

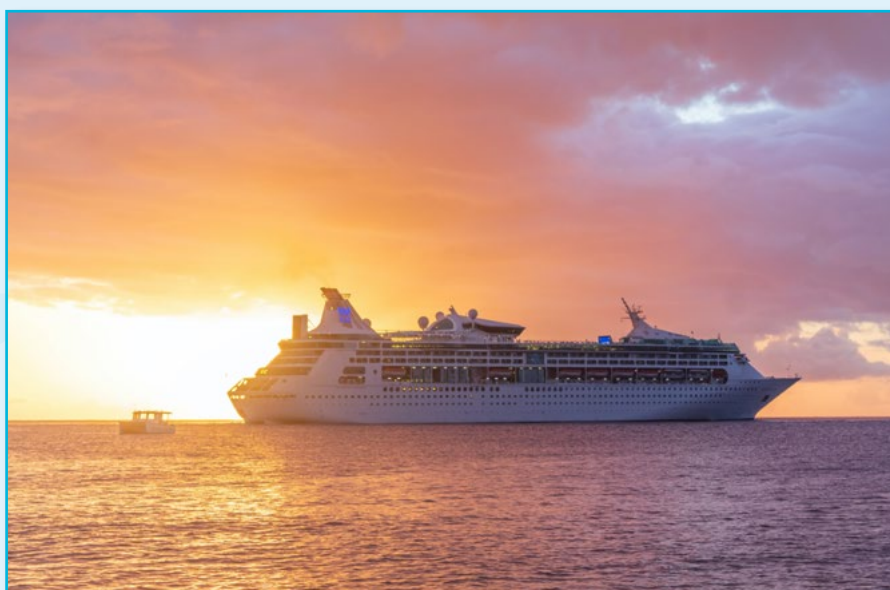
UPDATE

2023
JULY

Update SkillSea project

By **Diedrick Jansen**,
project coordinator

The past months have been an important period in our SkillSea project. With our preparatory research and investigation from work package 1 almost completed, and the development of a large number of Educational Packages in work package 2 very well underway, it is time to focus on the development of the Strategy document for Maritime Transport.



Under the coordination of our Greek partner, Eugenides Foundation, partners from work package 1, 2 and 5 are working intensively on the strategy document. After carefully analyzing the 2018 Call for Proposals, the 2018 SkillSea application and a large number of strategy documents from other sectoral alliance projects, a list of content has been worked out. This list of content enabled us to see which information already was available and which additional information is needed in order to complete the Strategy document.

Important elements of the strategy document were discussed in our consortium meeting in Rome. The

contribution of all partners will be used to fill in the missing gaps in the strategy document. As soon as the strategy document is in a full draft status, we will ask different stakeholders from the industry, research and education and relevant government bodies to review the document. Their input will be of great support for the development of the Roadmap (work package 5) that will help us to work on the ambitions from the strategy document.

Meanwhile, we have submitted a new (4th) amendment request. This amendment request not only concerned a number of financial administrative issues, but also asked for an extension of the

project period with 6 months, until the 30th of June 2023. The extension will enable us to complete all deliverables of the project and to further improve the quality of the different project results. Furthermore, the extra months will be used for the further dissemination of SkillSea.

I hope that all of you will keep on working with us to achieve the best possible results for the Maritime Transport sector.



Diedrick Jansen

3 questions to **Sotiris Raptis**, from ECSA



Sotiris Raptis

- 1 Could you introduce yourself?
- 2 What are your thoughts on the first outcomes of the SkillSea project?
- 3 When we finish the SkillSea project, what would be the greatest achievement for SkillSea in your opinion?

1 After joining ECSA in 2020 as Director of Environment and Safety, I took on the role of Acting Secretary General since September last year and took over the position full time in May 2022. I have over 14 years of EU political and policy experience having held several positions in the European Parliament and in different stakeholder organisations, such as the European Sea Ports Organisation and the NGO Transport & Environment.

2 One of the major objectives of ECSA is to keep our organisation an open, constructive and evidence-based partner for the maritime industry and its cluster. SkillSea is an essential tool which will undeniably contribute to this aim. We see a clear need to identify existing gaps in terms of green and digital skills as a priority objective for ECSA. It is essential to ensure the maritime transport skills agenda is future-proof. With this aim we are committed to safeguard the competitiveness of the sector by upskilling and reskilling the maritime workforce. We believe that the

work performed through the different work packages will contribute to creating highly-skilled maritime educational programmes.

- 3 The greatest achievement of SkillSea will be to contribute to setting up a sustainable skill strategy for the future supporting labour mobility and enhancing the attractiveness of the maritime industry. We hope it will not only help retain workforce but ultimately attract larger numbers to the profession. We also believe that establishing a long-term knowledge exchange tool through a strategic alliance with different stakeholders can support the industry's future challenges in terms of skills. In addition, by analysing the skills requirements, the gaps and the future skill needs of the industry, SkillSea will contribute to addressing the need for more highly-skilled maritime expertise especially with regard to the green transition and the digitalisation.

By Eurico Ortiga

Consortium meeting Rome

By STC Group

The SkillSea partners met in Rome at the premises of Confitarma - Confederazione Italiana Armatori for a consortium meeting on 4 and 5 July 2022.

The group brainstormed on topics as future scenarios for Maritime Transport and the recommendations for the SkillSea strategy document. The differences in national educational structures across the member states in Europe were discussed. Followed by an update on the future of the SkillSea Knowledge hub. Lastly the topic of project dissemination was discussed during a workshop. In the short term opportunities for relevant events were discussed as well as the longer term sustainability after the project.



IMO/STCW¹: its importance and its meaning for SkillSea



By *Diedrick Jansen and Alco Weeke, project manager and technical project manager SkillSea*

In many discussions concerning our SkillSea project and its deliverables, we have noticed that the importance of IMO/ STCW for the maritime transport sector and our current activities regarding future skills tend to be underestimated. This memo explains the aims of IMO/ STCW and its relevance for skills development in maritime transport.

First, a bit of history concerning IMO/ STCW

It has consistently been recognized that the best way to improve safety at sea is by developing international regulations that all shipping nations follow. Several countries proposed that a permanent international body should be established to promote maritime safety more effectively, but it was not until 1948 that these hopes were realized. That year, an international conference in Geneva adopted a convention formally establishing IMO. The IMO Convention entered into force in 1958. The safety and security of life at sea, protection of the marine environment and over 80% of the world's trade depend on the professionalism and competence of seafarers. Maritime safety and safety of navigation are enhanced by strengthening the focus on the human element. The wide-ranging scope and importance of the human element make it a shared responsibility of:

- IMO, as the regulatory body.
- Member States, as implementers.
- (shipping) companies, as providers of the necessary resources, safety policies and safety culture; and
- seafarers, as the individuals who physically operate ships.

The 1978 International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) was the first to establish basic requirements for training, certification (and watchkeeping) for seafarers on an international level. Previously, individual governments established the standards of training and certification of officers, usually without reference to practices in other countries. As a result, standards and procedures varied widely, even though shipping is the most international of all industries. Nowadays, the Convention prescribes minimum standards relating to seafarers' training and certification, which countries are obliged to meet or exceed. Member states must provide detailed information to IMO concerning administrative measures taken to ensure compliance with the STCW, education and training courses and certification procedures.

IMO/ STCW in relation to education and training

As described above, STCW establishes basic requirements for training and certification on an international level. For this reason, it is safe to assume that all

1 The content of this article is based on the information provided by the IMO: www.imo.org



IMO/STCW: its importance and its meaning for SkillSea

training and certification offered by European maritime training institutes (MET's) on all educational levels comply with STCW requirements. At the same time, it is essential to distinguish between initial training for students and lifelong training aimed at seafarers already working in the field.

It is the easiest to describe the situation of seafarers. In their case, updates of STCW with new training requirements automatically will have to result in the participation in additional training programmes, which in most cases will be paid by their employers. Participation in training not based on STCW requirements or exceeds STCW requirements will depend on the willingness of the employee and employer.

The situation of students is more complicated because their curriculum not only depends on STCW requirements but also needs to comply with national educational rules and regulations and structures. Examples of these different rules and regulations are the number of

years an educational programme lasts, the number of study hours per year, the (in)direct involvement of government bodies, the balance between theoretical and practical training, the room for MET's to develop their own curriculum, etc. MET's that mainly provide initial training permanently need to balance STCW regulations and national rules and regulations.

Consequences for SkillSea and the innovation of education and training

MET's obviously are open to integrating new educational content in their programmes to comply with developments in maritime transport such as digitalisation, remote shipping and green transport. At the same time, such integration needs to fit into an already fully developed, full-time curriculum. For this reason, the first question MET's tend to ask themselves is to what extent the new educational content comes from STCW. If this is the case, MET's are obliged to integrate the new content. If the new educational content is not related to STCW, MET's may decide to skip or postpone the integration or look for an alternative way to add the new content to their programmes. Be aware that many programs are four-year programmes, so implementation often takes at least four years.

Fortunately, because of the many governments and other bodies involved in the STCW process, updating and innovating training requirements a process that takes times. Consequently, for a large part, the MET's need to decide for themselves about integrating new educational content. It is essential to keep in mind that integrating new educational content into the curriculum is taking place without skipping elements from the current programme (as these elements are obliged because of national and STCW regulations).

Conclusions

STCW defines the basic requirements for training and education for seafarers. MET's are obliged to comply with these regulations and the national rules and regulations of their country. For this reason, the integration of in SkillSea's newly developed Educational Packages in the curriculum, to a great extent, will depend on how well they can be linked to compulsory STCW requirements or national rules and regulations. If these two are not the case, it will be up to the individual MET and their teachers whether and how they will use the new training content.



Professional competence profiles

Lessons learned - SkillSea

By, Damir Zec, The University of Rijeka, Faculty of Maritime Studies

Maritime professionals are these days responsible for a myriad of different tasks: during ship development and building, on board ships, in managing offices, during maintenance or on behalf of different regulators. And ships are immensely different, ranging from small coasters to giant container carriers, cruisers, or LNG carriers, including small but expensive super-yachts or highly sophisticated mammoths like floating offshore facilities.

Accordingly, maritime professionals need to acquire and master a set of technical skills required by his/her current occupation and “glued” together with various transitional (“human”) skills.

For those providing education and training, this is the central issue. There are so many knowledge “chunks”, each highly required for one occupation and totally unnecessary (even burden) for the other. So which one should be included in the routine education process and which should be left for later upskilling (not to mention that some “chunks” are becoming obsolete and others are emerging)? When asking people from the industry to suggest how to solve the issue, one will frequently get pretty controversial advice, mainly depending on the current responsibilities of those interviewed (but most, if not all, will agree that cadets these days are undereducated if compared with those 20 or 30 years ago!).

Based on the SkillSea project outcomes, recent developments have erased clear boundaries between traditional maritime occupational profiles. Masters know much more about their

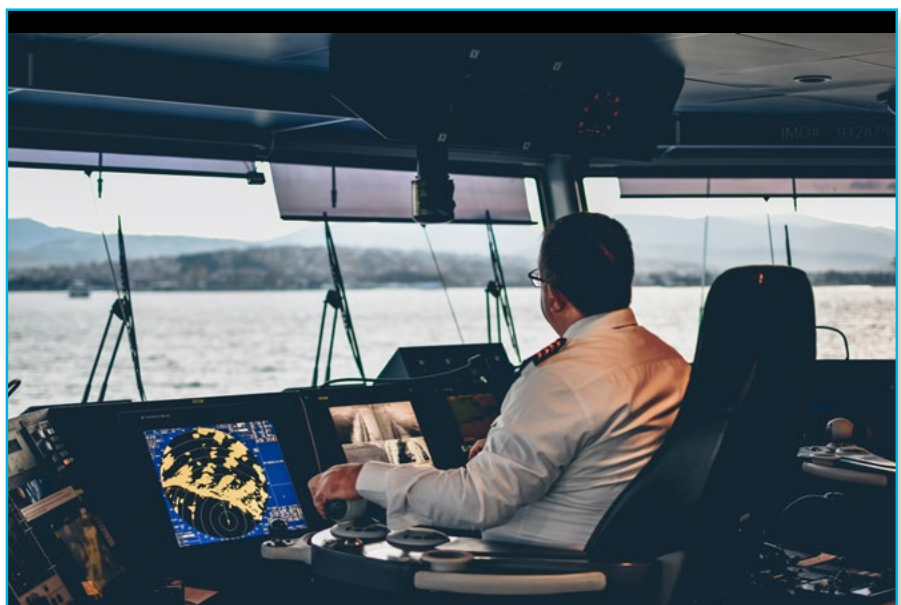
propulsion systems and engineers about voyage planning today than ever before. At the same time, the office staff is much more aware of regulations and legal and environmental problems than their predecessors.

In such circumstances, educational providers will soon be forced to deliver a well-founded core set of skills that will be gradually upgraded during students’ professional careers. Such outcomes will put an additional burden on all sides: education providers should prepare a much larger set of courses to offer (with fewer participants per

course!), employers should invest more in activities dealing with human capital, and employees should be prepared to retrain regularly as they assume new responsibilities or when new technologies emerge and change their working environment.

And as consequence for government administrations; one could expect hundreds of occupational profiles to emerge, all based on several core sets of skills, similar in a nutshell but with highly different advanced skills. Once common only for management staff, personalised occupation profiles will be required for staff performing at lower management levels or, in some instances, even at operational levels.

Finally, one point is beyond doubt: education and training will be much more a hot topic among maritime professionals than ever before.



SkillSea Project Presented in the frame of the European Maritime Day 2022, Ravenna

By Lidia Rossi and Mariachiara Sormani, Formare

On May 20th ForMare participated to the joint workshop “Future-proof skills and young start-ups for blue growth” organized with Sealogy, in the frame of [European Maritime Day 2022](#) in Ravenna. The EMD is the annual two-day event during which Europe’s maritime community meet to network, discuss and outline joint actions on maritime affairs and sustainable blue economy.

The workshop has been selected by the European Commission as an associated event of the [European Vocational Skills Week 2022](#), a week held by the Commission to celebrate all the very best practices in Vocational Education and Training (VET).

In this context, Lidia Rossi, Project Manager of ForMare, presented the Erasmus+ Project SkillSea focusing on the structure and key objectives of the project and illustrating the development and state of the art of each work package. This occasion has been also a great opportunity to promote SkillSea progress on fostering digital, green, and soft management skills in the rapidly changing maritime labor market.

The event has also represented an important opportunity to raise awareness at the presence of different actors operating in the blue economy sector, as VET providers, key stakeholders, European Commission and Public Authorities.

[Click here for further information.](#)

