



# UPDATE

2023  
DECEMBER

## SkillSea state-of-play

As we are approaching 2023 and the final six months of SkillSea are coming closer and closer, it is a perfect moment to inform you about the current status of the project and about the activities to come.

In our last transnational consortium meeting in November in Aalesund, Norway, we discussed the main elements of our SkillSea strategy, which will be one of the main deliverables of our project. We also have worked on an update of our dissemination strategy to have the most impact possible.

In general, we concluded during the meeting that the research concerning current and future trends and developments in the maritime transport sector is about to be completed and that the development of educational packages is coming to an end.

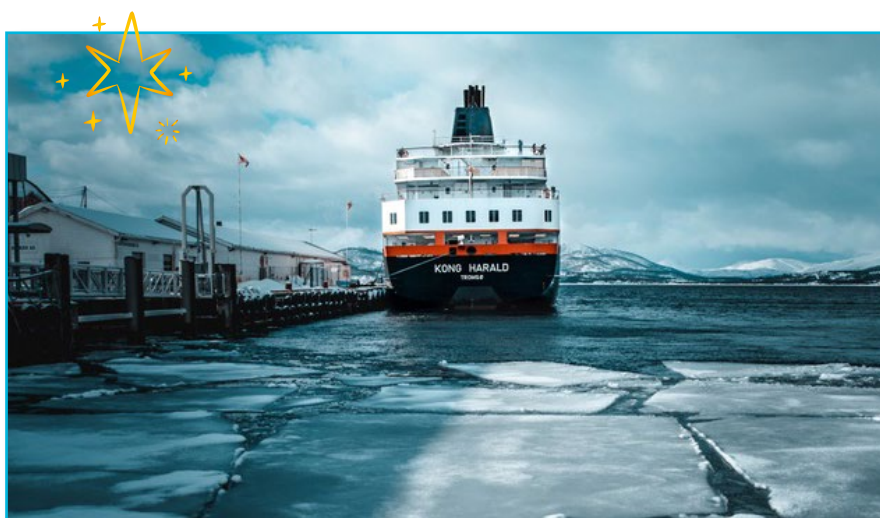
The activities that still need to be carried out are more and more focused on the period after the formal end of the project. Amongst others, this involves the work on the cooperation between European Maritime Education and Training Institutes (MET's), the guide on business- education partnerships, the development of a Strategic multi-stakeholder Alliance in Maritime Transport (which previously was called the SkillSea Knowledge Hub), including an action plan and the SkillSea strategy report.

In the coming months, we will take steps to achieve our ambitions. During 2023, we will keep you updated on all developments.

*I wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.*



**Diedrick Jansen**  
project  
coordinator



### Sailing into 2023

Winter is taking over, holidays are coming. The SkillSea project team wishes you all

*a Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year.*

Photo: Tobias Bjørkli



# Consortium meeting in Ålesund

Thirty SkillSea partners, including ten online participants, met in Ålesund Norway, on November 24 and 25 to discuss the current status of the work that is being carried out and to take steps concerning the activities for the remaining months in the project.

The first morning session began with an introduction by project coordinator Diedrick Jansen. He briefly summarised the achievements so far and formulated the challenges for the coming months. He also explained a few of his worries concerning the project and pushed the participants to undertake appropriate actions whenever possible and needed.

Diedrick also informed the participants about some of the experiences of the project management during the past few months. He described his perhaps a bit naïve assumption that all national and European stakeholders would be interested in the full project, while it more and more becomes clear that stakeholders are cherry-picking in the overall SkillSea results.

Based on this experience, the SkillSea dissemination building blocks were developed, that were presented by Esther Ouwens Nagell, the Work Package 4 leader. In her presentation she distinguished four specific output categories of SkillSea (Strategy, Training material, Research and the Strategic alliance for Maritime Transport). She explained that each of the four categories involves specific stakeholder groups and requires specific dissemination activities and material in order to be most effective.

The participants showed much appreciation for the model. Later during the meeting partners from

different countries were asked to fill in the scheme with stakeholders from their own country in order to create a database of dissemination target groups.

## Overview

The meeting continued with a presentation of all work package leaders concerning the status of the deliverables they were working on. The presentations provided all participants with an accurate overview of the work that was carried out and everything that still needs to be done.

Next sessions were spent on a discussion about the SkillSea recommendations. Eugenides Foundation, the work package 3 leader, had prepared a Delphi survey in order to investigate the views of all partners regarding the SkillSea recommendations. The results of the Delphi survey will be used to further specify and prioritise the recommendations. During the session participants further discussed in smaller groups in detail all recommendations, made suggestions for improvements with respect to their content and their wording. This working method stimulated the exchange of views and opinions amongst the partners and certainly has enriched the recommendations.

NTNU, the host of the meeting, invited two guest to present their views on new developments



regarding ship propulsion. The first presentation was held by Øystein Tørlen, Chief Technology Officer from Norwegian Hydrogen, a company that drives the green transition through the development and operation of green hydrogen infrastructure, aimed primarily towards heavy-duty transport and maritime customer segments. The second presentation was held by professor Jan Emblemsvåg. He informed all participants about nuclear power supply for vessels.

The consortium meeting ended with a study visit onboard the Normand Maximus, a 177 meter long multi purpose offshore vessel that was built in 2016 and is sailing the Norwegian flag. The visit offered the partners a good impression of the jobs and skills needed to operate such a ship.



## A PERSONAL OPINION FROM THE PROJECT COORDINATOR

## Improving student attraction in maritime transport: ideal or illusion?

As is the case in many economic sectors, maritime transport education is suffering from a decline in student numbers and in many European countries student supply does not match employers' demand. This explains why the 2017 SkillSea grant application also explicitly mentions the ambition to achieve an expected growth of five percent of young people aiming at a maritime career.

Assuming that similar projects in other economic sectors, such as health care, logistics, and not to forget the technology sector in general, have formulated similar ambitions, it immediately becomes clear that the track towards student growth in a specific sector is dead. This conclusion may be based on a simplified Dutch line of reasoning, but if we consider European demographic developments, there might be much truth in it.

In their report "The importance of being vocational: challenges and opportunities for VET in the next decade" (Cedefop/ETF, 2020), it is stated that "While in some countries IVET is under pressure from declining youth cohorts and a growing preference for education pathways that usually lead to higher education, many countries have preserved or even expanded the proportion of young people participating in IVET."

The differences between the situation in European countries again emphasise the need for national and sometimes even regional approaches to improve student

attractivity for maritime transport. While in the Netherlands, each additional student for maritime transport is one student less for another sector in need, in other countries, an additional influx of students may not be at the expense of other sectors.

In the latter case, student attraction for maritime transport might be realised with well-known traditional methods and tools (e.g. open days, promotion videos, and onsite visits). While in contrast with the first case, more innovative solutions might be needed (e.g. a training offer focusing on the technology sector in general, instead of a specific sectoral one, creating the opportunity to postpone the student choice for a specific sector, facilitating the possibility for an easy shift between comparable sectors during the educational program).

Perhaps, this approach can be more promising and effective than simply formulating numerical targets, which in most cases never will be reached.

By Diederick Jansen

## Day of the Dutch Maritime Lecturer

Lecturers from all Dutch maritime schools came together in the new location of the Amsterdam University of applied sciences (HvA) to "celebrate" the Day of the Dutch Maritime Lecturer. In total over two hundred lecturers from VET and Bachelor, inland, fishery, dredging, and near coastal and ocean-going were present.

SkillSea has led two one-hour workshops of 30 lecturers each. First, a brief background on the project and

the outcomes of work packages one and three were given. After this, the group was divided into four tables, each with all the materials of one of the work packages of Green skills 1 & 2 and Digital Skills 1 & 2.

The lecturers engaged in lively discussions. The materials were received very positively, and the learning outcomes and objectives were clear and gave the correct guidance. All agreed that the subjects are lacking in the current



curricula. The following discussion will be between schools (and lecturers) and will focus on translating and finalising the materials for the desired level.



# ForMare presents SkillSea during Naples Shipping Week

The conclusive day of the Naples Shipping Week saw the participation of Fabrizio Monticelli, CEO of ForMare – National Shipping Hub, in the panel “Human Factors Summit” in which he presented the project SkillSea. The participation to the Naples Shipping Week has represented a valuable opportunity for SkillSea partner ForMare to present the project and its future steps.

In fact, during the Shipping Week, a set of conferences and meetings open to the entire international shipping community was hosted in Naples. Prestigious speakers and stakeholders from the industry, scientific and academic world intervened and/or participated to the panels.

Furthermore, Kitack Lim, Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization took part as special guest during the NSW’s Opening Day. This has represented a relevant opportunity for stakeholder engagement activities and mostly to raise awareness on the relevance of the project SkillSea.



In particular, the Panel “Human Factors Summit” was focused on the importance of Blue Economy’s skills for the competitiveness of the sector, and it was attended by several stakeholders, VET providers and experts of the maritime sector operating at the National, European and International Level.

## ... and at Festival della Diplomazia

Lidia Rossi, Managing Director of ForMare – National Shipping Hub has presented the SkillSea project during the webinar “Increase Gender Balance in EU Shipping”. Lida was introduced by Eurico Ortiga, Senior Policy Advisor on Social Affairs of ECSA.



The webinar was part of XIII Edition of Festival della Diplomazia and hosted by Confitarma, the Italian Shipowners Association in Rome, Italy.

The Festival of Diplomacy has represented a great opportunity to raise awareness on the relevance of the SkillSea project, on the need to ensure a gender balance approach in the maritime sector and on the relevance of the women’s role on board. During the Festival, several conferences and webinars has been held on several topics related to the maritime sector.

The event was supported by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and attended by relevant speakers and participants, as for instance shipping companies, maritime clusters, members of the European Commission, scientists and Embassies.

## A PERSONAL OPINION FROM A TECHNICAL PROJECT MANAGER

### Occupational Profiles

By **Alco Weeke**, technical project manager SkillSea



**With the ever-changing times in the shipping industry, there is always the question: will there be new jobs, or will the jobs change?**

With the introduction of the steam engine, a real new occupation entered the maritime world as the engineer came on board. Engineers adjusted their skills to handle diesel engines when the diesel era started.

Of course, occupational profiles were lost on board ships. When the sails went, the sailmaker and the carpenter went ashore, but others adapted - for example, the Bosun is still there, although with additional skills.

The current pace of change in the shipping industry is accelerating, and with the environmental goals

and digitalisation, the question arises again: are new occupational profiles in view?

After discussions with ETF, ECSA members, current and former seafarers, and research, the main message is: not yet. The industry is still and mostly looking at additional skills as a response to emerging skill needs.

The only new wish popping up is a new occupational profile like the Electrical Technical Officer, the so-called *Digital-Data Analysing-Electronic Technical Officer (DTO)*. This person can assist on board with network problems, data gathering and repairing electronic devices, to assist the engineers and bridge team on "digital issues". Their education is basically not maritime, but like the

ETO, this person needs extra training in relation to the safety on board.

Looking at the development of shore control centers, the opinion is that in the nearby future, Captains and Chief Engineers will man the shore control centres.

The main challenges ahead are not focussed on new occupational profiles but firstly to identify the future learning goals and outcomes to provide education on these new subjects and secondly to decide what needs to be in the basic STCW education as we cannot keep on adding items without also taking some subjects away.



### SkillSea follow-up requires more cooperation

The SkillSea application describes the need to influence government bodies with the results of SkillSea. More concretely, the application describes the need to "install sustainable cooperation between industry, MET's and competent authorities at a regional/national and European level".

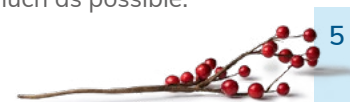
In order to be able to develop the most appropriate and effective tools and instruments to achieve this result, it is vital to investigate whether such cooperation structures in member states and in Europe already are existing, how they are organised, and which are their main objectives and activities.

A first inventory in the different SkillSea partner countries already clearly indicated that in most countries collaboration structures between industry, MET's and competent authorities are existing and active. The assumption in the application that no such cooperation was existing therefor proved not to be true. However, it also became clear that despite the fact that smaller groups of MET's are collaborating in European

| COOPERATION          |          |                |             |                            |
|----------------------|----------|----------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| Stakeholder category | Industry | MET's research | Authorities | Industry MET's Authorities |
| Nationally           | ✓        | ✓              | ✓           | ✓                          |
| European             | ✓        | ✗              | ?           | ✗                          |

funded projects, a structured (formalised) collaboration between European MET's institutions is non-existent. A similar situation was observed regarding cooperation between research institutions in maritime transport. Perhaps due to the worldwide character of maritime transport regulations through IMO and others, the existence of a cooperation structure of national authorities on a European level is not clear.

Taking these conclusions into consideration, it is obvious that an effective follow-up of SkillSea recommendations can only take place when structures and working policies of member states are joined as much as possible.



# Video's and animation delivered

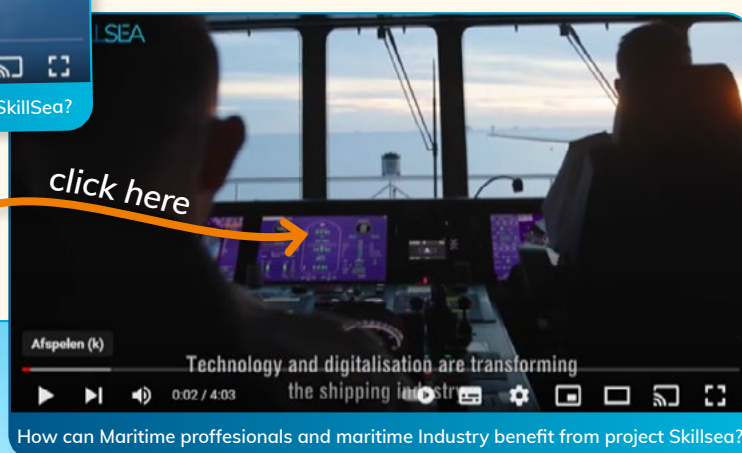
The SkillSea project delivered two video's and one animation, both for dissemination purposes. We invite everyone who wants to explain what SkillSea is about to share and use the video's and animation.



The first video focuses on Maritime Education and Training Institutions and how project SkillSea can be of benefit for them. For this video we asked students for their opinion on the course on Cyber iSecurity, as it is part of the Educational Package Digital Skills.



The second video focuses on the maritime transport sector and how maritime professionals will benefit from the SkillSea project. For this video we filmed on board a ferry of Stena Line.



The animation is meant as a teaser and focuses on Maritime Education and Training institutes.

## Online seminar Digital Skills I

On Friday December 16 2022 SkillSea organised an online seminar on the topics Digital and Green Skills. Alex Barlow, Programme Leader FDNS, School of Maritime, Blackpool and The Fylde College, explained the Educational Package 'Digital Skills I'. "How does the EP work and how can your institution benefit from it?" was the central question in his presentation.

The Educational Package Digital Skills I aims to provide maritime professionals with the knowledge and skills required to use information infrastructure on board

modern ships. After the course, the maritime professional will be able to assess available data and be able to act upon this data. The EP Digital Skills I will soon be added to the website of SkillSea (in the [MET-portal](#)). You can watch the video registration [here](#).

Unfortunately, the presentation regarding the educational package Green Skills was replaced by a presentation about different tools and instruments developed within the project. The presentation regarding Green Skills now will take place in March 2023.