conference 2023 on the 10th and 11th of October in Vigo (Spain).

From left to right: Eirini Apazoglou (Project Manager of Prep4Blue / EuroMarine), Thorsten Kiefer (JPI Ocean), David Whyte (WP3 leader of Prep4Blue / MaREI - University College Cork), Cécile Nys (Interim Coordinator of Prep4Blue / Ifremer) and Susana Baston Meira (CETMAR).

2.3 Contribution to the EU Agenda for International Ocean Governance, focusing on the UN Decade on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the UN Decade of Ecological Restoration (2021-2030) (Task 1.4)

The aim of T1.4 is to ensure a close connection between the Mission and the UN Decades (Ocean Decade & Ecological Restoration Decade). T1.4 contributes and exchanges on best practices, funding, monitoring through participation with the *Task force on ocean, seas and inland waters*. The aim is to create synergies and seek coherence in those areas where they (Mission & UN Decades) can be mutually strengthened. The Decades will be used as a sounding board for CSAs activities in the international community on the subjects of Mapping, Visibility and Outreach, Policy.

So far, task partners are mainly involved in the United Nations Decade of ocean science for sustainable development (UN Ocean Decade). Representatives from the consortium - namely VLIZ (Flanders Marine institute), CNR, Ifremer and JPI Ocean - are very active in the UN Ocean Decade initiatives at strategic and operational levels. They are involved as core members of Decade National Committees (e.g., CNR is hosting and coordinating the Italian National Committee); as contributors to Decade Collaborative Office (e.g., VLIZ / DCO Data Sharing Strategy Implementation Group) and Decade Collaborative Centres (e.g., Ifremer / DCC Ocean Observation); or are endorsed as Decade Implementing Partners (JPI, VLIZ). Partners also lead Decade endorsed Programs (e.g., CNR/CoastPredict; Ifremer/OneDeepOcean), Projects and Contributions (e.g., Ifremer/French Priority Research Program “Ocean & Climate, an ocean of solutions). VLIZ holds the secretariat of the National

Ocean Decade Committee NDC for Belgium. CSIC are co-organisers of the UN Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona, April, 2024.

The coordinator initiated interactions with the Ocean Decade coordination unit at IOC-UNESCO and partners of Prep4Blue (namely JPI Ocean and SDU), which led to an agreement on cross-referencing submissions to the Mission Charter and endorsed UN Ocean Decade actions.

Three partners (CSIC, SDU, Ifremer) are founding members of the working group “TransOcean”²¹ (Figure 13) supported by EuroMarine. The purpose of the TransOcean working group is to reach out to EuroMarine members and provide them with an outlook on *Transoceanic, Transversal and Transformative International Ocean Programs*. TransOcean has five strategic objectives:

- Support ocean-oriented communities of practice and networks.
- Support the development of structural ocean literacy, with both formal education and sensory experience components.
- Enhance citizen ocean awareness and engagement.
- Develop concepts and strategies towards full integration of the ocean in the collective imagination, including actions for restoration and rewilding.
- Produce solid documents that can set the basis for strategies and policies at the European and UN levels.

The TransOcean working group gathered at four online meetings in 2023 to discuss joint actions and networking activities.

Ocean Decade, Mission Ocean and other international initiatives



Figure 13. TransOcean Working group logo on the EuroMarine website.

In 2023, partners have been preparing their participation in the second UN Ocean Decade Conference hosted in Barcelona in April 2024.

Prep4Blue partner CSIC is particularly involved and plans to organise a EuroMarine TransOcean Working Group dedicated event and five satellite events focusing on citizen engagement. Prep4Blue has submitted the five related proposals, to be held at the ICM-CSIC venue on Tuesday 9 April, with the support of the Barcelona City Council. These events are interconnected and grouped together under the caption “We are Ocean”. They are designed to build synergy between the UN Decade and EU Mission Ocean and are potentially open to the same audiences (general public, scientists, artists, entrepreneurs and educators):

- Coastal communities (morning)
- Ocean intelligence [literacy] (morning)
- Enbluement [Science and Arts] (morning)
- Engaging citizens [methods] (afternoon)
- Celebrating the Ocean [A sensory session at the beach] (afternoon)

²¹ TransOcean Working group : <https://euromarinetwork.eu/activities/transocean/>

VLIZ is involved in the preparation of a side event gathering and showing the work of the NDCs, as well as an event on Ocean Data Sharing with participation of the main ocean data management entities.

With regards to the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, some partners are involved through projects on management and restoration of relevant coastal ecosystems (such as mangroves), the exchange of best practices between decade approaches, and communication (mainly through UNEP).

3 Conclusions

After this first 18 months, it can be concluded that Prep4Blue has really got involved at all levels of the Mission “Restore Our Ocean and Waters by 2030”. The project also spread the word about the Mission both at the European and international levels.

Through its role as linking agent and implementing project of the Mission with the other LH CSAs, Prep4Blue has been present in all Mission related major events and online workshops either online and/or in-person. These events allowed Prep4Blue to meet and build links with partners of other projects involved in the Mission, create synergies within the Mission Ecosystem, *etc.* For some of the major European instances, some partners have been involved in the organisation, which allowed them to build links directly with some the “local” stakeholders. Prep4Blue has also been heavily involved in presenting a unified communication, through various channels, about the Mission to the various “Ocean and Waters” stakeholders in order to boost the outreach of the Mission Charter and the Mission Stakeholder Network.

While slow building in the beginning, lots of synergies have been implemented in the whole Mission Ocean & Waters Ecosystem. Prep4Blue has ensured a good collaboration with the Mission governance and is striving at aligning the expectations and efforts of all the LH CSAs, and through them the LH (R)IAs, with the MIP Ocean and Mission Secretariat (as representatives of the European Commission).

At the international level, Prep4Blue is involved in the UN Ocean Decade, mainly in the UN Ocean Decade initiatives at strategic and operational levels. One of the partners is also co-organiser of the UN Ocean Decade conference in Barcelona in 2024. Partners are also involved in the organisation of the next UN conference on the Ocean in 2025. These high-level events highlight the importance of the Ocean and helps to bring forward Prep4Blue’s work at the international level.

Some efforts still need to be put in engaging with the Mission Core Network (TRAMI project) and the other four missions. Efforts will also continue in order to maintain and develop the current synergies, but also to implement new ones both at the European level and international level of the Ocean Governance to strive for the Ocean we want.

This report will be updated by the end of the project at Month 36 (May 2025).