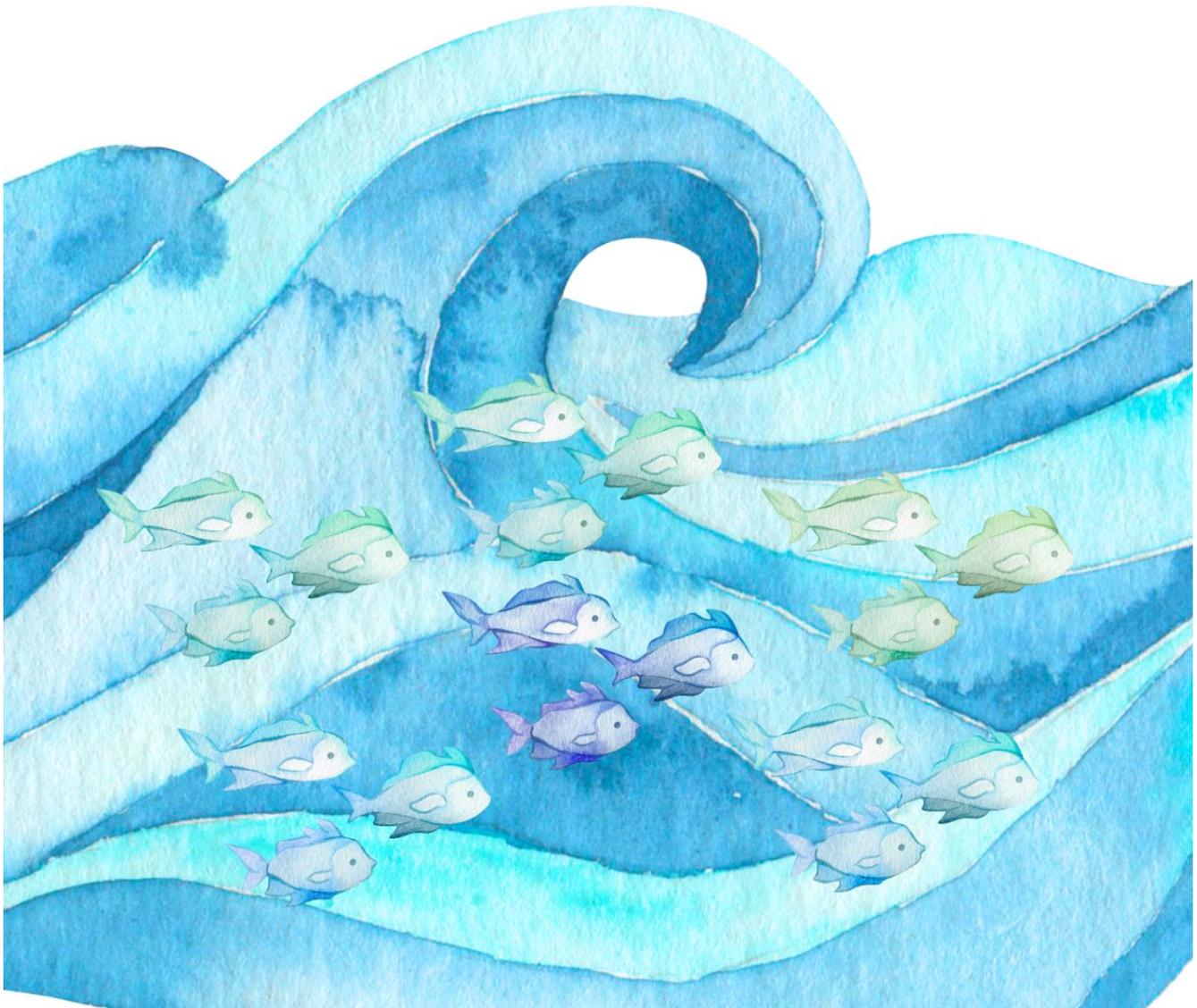


GUIDELINES

ON LOCAL INVOLVEMENT IN MPAs



Guidelines on local involvement in MPAs

Final Version

Deliverable Number D.2.2.5.



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INTRODUCTION

The Guidelines are a manual for the implementation of capacity building/training schemes developed through project MAPA. Designed to support both the effective delivery of the programmes and the replicability of these approaches in other contexts, the Guidelines draw on the collective experience and expertise of project partners PP3, PP4, and PP5.

By providing clear frameworks, tips, and adaptable strategies, this document aims to facilitate the engagement of different target groups – ranging from children and youth to the public and citizen scientists – in marine conservation and participatory governance.

Recognizing the diversity of audiences and regional contexts in which marine capacity building may be applied, the Guidelines are made available in three languages – Croatian, Italian, and English – to ensure accessibility, inclusiveness, and the widest possible impact across the Adriatic and beyond.



“HOW TO?” ON IMPLEMENTING “BUILDING BLUE COMMUNITIES”

Guidelines for Implementing the “Building Blue Communities: Citizens Engaged for the Ocean” Capacity Building Programme for the General Public

Overview

Building Blue Communities is a modular, participatory programme designed to empower citizens – residents, visitors, local businesses, community groups, and institutions – with the tools and knowledge needed to support and steward Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Its goal is to create lasting awareness, foster stewardship, and build the social license essential for effective, inclusive marine conservation.

Why Implement This Programme?

- **Connects people** to their local sea, heritage, and sustainable futures.
- **Demystifies MPAs** – fostering trust, acceptance, and engagement.
- **Empowers communities** to take practical ownership of marine protection.
- **Supports compliance, participation, and innovation** in sustainable development.
- **Strengthens communities** by bridging generations, sectors, and perspectives.
- **Supports co-management** in protected areas enhancing conservation efforts

When and Where?

- **Flexible, modular design:** 4 modules; each ≈ 2 hours; deliver standalone or as a series.
- **Adapt to context:** Public events, festivals, community meetings, local schools, MPA visitor centres, NGOs, island gatherings, or even local cafés.





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- **Maximum impact:** Link with local maritime traditions, big annual events, or as a campaign kick-off.



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Getting Started

Know your audience:

- Urban: Diverse backgrounds, transient populations—focus on broad inclusivity and visible benefits to all.
- Rural: Long-standing connections, place-based culture—emphasize local livelihoods, history, and community pride.
- Small Islands: Strong sense of “ownership,” attachment, and sometimes scepticism—value local knowledge, traditions, involve elders and youth, and respect local autonomy.

Form partnerships:

- Involve local leaders, NGOs, teachers, and respected individuals.
- Invite MPA managers, scientists, local fishers, and business owners.

Prepare materials

- Use maps, visual aids and simple info sheets
- Use examples from local life, testimonies, and interactive exercises.

Tips & Tricks by Community Type

Urban Communities

- **Leverage diversity:** Frame MPAs as everyone's shared heritage and responsibility; highlight ecosystem services that benefit the urban area (recreation, resilience).
- **Show connections:** Demonstrate how everyday urban actions (waste and water management, choices, advocacy, touristic activities, infrastructure) impact the sea – even from afar.
- **Offer visibility:** Use urban spaces for events – libraries, centres, parks. Engage with local media and influencers when possible. Include the schools to broaden reach to attract teachers.



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Rural/Coastal Communities

- **Honor traditions:** Start with fishing, agriculture, or maritime heritage; collect local marine stories and practices.
- **Address livelihoods:** Emphasize eco-tourism, sustainable fishing, and how MPAs can help safeguard jobs and resources.
- **Foster local champions:** Identify community leaders, active fishers, or artisan producers who can model positive engagement.

Small Island Communities

- **Value local wisdom:** Co-create sessions with elders, youth, and community groups.
- **Acknowledge ownership:** Address scepticism honestly – clarify that MPAs do not always mean exclusion; discuss local governance tools (Local Cooperation Councils, Citizen Science).
- **Bridge generations:** Mix intergenerational workshops: let elders share knowledge, youth lead new ideas, and all co-design the vision for the island's future.

General Tips for All

- **Build trust:** Transparency is key – address doubts, clarify MPA goals, and give everyone a voice.
- **Adapt language and pace:** Use simple, relatable examples; avoid jargon; translate materials as needed.
- **Celebrate small wins:** Highlight positive stories from participants – citizen science, clean-ups, successful local initiatives.



How to Deliver Each Module

Module 1: Benefits of a Healthy Marine Environment

- Use personal stories and local testimonials: "How does the sea influence our daily lives?"
- Visualize with maps and art – let participants list their favourite coastal activities or foods.
- Facilitate a sense of pride and connection.
- Give true life examples of ecosystem services on land and in the sea, as land examples are sometimes easier to comprehend

Module 2: Threats to Marine Biodiversity

- Show before/after images, or shortcut a local “walk and talk” to spot visible threats.
- Invite participants to map threats and brainstorm local solutions.
- Use fun myth-busting or “marine jeopardy” quizzes to debunk common misconceptions.
- Talk about the impact of stress in our daily lives and how it impacts us humans (cranky, lower immunity, less strength, ...) and correlate that to marine ecosystems and how different threats are stress on the sea and marine organisms

Module 3: Introduction to MPAs

- Use real-life local or Mediterranean examples – good and bad – what makes it work?
- Host a “build-your-own MPA” activity to involve input and imagination.
- Invite MPA managers or rangers for informal Q&A.

Module 4: Active Engagement

- Map local stakeholders, roles, and opportunities for action.
- Try hands-on activities: litter clean-ups, citizen science, beach bioblitzes.
- Facilitate action planning: “What can I (or we) do next? Who else should join?”



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Principles for Facilitators

- **Be a guide, not a lecturer:** Let participants' questions, experiences, and stories lead the way.
- **Embrace co-creation:** Let participants design parts of the session or suggest next steps.
- **Stay neutral and inclusive:** Respect all viewpoints, including scepticism; find common ground.

Building Ownership & Social License

- Frame MPAs as community assets, not external impositions.
- Celebrate local contributions – everyone's actions matter.
- Maintain ongoing dialogue: strengthen feedback loops so community voices influence management decisions.
- Foster pride: create visible symbols (local art, signs, events) that reinforce the MPAs' shared identity.

Evaluation & Reflection

- Start and end with a question: "What does the sea mean to you (now)?"
- Use feedback forms and informal reflection circles to collect ideas, insights, and concerns.
- Encourage participants to stay connected: join local networks, campaigns, or citizen science projects.

Outreach & Invitation

- Use inclusive, positive messaging: "The sea is ours to cherish – join us in building a Blue Community."
- Advertise locally: posters, radio, social media, **word-of-mouth through trusted voices.**
- Open to all ages – adapt modules for families, elders, or youth-only sessions.
- Partner with festivals, markets, or local events for maximum visibility and impact.



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Sample Implementation Checklist

Task	Tips for Urban Communities	Tips for Rural/Coastal Communities	Tips for Small Island Communities
Phase		Preparation	
<i>Identify community type and key local players</i>	Engage diverse, transient groups	Involve fisher groups, local leaders	Consult elders, youth, tradition keepers
<i>Form partnerships (local leaders, NGOs, MPA managers, scientists)</i>	Use schools, community centres	Use village halls, marinas	Use local gathering spots, cafes
<i>Select and book accessible venues (indoor or outdoor)</i>	Libraries, parks, city spaces	Beaches, town halls, piers	Multi-purpose halls, beaches
<i>Gather and prepare materials (maps, visuals, props, quizzes)</i>	Showcase city-sea connections	Gather stories and local artifacts	Integrate island maps and folklore
<i>Announce/promote programme using media, flyers, networks</i>	Local media, city websites	Community radio, notice boards	Word-of-mouth, local radio
<i>Recruit participants and register special needs</i>	Focus on age and diversity	Leverage existing community bonds	Ensure multigenerational inclusion
Phase		Implementation	



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Task	Tips for Urban Communities	Tips for Rural/Coastal Communities	Tips for Small Island Communities
<i>Prepare agenda and session plan for each module</i>	Tailor content for city	Focus on livelihoods and heritage	Emphasize ownership and autonomy
<i>Set up participatory seating and welcoming environment</i>	Circle setup in public venues	Outdoor clusters for informal feel	Informal setting, open discussion
<i>Begin with local context icebreaker</i>	"How does the sea touch our city?"	"What's our history with the sea?"	"What story do you remember of the sea?"
<i>Deliver each module using interactive methods:</i>			
<i>Module 1: Local mapping of ecosystem services</i>	Relate to urban benefits (cooling, air)	Resource mapping, local foods	Map island resources and traditions
<i>Module 2: Threat identification</i>	Relate to regional impacts	Address visible threats	Address local threats
<i>Module 3: Design an MPA activity</i>	Use city planning analogies	Highlight co-management	Discuss their potential involvement and motive
<i>Module 4: Facilitate action planning</i>	Focus on city volunteers, green groups	Link to seasonal events (fishing, tourism)	Combine with island festivals
<i>Document activities</i>	Get media coverage	Share in local newsletters	Island notice boards/social media
Phase		Evaluation & Reflection	



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Task	Tips for Urban Communities	Tips for Rural/Coastal Communities	Tips for Small Island Communities
<i>Pre/post questionnaires and group feedback sessions</i>	Online or printed forms	Verbal/written feedback, reflection circles	Verbal/written feedback, story-sharing
<i>Group reflection: "What's changed for us?"</i>	"What can the city do for the sea?"	"What can we do together for our coast?"	"How do we show our care for nature?"
<i>Collect facilitator notes, highlight stories of impact</i>	Identify next steps or ambassadors	Identify future leaders and groups	Plan next gathering or initiative
Phase		Follow-up	
<i>Share session outcomes and stories</i>	Community newsletters, social media	Announce in public gatherings	Word-of-mouth, displays at key spots
<i>Encourage continued involvement</i>	Promote via schools, NGOs	Use community events as entry points	Foster regular island collaboration

Final Words

Building Blue Communities is about making marine conservation everyone's story. Whether you're working in a busy city, a quiet fishing village, or a proud island community, adapt the approach to local realities, invite all voices to the table, and celebrate the potential of ordinary people to achieve extraordinary results for our sea. Together, we build the public trust and local pride that keeps our blue planet resilient for generations to come. Remember to Think Blue!



“HOW TO?” ON IMPLEMENTING “YOUTH THINKS (OF) BLUE”

Guidelines for Implementing the "Youth Thinks (of) Blue" Capacity Building Programme

Overview

Youth Thinks (of) Blue is an interactive educational programme empowering high school and university students (ages 15–30) to explore, analyse, and protect the marine world. The programme centres on ocean literacy, Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), and active youth participation, blending science, policy, and hands-on experience. These guidelines are designed to help educators, NGOs, student groups, and facilitators successfully implement the programme and inspire young leaders in marine conservation.

Why Run This Programme?

- **Empowers youth** to become changemakers and advocates in marine conservation.
- Builds **critical, interdisciplinary skills** – scientific, civic, communication – for academic and career growth.
- Tackles the urgent need for **ocean literacy and real-world science education**.
- Fosters connections between **young people, communities, and stakeholders** for long-term stewardship of the sea.

When and Where?

Timing:

- Flexible scheduling - programme can be delivered as a series of workshops, a project week, summer school, or as modules embedded in curricula or youth initiatives.



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- Plan around environmental days (World Oceans Day, Earth Day) for greater impact or link with academic terms.

Setting:

- *Ideal:* Combination of indoor workshops and field experiences (MPAs, coastal sites, research labs).
- *Alternative:* University/school classrooms, NGOs, online or hybrid settings with virtual fieldwork (using films, VR, or stakeholder interviews).
- *Tip:* Ensure locations are accessible and provide real or simulated engagement with marine issues.

Getting Started

Preparation

- **Build a multidisciplinary team:** Recruit marine scientists, educators, community/NGO leaders, and youth mentors.
- **Gather materials:** Infographics, real data sets, stakeholder profiles, activity worksheets, equipment for practical/lab work, and access to digital resources or films.
- **Plan logistics:** Secure permissions for site visits, coordinate with local MAPA (and/or MPA) stakeholders, identify relevant NGOs/experts willing to participate.
- **Promote inclusivity:** Encourage diverse youth participation - gender balance, regional representation, accessibility for all backgrounds and abilities.

Successful Recruitment

- Advertise through schools, universities, youth clubs, youth centres and social media.
- Frame as a unique chance for **real impact, leadership, fieldwork, and networking**.
- Offer participation certificates and potential paths to internships or further volunteering.





Programme Structure & Delivery Tips

1. Workshop Sessions

- **Begin with inspiration:** Share local and global stories about marine conservation challenges and successes.
- **Foundational learning:** Use dynamic lectures and peer learning about oceanography, marine biodiversity, and ecosystem services.
- **Let youth lead:** Encourage critical questioning, group work, role-play, and debate.
- **Link theory to practice:** Incorporate actual case studies from the region or relevant MPAs.

Session Tips:

- Use hands-on models, real-time data analysis, or demo experiments (e.g., ocean current simulation).
- Bring in guest speakers – ex. marine biologists, local policymakers, or activists.

2. Mobility Session of Exchange

Choose the format best suited to your group and resources:

Format Type	Description & Tips
Case study/Role-play	Assign students roles (fishers, NGOs, scientists, community leaders). Lead a realistic stakeholder meeting. Guide negotiation, explore different perspectives, and find consensus or highlight real-world tensions.
Field Visit	Organize trips to local M(A)PA sites, marine labs or stakeholder sessions. Prepare guiding questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What conservation actions are working? - Where are the challenges?



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Format Type	Description & Tips
	Enable direct interaction with rangers, environmentalists, or local authorities.
Citizen Science/Lab/Research	Involve young people in authentic marine data collection: water sampling, species ID, marine debris monitoring. Use citizen science protocols. Emphasize the importance of accuracy and collaboration.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>If in-person is not possible, leverage online simulations, documentaries, stakeholder interviews, or virtual reality experiences to maintain engagement.</i>

3. Assessment & Reflection

- **Start with a baseline:** Use a pre-programme questionnaire on ocean knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour.
- **End with reflection:** Post-programme survey and joint discussion: What have we learned? How might we act locally?
- **Encourage proposals:** Let youth brainstorm or pitch projects for further ocean action – be it awareness campaigns, research, or community stewardship.



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Key Implementation Tricks

- **Be flexible:** Adapt depth, pace, and formats to group's age, experience, and interests.
- **Emphasize dialogue:** Facilitate roundtables and debates; let participants practice public speaking and negotiation.
- **Celebrate diversity:** Leverage varied backgrounds for richer discussions – urban/rural youth, science/humanities students, etc.
- **Encourage networking:** Facilitate connections between youth and marine professionals (potential mentors or role models).
- **Document the process:** Take photos (with consent), collect testimonials and reflections for sharing and future recruitment.
- **Showcase impact:** Organize a final event, exhibition, or digital showcase of youth work/products/proposals.

Creating an Inviting Atmosphere

- Use **youth-friendly visuals** – bright, modern blues and aquas, marine icons, infographics.
- Keep messaging positive: *“Join agents of change for the sea—no prior knowledge required!”*
- Stress the **opportunity for personal growth and real-world impact**.
- Share past participant testimonials when available.



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Sample Implementation Checklist

Preparation	During Sessions	After Sessions
Recruit a multidisciplinary team	Welcome/icebreakers	Collect feedback
Secure locations & any permissions	Facilitate workshops, group activities	Celebrate outcomes
Connect with guest experts & stakeholders	Encourage active participation & dialogue	Distribute certificates
Prepare materials/equipment	Guide reflection and critical analysis	Support post-programme engagement
Announce programme & open for registrations	Document key activities	Share achievements to inspire others

Final Words

Youth Thinks (of) Blue is more than a learning journey – it's a launchpad for empowered youth leadership and science-based action for the ocean. Facilitators play a crucial role in fostering confidence, curiosity, and collaboration. By following these guidelines, you're not just teaching – you're opening doors for the next generation of marine protectors and civic innovators. Dive in, stay adaptable, and let youth voices shape a bluer, brighter future! Remember to always Think Blue!



“HOW TO?” ON IMPLEMENTING “KIDS THINK (OF) BLUE”

Guidelines for Implementing the "Kids Think (of) Blue" Capacity Building Programme

Overview

Kids Think (of) Blue invites children aged 10–15 to explore, understand, and protect the ocean through hands-on science, games, and creative experiences. If you're an educator, youth group leader, NGO, or community organizer, these guidelines will help you launch the programme.

Why Implement This Programme?

- **Ignites curiosity and engagement** with marine science and environmental issues.
- **Connects children to their local environment** and the global importance of the ocean.
- **Fosters lifelong stewardship** by encouraging responsibility and advocacy.
- **Supports curriculum goals** and broad educational competencies (scientific literacy, teamwork, creative thinking).

When and Where to Implement

Timing:

- Two-session structure, 135 minutes each, flexible scheduling.
- Ideal for special project weeks, science days, eco-camps, or as an enrichment series.
- Can be repeated with different groups or seasonally (e.g., aligned with World Oceans Day).

Setting:

- *Preferred:* Outdoors – schoolyards, parks, beaches, science centres.
- *Alternative:* Classroom, community centres, or blended with virtual components.





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- *Tip:* Adapt to your context; even urban groups can connect through VR, digital activities, or local water bodies.



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Getting Started

Preparation

- **Assemble educational materials:**
 - Marine specimens, shells, photos, videos, scientific tools (microscope, nets—real or replica).
 - Worksheets, drawing supplies, and game props.
- **Organize your team:**
 - Recruit educators or volunteers with interest in marine science or environmental education.
 - Brief all facilitators on the child-centred, playful, and interactive approach.

Inclusivity Tips

- *Welcome diverse participants.* The programme is designed for all backgrounds and abilities.
- *Adapt language and activities* to the group's needs (age, prior knowledge, learning styles).
- *Invite local experts.* Fishermen, scientists, or environmentalists inspire authenticity.



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Session Structure & Delivery Tips

Session 1: How Does the Ocean Influence Us?

- **Kick-off with excitement:**
 - Use storytelling and sensory introductions. Make it “feel like an adventure.”
- **Hands-on discovery:**
 - Touch, observe, and play – kids should see, hear, and handle marine objects.
 - Use games to reinforce food webs, biodiversity, and ocean zones.
- **Encourage questions:**
 - Prompt curiosity: “Why is a drop of seawater a whole world?”
- **Integrate technology:**
 - Use stereomicroscopes, or even simple videos to access the ocean’s hidden wonders.

Session 2: How We Influence the Ocean

- **Make it real:**
 - Field trip, beach visit, or immersive digital experience to connect children directly with marine places (even virtually).
- **Active stewardship:**
 - Organize a mini clean-up or citizen science activity; highlight the power of “small actions, big difference.”
- **Empower expression:**
 - Creative projects (“message to the sea”) let children articulate their hopes and solutions.
- **Invite feedback:**
 - Use group discussions, drawing, and reflection to strengthen learning and confidence.



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Tips and Tricks for Success

- **Flexibility is key:**
 - Be ready to adapt timing, activities, or groupings based on attention span and energy.
- **Keep it playful and age-appropriate:**
 - Prioritize fun – short games, challenges, role-play, and movement.
- **Connect to children’s lives:**
 - Use local examples: “What is happening in *our* sea/river/lake?”
- **Celebrate achievements:**
 - Award certificates, showcase their creations, and encourage sharing with families and communities.
- **Continuous improvement:**
 - Collect feedback – what did children love, what sparked their curiosity, what would they change?

Inviting Participation

- **Promote widely:**
 - Use flyers, school newsletters, and social media to invite schools, parents, and local groups.
 - Highlight the hands-on, fun, and empowering nature of the programme.
- **Showcase impact:**
 - Share photos (with consent), children’s artwork, and “messages to the sea” to inspire others.



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Sample Implementation Checklist

Preparation	During Sessions	After Sessions
Prepare materials & schedule	Welcome and icebreakers	Gather feedback
Recruit and brief facilitators	Encourage questions & dialogue	Celebrate achievements
Confirm location and permissions	Document activities	Share creations/publicize
Arrange guest experts or speakers	Ensure safety & engagement	Evaluate & report
Announce programme & enrolments	Adapt activities as needed	Plan next sessions

Final Words

Kids Think (of) Blue is more than a programme – it's an invitation for children to become tomorrow's ocean protectors. If you're implementing it, you're empowering young voices, inspiring curiosity, and contributing to a healthier blue planet. Remember to always Think Blue!



“HOW TO?” ON IMPLEMENTING “SEA-TIZEN SCIENCE”

*Guidelines for Implementing the "The Sea-tizen Diver Training Programme "
Capacity Building Training Programme*

Overview

The **Sea-tizen Diver Training Capacity Building Programme** is a modular capacity building scheme designed to enable volunteer divers and citizen scientists to contribute high-quality data for monitoring and safeguarding Marine Protected Areas (MAPAs). This guideline provides practical steps, tips, and best practices for facilitators—dive centres, NGOs, scientists, MPA managers, and community leaders—ensuring impactful engagement, scientific rigor, and long-term stewardship.

Why Run This Programme?

- **Enables public participation** in real marine science and conservation.
- **Empowers local and visiting divers** to be active contributors to marine knowledge
- **Fosters local stewardship** and ownership of marine environments.
- **Improves data collection** for management and restoration of M(A)Pas and ensures data reliability for management of MAPAs through hands-on, certified citizen science protocols.
- **Strengthens local networks**, enhances skills, and can open new economic opportunities for the diving sector.



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When and Where?

Best Timing:

- Schedule outside the main tourist/high workload periods for dive professionals.
- Pair with local marine festivals, World Oceans Day, or MPA awareness campaigns.
- Run as intensive workshops or over several days/weekends.

Ideal Venues:

- Local dive centres, marine science institutions, community halls for theory.
- Adjacent beaches, MAPA sites, or from boats for practical fieldwork.
- Ensure proximity to targeted monitoring habitats; adapt for weather and sea conditions.

Getting Started

Preparation

- **Identify Partners:**
 - Dive centres, scientific divers, local NGOs, MPA managers, tourism operators.
- **Recruit Participants:**
 - Prioritize local divers and snorkelers, but include occasional visitors, students
 - Ensure participant diversity (gender, age, experience, stakeholder background).
- **Prepare Materials:**
 - Protocols (digital/print), underwater slates, species ID guides, checklist, data sheets.
 - Arrange for visual aids: slides, infographics, videos, reference specimens.
- **Plan Logistics:**
 - Confirm access to equipment, boats, permits.





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- Prepare alternative plans in case of poor weather.



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Implementation Guidelines

1. Structure Programme Modules

Introductory Session

- Overview of MAPA and ecosystem services; social, ecological, and economic value of marine environments.
- Introduce concept and impact of citizen science in marine conservation.
- Tips: Use local examples, accessible infographics, and videos to set the context.

Module	Core Focus	Implementation Tips
Reef Check Mediterranean Protocol	Underwater monitoring of indicator taxa; data upload and certification as EcoDivers	Practice ID on land, hands-on slate use, buddy up with experienced diver.
Mass Mortality Monitoring (MPA Engage)	Detecting and recording mortality events in benthic species	Use underwater imagery for dry runs; reinforce data consistency, clear protocol steps.
Fish Visual Census of CC Indicators	Monitoring fish community shifts due to climate change	Distinguish natives/exotics with visuals, emphasize climate relevance.
<i>Pinna nobilis</i> Assessment	Rapid health status review for endemic pen shell	Teach clear differentiation with <i>Pinna rudis</i> , address conservation urgency.
Nudibranchs & Sea Slugs (iNaturalist)	Photographic species survey via iNaturalist	Practice underwater photo techniques; cover data/metadata requirements.

- *Not all modules may be appropriate for every MAPA – select based on local habitats and community needs.*



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2. Session Delivery

- **Start each session** with an introduction: “Why does this monitoring matter to you / the sea?”
- **Alternate methods:**
 - Start with interactive presentations, move quickly to application (dry runs, simulations), then field dives/snorkel.
 - Use theory indoors; practical outdoors/in the water.
 - Allow for both SCUBA and snorkel options where protocols permit.
- **Break sessions** into short, interactive segments – mix lectures, group discussion, hands-on “dry” exercises, and diving/field immersion.
- **Monitor safety:** Ensure all participants are briefed on safety protocols before field dives.

3. Training & Quality Assurance

- **Focus on skills:**
 - Identification of indicator species (pictures, real-life specimens, games).
 - How to use monitoring slates, fill in protocol sheets, upload data.
 - Underwater communication, buddy checks, and safe data gathering.
- **Practice dry runs:**
 - On-land mock-ups with slates, simulated data, quiz games for protocol mastery.
- **Follow-up feedback:**
 - After each session, do quick knowledge and confidence checks.



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Evaluation & Reflection

- **Pre- and post-training questionnaires:** Assess knowledge, attitudes, behaviours.
- **Facilitate group reflection:** Run a roundtable: “What did you discover/find challenging?”
- **Review and verify data:** Check data entries together for quality assurance before uploading.
- **Encourage suggestions:** Collect ideas for session improvements, future protocols or training

Tips & Tricks for Success

- **Foster community spirit:** Hold welcome and wrap-up socials; certificate ceremonies.
- **Share responsibility:** Assign roles (e.g., data manager, underwater photographer).
- **Celebrate achievements:** Publicly recognize new citizen scientists; highlight best photos.
- **Encourage peer learning and storytelling:** Invite more experienced divers to mentor others.
- **Maintain engagement:** Set up way to share updates, sightings, and future opportunities
- **Link to broader impact:** Show how data feeds into larger projects (Reef Check, Observadores del Mar, iNaturalist, etc.).

Inviting Participation

- Reach out through dive centres, marine NGOs, citizen groups, and social media.
- Stress that no prior citizen science experience is required – passion and curiosity matter most.
- Highlight immediate value for participants: new skills, community, adventure, and real-world impact.



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Sample Implementation Checklist

Phase	Task	Notes/Best Practices
Preparation	Identify partners, gather materials, recruit	Ensure all documents translated, protocols ready
Pre-assessment	Administer initial questionnaire	Clarify goals and expectations
Indoor Session	Deliver theory, show visuals, run dry	Adapt for group size, prior knowledge
Field/Waterwork	Supervise protocol practice dives/snorkels	Brief on safety and buddy checks
Data Handling	Practice filling, checking, and uploading data	Assign responsibility for data management
Post-assessment	Conduct feedback, group Q&A	Use roundtable for review
Follow-up	Encourage “Sea-tizen” network-building, schedule next dives	Distribute certificates, share photos/data summaries



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Final Words

The Citizen Science Capacity Building Programme is an opportunity to unite passionate people in making a genuine difference for the ocean. By supporting volunteers with science-based training, hands-on experience, and a network of peers, you are building a community of informed, empowered marine stewards whose efforts will echo far beyond the MAPAs. Dive in, nurture curiosity, and watch local action ripple into basin-wide impact!



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