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MareSkill

INTERREG ITALY-CROATIA
Programme 2021 – 2027

Smart and innovative blue skills for competitive blue economy MareSkill

D.2.2.2. Template for the certificate

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Project identification

Project ID: ITHR0200456

Name of the lead partner organization: Veleučilište u Šibeniku

Name of the lead partner organization in English: Polytechnic of Šibenik

Project title: Smart and Innovative Blue Skills for Competitive Blue Economy

Project acronym: MareSkill

Programme priority: Sustainable growth in the Blue Economy

Specific objective 1.2.: Developing skills for smart specialization, industrial transition and entrepreneurship

Project duration in months: 30

Work package: WP2 Implementation of pilot courses

Activity title: Activity 2.2 Implementation of pilot courses in blue skill education

Delivery period: Period 4, 19 - 24

Activity description: Certifications will be provided to participants who complete the course and will be issued by the organization delivering the course. In order to have unified certification, in cooperation with stakeholders from creative industries, we will create a template for it.

Partner responsible: ARTI

Dissemination level: Public

Status: Final

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Contents

1. Introduction

The MareSkill project, run within the Interreg Italy–Croatia Programme 2021–2027, aims to enhance the development of skills needed for sustainable growth in the Blue Economy. The project bridges the gap between labor market demands and current competencies by creating innovative educational programs focused on key sectors such as aquaculture, nautical tourism, maritime technologies, environmental protection, and innovation management.

A key part of the project is developing pilot education programs that give participants practical knowledge, industry-specific skills, and interdisciplinary abilities aligned with current industry demands. These programs are designed as micro-credentials, allowing learners to gain targeted skills through flexible, modular learning formats. The courses adhere to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) [1] and feature clearly defined learning outcomes, assessment methods, and workload expressed through ECVET/ECTS credits, in line with European standards that support transparency and comparability of qualifications.

To promote recognition and transparency of acquired skills, the MareSkill project introduces a digital certification system based on the Open Badge standard. Digital credentials allow participants to showcase their achievements in a verifiable and shareable format that can be included in professional profiles, digital portfolios, and job applications. This approach aligns with the European Commission Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability [2].

To achieve this, the project consortium adopted the Pearson Credly platform [3], which allows for issuing, managing, and verifying digital credentials. Participants who complete the MareSkill pilot courses receive a digital Open Badge [4] issued through this platform.

This document outlines the template and structure of the digital certificates created within the MareSkill project. It describes the process used to issue Open Badges for the seven micro-credentials developed. It also provides an overview of the badges issued and explains how the credentials can be accessed and verified.

2. Digital Certification Approach

The MareSkill project adopts a digital method for certification by issuing credentials as Open Badges. This reflects current European trends in lifelong learning and the increasing use of micro-credentials as flexible tools for recognizing skills gained through short training programs.

Digital credentials offer a transparent and portable way to recognize learning achievements. They allow learners to showcase their skills to employers, educational institutions, and other stakeholders while enabling the transfer of skills across sectors and countries.

Unlike traditional certificates, digital credentials can be verified online and shared across digital platforms, increasing their visibility and reliability in professional environments.

2.1 Open Badge Standard

The Open Badge standard is a globally recognized framework for issuing digital credentials. Originally developed by the Mozilla Foundation [5], the standard allows organizations to issue verifiable digital badges that include embedded metadata describing the learning achievement.

The metadata embedded in each badge contains important information about the credential, such as the issuing organization, the requirements to earn the badge, and the data needed for verification. This helps ensure that the credential stays transparent and traceable, even when shared across different digital platforms.

Open Badges thus serve as a dependable way to document competencies gained through micro-credentials and other types of short educational programs.

2.2 Use of the Pearson Credly Platform

To oversee the digital credentialing process, the MareSkill project utilizes the Pearson Credly platform, a well-known system for issuing and managing Open Badges.

The platform allows project partners to issue digital credentials with verifiable metadata, while badge recipients can view and manage their achievements through a personal dashboard. Participants who complete the MareSkill micro-credential programs receive their badges through this platform.

Once issued, the credentials can be shared or displayed in various ways, including professional networking platforms (e.g., LinkedIn), digital CVs and professional portfolios (e.g., Europass), personal websites, or professional profiles.

Each badge is linked to a permanent verification URL, enabling employers and other stakeholders to validate the authenticity and details of the credential.

3. Certificate Template and Structure

To ensure transparency and consistency in the recognition of learning achievements, the MareSkill project developed a standardised structure for digital certificates issued as Open Badges. The certificate template defines the key information presented in each digital credential. It ensures that all badges issued within the project follow a uniform format regardless of the issuing partner or specific course.

The digital certificates are issued through the Pearson Credly platform, where each credential is represented by a visual badge accompanied by structured metadata describing the learning achievement. This structure allows the credential to be both visually recognisable and digitally verifiable.

Each MareSkill digital certificate includes a set of core elements that provide information about the completed micro-credential programme, the competencies acquired by the participant, and the standards to which the programme is aligned.

The digital certificate typically contains the following information, as described in Table 1. In addition to the textual information, each credential is visually represented through a digital badge image, which enables quick identification of the course or competency area.

The combination of visual representation and structured metadata ensures that the issued credentials clearly communicate the competencies acquired within the MareSkill educational programmes while allowing external stakeholders to verify the authenticity and scope of the learning achievement.

Table 1. Key Elements of the MareSkill Digital Certificate

Element	Description
Credential Title	Name of the micro-credential or training programme
Issuing Organisation	The institution responsible for issuing the credential
Project Reference	Reference to the MareSkill project within the Interreg Italy–Croatia Programme
Learning Level	Level of the badge (e.g., Foundational)
Description	Short description of the course and the competencies gained.
Skills	List of key competencies developed during the training
Earning Criteria	Requirements participants must fulfil to obtain the badge.
Qualification Level	Alignment with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)
Credit Allocation	Number of ECVET/ECTS credits associated with the course
Standards	Reference to relevant European education frameworks
Verification	Permanent digital link allowing verification of the credential

4. Overview of MareSkill Digital Certificates

Within the MareSkill project, seven micro-credential programs were created to meet key skill needs across various Blue Economy sectors. Each program concentrates on a specific thematic area and was developed collaboratively by project partners.

The following sections showcase the digital certificates linked to the developed programs, including a brief overview of the course and the main skills gained by participants.

4.1. Sustainability and Digitalization in the Blue Economy

Badge picture

Issuing organisation

University of Trieste, Šibenik University of Applied Sciences

Course level

EQF Level 5

3 ECVET / ECTS credits

Project reference

Interreg VI-A Italy–Croatia Programme, MareSkill project (ITHR0200456)

Description

The Sustainability and Digitalization in the Blue Economy micro-credential focuses on the application of digital technologies and sustainable practices in maritime and coastal sectors. The programme was developed within the MareSkill project by the University of Trieste.

Participants acquire interdisciplinary knowledge related to digital environmental monitoring, sustainable maritime transport, and innovation in blue economy sectors. The course combines

theoretical lectures with data analysis, case studies, field visits, and practical assignments that support the development of smart and environmentally responsible solutions.

Skills

- Sustainability and corporate sustainability practices
- Data analysis and data analytics
- Innovation and digital transformation
- Practical experience through field activities and testing
- Case study analysis and problem solving
- Sustainable transport and reliable transport systems
- Transport industry and transport services management
- Field service and field testing methods
- Visitor management and operational coordination

Earning criteria

The badge is awarded to participants who complete the micro-credential programme and demonstrate the required learning outcomes through guided learning activities, case studies, practical exercises, and independent assignments.

Standards

The programme is aligned with:

European Qualifications Framework (EQF) – Level 5

European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)

4.2. Quality Aquaculture – Management and Sustainable Practices

Badge picture

Issuing organisation

Šibenik University of Applied Sciences

Course level

EQF Level 5

2 ECVET / ECTS credits

Project reference

Interreg VI-A Italy–Croatia Programme, MareSkill project (ITHR0200456)

Description

The Quality Aquaculture – Management and Sustainable Practices micro-credential focuses on sustainable aquaculture production, environmental protection, and innovation in aquaculture systems. The programme was developed within the MareSkill project by the University of Bari "Aldo Moro" in cooperation with the Regional Agency for Technology and Innovation (ARTI, Puglia).

Participants gain knowledge and practical skills related to sustainable aquaculture management, environmental responsibility, and the application of innovative technologies in aquaculture

production. The programme combines hybrid learning methods, including guided lectures, case studies, simulations, and practical activities focused on real-world aquaculture challenges.

Skills

- Sustainable aquaculture management
- Environmental responsibility and bioremediation
- Application of IoT and AI technologies in aquaculture
- Quality certification and industry collaboration
- Project design and funding in the Blue Economy

Earning criteria

The badge is awarded to participants who complete the micro-credential programme and demonstrate the required learning outcomes through guided learning activities, case studies, practical exercises, and independent assignments.

Standards

The programme is aligned with:

European Qualifications Framework (EQF) – Level 5

European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)

4.3. Sustainable Practices in Nautical Tourism with Emphasis on Skippers and Environmental Protection

Badge picture

Issuing organisation

University of Zadar, Šibenik University of Applied Sciences

Course level

EQF Level 5

4 ECVET / ECTS credits

Project reference

Interreg VI-A Italy–Croatia Programme, MareSkill project (ITHR0200456)

Description

The Sustainable Practices in Nautical Tourism with Emphasis on Skippers and Environmental Protection micro-credential focuses on sustainable development in nautical tourism and the role of skippers in promoting environmentally responsible maritime activities. The programme was developed within the MareSkill project by the University of Zadar, Maritime Department.

Participants acquire applied knowledge related to sustainable nautical tourism management, environmental protection, and skipper education. The programme combines hybrid learning methods, including lectures, simulation-based learning, and field visits, with a focus on practical understanding of sustainability challenges and solutions in the blue economy.

Skills

- Blue Economy concepts and sustainable maritime development
- Environmental protection and environmental impact assessment
- Sustainable development in nautical tourism
- Skipper education and certification
- Simulation-based learning and practical training
- Nautical tourism management and environmental responsibility

Earning criteria

The badge is awarded to participants who complete the micro-credential programme and demonstrate the required learning outcomes through guided learning activities, case studies, practical exercises, and independent assignments.

Standards

The programme is aligned with:

European Qualifications Framework (EQF) – Level 5

European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)

4.4. Blue Horizon Accelerator for Next-Gen Economies

Badge picture

Issuing organisation

Šibenik University of Applied Sciences

Course level

EQF Level 5

2 ECVET / ECTS credits

Project reference

Interreg VI-A Italy–Croatia Programme, MareSkill project (ITHR0200456)

Description

The Blue Horizon Accelerator for Next-Gen Economies micro-credential emphasizes entrepreneurship, innovation management, and access to finance within the Blue Economy. The program was created as part of the MareSkill project by Fondazione Fenice NGO & VET.

Participants acquire practical knowledge in business development, startup acceleration, and strategic planning within emerging blue economy sectors. The program combines guided learning,

simulations, and case studies to help develop innovative, investment-ready business ideas aligned with European innovation and funding frameworks.

Skills

- Entrepreneurship and business development
- Innovation management and technology transfer
- Strategic planning and project management
- Access to finance and EU funding opportunities
- Startup acceleration and investor readiness
- Sustainability in business development

Earning criteria

The badge is awarded to participants who complete the micro-credential programme and demonstrate the required learning outcomes through guided learning activities, case studies, practical exercises, and independent assignments.

Standards

The programme is aligned with:

European Qualifications Framework (EQF) – Level 5

European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)

4.5. Essentials of Technology Transfer and Commercialization

Badge picture

Issuing organisation

University of Rijeka, Šibenik University of Applied Sciences

Course level

EQF Level 5

2 ECVET / ECTS credits

Project reference

Interreg VI-A Italy–Croatia Programme, MareSkill project (ITHR0200456)

Description

The Essentials of Technology Transfer and Commercialization micro-credential concentrates on converting research findings and innovative technologies into market-ready solutions within Blue Economy sectors. The program was created as part of the MareSkill project by the University of Rijeka, Faculty of Biotechnology and Drug Development.

Participants acquire practical knowledge in technology transfer, intellectual property management, innovation valorization, and commercialization strategies. The program combines guided learning,

independent tasks, and a capstone project designed to enhance innovation capacity and promote sustainable growth in blue economy industries.

Skills

- Technology transfer and commercialization strategies
- Intellectual property rights (IPR) management
- Technology assessment and valuation methods
- Innovation management in blue economy sectors
- Market entry and commercialization planning
- Sustainability and innovation valorisation

Earning criteria

The badge is awarded to participants who complete the micro-credential programme and demonstrate the required learning outcomes through guided learning activities, case studies, practical exercises, and independent assignments.

Standards

The programme is aligned with:

European Qualifications Framework (EQF) – Level 5

European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)

4.6. Sustainable Environmental Protection in Coastal and Marine Areas

Badge picture

Issuing organisation

Šibenik University of Applied Sciences

OGS – National Institute of Oceanography and Applied Geophysics

Course level

EQF Level 5

3 ECVET / ECTS credits

Project reference

Interreg VI-A Italy–Croatia Programme, MareSkill project (ITHR0200456)

Description

The Sustainable Environmental Protection in Coastal and Marine Areas micro-credential focuses on developing knowledge and practical skills for monitoring and protecting marine and coastal ecosystems. The programme was developed within the Interreg VI-A Italy–Croatia project MareSkill by Šibenik University of Applied Sciences and OGS – National Institute of Oceanography and Applied Geophysics.

Participants gain competencies related to marine ecosystem monitoring, environmental legislation, field sampling methods, and ecosystem assessment. The programme combines theoretical instruction with practical learning through research activities, fieldwork, and collaborative group tasks, supporting sustainable environmental governance and responsible management of coastal and marine areas.

Skills

- Marine ecosystem monitoring and assessment
- Environmental protection and sustainability principles
- Environmental legislation and governance
- Field sampling and survey techniques
- Data collection and field research methods
- Ecosystem analysis and environmental reporting

Earning criteria

The badge is awarded to participants who complete the micro-credential programme and demonstrate the required learning outcomes through guided learning activities, case studies, practical exercises, and independent assignments.

Standards

The programme is aligned with:

European Qualifications Framework (EQF) – Level 5

European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)

4.7. Digital and Circular Transformation in the Blue Economy

Badge picture

Issuing organisation

Šibenik University of Applied Sciences

Croatian Chamber of Economy (CCE)

Course level

EQF Level 5

4 ECVET / ECTS credits

Project reference

Interreg VI-A Italy–Croatia Programme, MareSkill project (ITHR0200456)

Description

The Digital and Circular Transformation in the Blue Economy micro-credential focuses on developing knowledge and practical skills related to the application of digital technologies and circular economy principles in blue economy sectors. The programme was developed within the Interreg VI-A Italy–Croatia project MareSkill by the Croatian Chamber of Economy (CCE).

Participants gain competencies in digital transformation processes, innovation management, and sustainable resource use in marine-related industries. The programme combines theoretical learning with practical activities, including workshops, case studies, group projects, and fieldwork. Special emphasis is placed on emerging technologies such as Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and smart monitoring systems for sustainable marine and coastal management.

Skills

- Digital transformation in blue economy sectors
- Circular economy principles and sustainable resource management
- Application of IoT, AI, and blockchain technologies
- Innovation and digital literacy in marine industries
- Case study analysis and problem solving
- Presentation and communication of digital solutions

Earning criteria

The badge is awarded to participants who complete the micro-credential programme and demonstrate the required learning outcomes through guided learning activities, case studies, practical exercises, and independent assignments.

Standards

The programme is aligned with:

European Qualifications Framework (EQF) – Level 5

European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)

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