



INTERREG ITALY-CROATIA  
Programme 2021 – 2027

# Smart and innovative blue skills for competitive blue economy MareSkill

D.2.3.1. Recommendations for improvement



[www.italy-croatia.eu/web/mareskill](http://www.italy-croatia.eu/web/mareskill)



## 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 2.3 Final pilot courses based on the feedback of target audience

Delivery period: Period 4, 19 - 24

Activity description: Gathering feedback from participants and stakeholders involved in the program is essential. This will be accomplished through a survey asking participants about their experiences and perceptions of the program's effectiveness. Based on the feedback received, recommendations for improvements can be made to enhance the program's effectiveness and ensure it meets the target audience's needs. These recommendations may include modifications to the program content, changes in the delivery method, or adjustments to the assessment process. Responsible partners are UNIRI and FF. After understanding the actual needs, the implementation of pilot courses should consider educational methods as a final step, which involves setting clear program topics and objectives. Evaluation of each step is also planned, along with suggestions for improvements to ensure the pilot courses are as effective as possible after the project ends.

Partner responsible: OGS

Dissemination level: Public

Status: Final





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## Abstract

This document presents the evaluation results and improvement suggestions for the MareSkill pilot micro-credential courses implemented under WP2. The assessment combined quantitative and qualitative feedback from participants in Croatia and Italy, confirming high satisfaction levels and strong relevance to Blue Economy skills development. The findings highlight the particular value of hands-on learning, networking, and cross-border teamwork. Based on the evaluation, practical implementation recommendations are proposed to enhance hands-on components, structured interactions, and post-course engagement. The validated and refined pilot model provides a solid foundation for ongoing use, integration within the Knowledge Hub (WP3), and potential replication within the Programme area.



## 1. Introduction

The Blue Economy is experiencing a major shift driven by sustainability needs, digital changes, new regulations, and rising innovation in maritime industries. In such a fast-changing environment, traditional education models often can't keep up with emerging skill gaps. There is an increasing demand for flexible, sector-specific educational methods that can support both upskilling and reskilling of students and professionals working in the marine and coastal sectors.

Within Work Package 2 of the MareSkill project, seven micro-credential programs were created to address identified skill gaps in key Blue Economy areas. Five of these programs were then tested in Croatia and Italy, offering a chance to validate new educational methods in real learning settings that combined academic expertise, industry involvement, and cross-border collaboration.

In line with the commitments outlined in the project application, a systematic evaluation was conducted during the pilot phase. Feedback was gathered from participants and relevant stakeholders through structured surveys designed to assess their overall experience in the program, the perceived effectiveness of the educational approach, the relevance of the content to their professional needs, and the quality of delivery and learning materials. This evaluation process was intended not just as a validation exercise but as a tool for ongoing improvement and long-term sustainability of the developed curricula.

The purpose of this deliverable is to translate the findings of the pilot evaluation into clear, actionable recommendations for improvement. These suggestions focus on refining program content, adjusting delivery methods, and enhancing assessment processes to ensure that the micro-credential programs stay responsive to sector needs and remain effective beyond the project's duration.

The development of these recommendations was supported by ensuring consistent analysis and objective interpretation of pilot results. Through this structured approach, the document aims to provide practical guidance for educators and training providers seeking to implement or improve blue skills education within maritime innovation ecosystems.



## 2. Evaluation of Pilot Courses

The evaluation of the pilot courses was conducted to measure the overall effectiveness of the new educational methods and to find areas for further improvement. The assessment combined quantitative and qualitative data collected through structured participant surveys. This mixed method allowed for both measurable validation of program quality and a deeper understanding of participants' experiences and suggestions.

### 2.1. Quantitative Findings

Feedback was gathered through a structured evaluation survey distributed to all pilot participants. The questionnaire evaluated various aspects of the program quality using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 represented the lowest level of satisfaction ("Very dissatisfied"), 2 indicated "Dissatisfied," 3 corresponded to "Neutral," 4 to "Satisfied," and 5 represented the highest level of satisfaction ("Very satisfied").

The survey asked about the following key areas: overall satisfaction with the training program, relevance of the content to participants' interests and professional needs, quality of learning materials, clarity and effectiveness of the trainers, usefulness of the knowledge gained for studies or professional growth, and the organization and delivery of the training.

Feedback from 49 respondents shows a very high level of satisfaction across all examined areas. The overall satisfaction score averaged 4.49, with organisation and delivery rated equally high at 4.49. Trainers' clarity and effectiveness received an average rating of 4.43, while the quality of learning materials was rated at 4.41. Participants rated the relevance of the content with an average of 4.37, and the perceived usefulness of the knowledge gained reached 4.31.

All evaluated dimensions scored well above the "Satisfied" threshold (4.0), showing strong validation of the pilot courses. The results confirm that the developed educational methodology was well received and that the micro-credential approach effectively met the expectations and needs of the target groups.



## 2.2. Qualitative Findings

Along with the numerical ratings, participants were asked to give more detailed feedback through open-ended questions. These questions prompted them to describe what they liked most about the training, which aspects they found especially valuable, and how they would suggest improving future versions of the program. This enabled participants to reflect openly on their overall experience and provide specific recommendations.

The screenshot shows a mobile survey form on a teal background. At the top, it displays the time 13:37 and a camera icon. Below this is a header with the Interreg logo, the European Union flag, and the text 'Co-funded by the European Union', followed by 'Italy - Croatia' and the MareSkill logo. The main title of the survey is 'Sustainable Practices in Nautical Tourism'. A message follows: 'Dear Participant, Thank you for participating in the MareSkill training. Your feedback is very valuable and will help us enhance the quality of future sessions. Please rate each aspect on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) in response to the following questions. The survey is anonymous and will take only a few minutes to complete. Thank you for your time and valuable input!'. Below the message, a note states: 'When you submit this form, it will not automatically collect your details like name and email address unless you provide it yourself.' A section marked with an asterisk as 'Required' contains the question: '1. Overall satisfaction with the training program \*'. This question has five radio button options: 'Very dissatisfied', 'Dissatisfied', 'Neutral', 'Satisfied', and 'Very satisfied'. At the bottom of the form, a browser address bar shows 'forms.cloud.microsoft' and a mobile navigation bar with back, forward, share, bookmark, and home icons.



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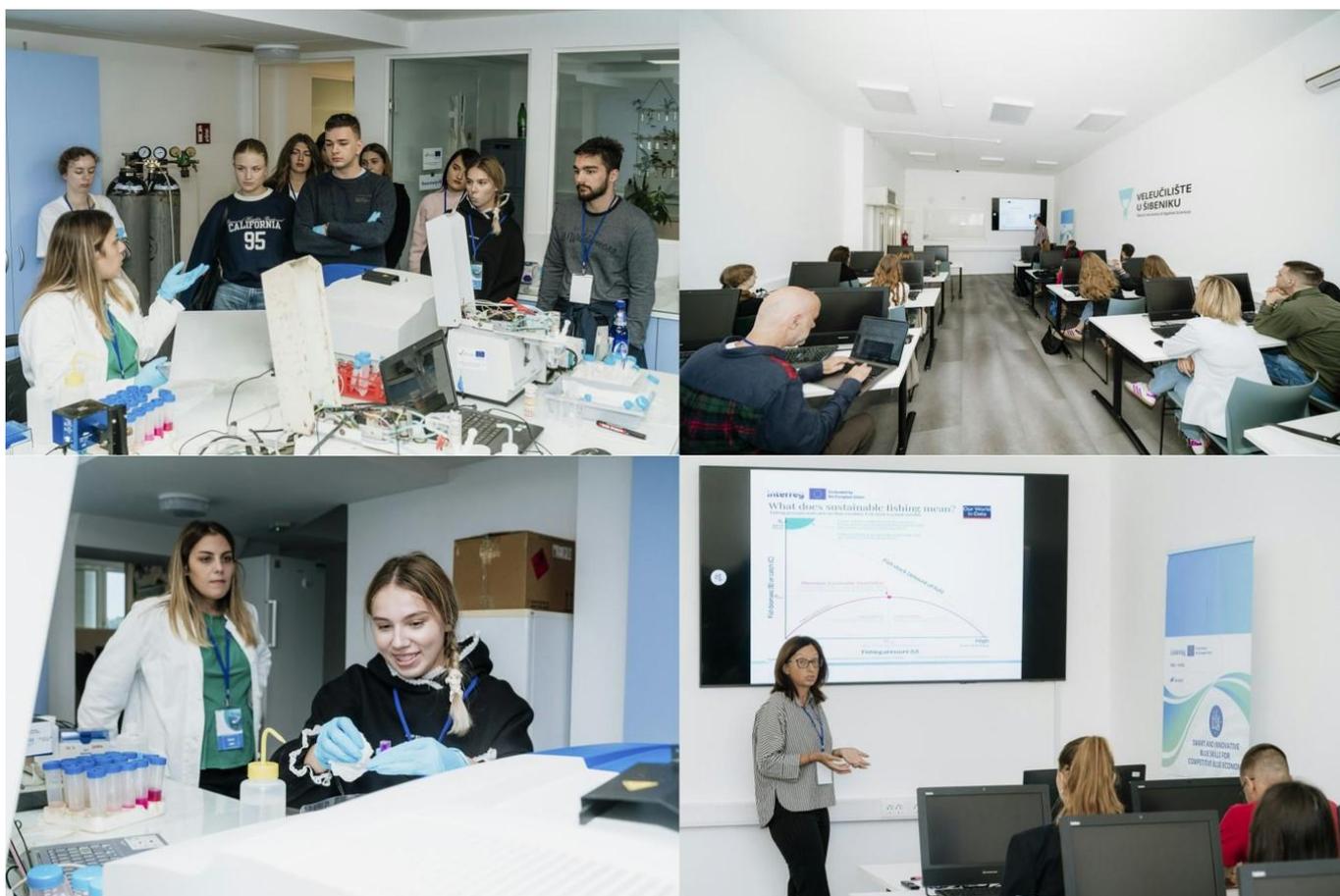
**DO YOU WORK IN NAUTICAL TOURISM?**

Many participants highlighted the strong practical focus of the programs. Company and production site visits were often noted as especially valuable because they offered direct insight into real working environments within Blue Economy sectors. Practical, case-based learning activities were also highly valued, as they helped participants link theory with real-world challenges. Mentoring sessions and interactions with experts were seen as important for professional development. Interdisciplinary teamwork and cross-border cooperation were also emphasized as meaningful experiences that broadened perspectives and promoted knowledge exchange.



At the same time, participants provided constructive suggestions. Several respondents expressed the need for more time dedicated to hands-on activities to improve their understanding and skills. Others recommended expanding networking opportunities to encourage more interaction among participants and stakeholders. Some participants would have liked more time to explore certain topics in greater depth, while others suggested introducing follow-up activities after the course to promote ongoing learning and application of knowledge.

Overall, the qualitative feedback confirms the high practical relevance of the pilot courses while highlighting clear and achievable areas for improvement.



### 3. Identified Areas for Further Enhancement

The pilot courses received very positive evaluations. However, participant feedback also pointed out several areas where the programs could be improved. These suggestions do not indicate flaws in the overall concept but highlight opportunities to enhance the learning experience and boost long-term impact.

#### 3.1. Strengthening Practical Components

Participants consistently emphasized practical activities as the highlight of the programs. Company visits, field-based learning, case studies, and interactive workshops were often noted as especially valuable. These activities helped participants better understand how theoretical knowledge relates to real work environments in Blue Economy sectors.



Simultaneously, several respondents recommended dedicating more time to these practical components. Allocating extra time for discussions, hands-on exercises, and reflection would help



participants absorb the material better and apply it more confidently in their professional settings. Future course editions might consider slightly reallocating time to emphasize practical and interactive sessions.

### 3.2. Expanding Networking and Interaction Opportunities

Interaction among participants and engagement with experts were also seen as key parts of the learning experience. Cross-border cooperation and interdisciplinary teamwork were particularly valued, as they let participants share different perspectives and experiences.

Some participants suggested offering more structured opportunities for networking. This might include dedicated discussion sessions, informal exchanges, or facilitated networking events. Enhancing this aspect could promote long-term collaboration and professional relationships within the Blue Economy community.

### 3.3. Supporting Continued Engagement After Course Completion

Several participants showed interest in staying in touch after the course finished. They recommended that follow-up communication or extra activities could help them keep applying the knowledge and skills they learned during the training.

Implementing a simple follow-up system, such as periodic updates, short impact surveys, or networking platforms, can help reinforce learning results and offer insights into how participants apply their skills in real life.



OVERVIEW

# NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2025

**MareSkill at the Green Eye Festival**

In January 2025, the MareSkill project was proudly featured at the Green Eye Festival, held in celebration of the 40th anniversary of Krka National Park. [Read more.](#)

**Conference on Marine Technologies and Blue Economy**

Held in Pula, the conference gathered MareSkill partners and stakeholders to discuss marine technologies, sustainable innovation, and spin-off developments within the blue economy. [Read more.](#)

**Quality Aquaculture Pilot Course Kick-Off**

In collaboration with ARTI Puglia and the University of Bari, the MareSkill project launched the "Quality Aquaculture" pilot course, offering 20 hours of in-depth training for students and professionals from Italy and Croatia. [Read more.](#)

**BLUESLINKS & MareSkill Focus Group**

A joint focus group session hosted in Sassari by the Bioparc and Argonauta brought together stakeholders from education, government, and marine sectors to exchange ideas, address climate challenges, and build an innovation Center Network. [Read more.](#)

**Interview Sessions Across the Partnership**

In January 2025, MareSkill partners carried out interviews with local stakeholders to map skill gaps and identify priorities for future training programs. These conversations are shaping the future of workforce development in the blue economy. [Read more.](#)

**Workshop on Designing Effective Training Programs**

Held at the University of Zadar, this two-day workshop brought together project partners to exchange best practices and develop strategies for implementing training programs using the MareSkill LMS platform. [Read more.](#)

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## Technology Transfer Workshop

Discover best practices in technology transfer and innovation management

19th March 2026	From 10:00 to 12:00	Online Event
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## 4. Implementation-Oriented Recommendations

The following recommendations directly build on the evaluation findings and aim to improve future editions of the pilot courses while remaining aligned with the broader project structure, including the activities outlined in WP3.

### 4.1. Adjust Time Allocation in Favour of Practical Work

Future course schedules should be reviewed to ensure that more time is allocated to workshops, applied case studies, and field-based learning. This might involve slightly reducing lecture segments in favor of interactive components.



Participant feedback clearly highlighted practical activities as the most valuable part of the training. Adjusting time allocation would therefore directly address identified needs without altering the overall thematic structure of the programs.



#### 4.2. Integrate Dedicated Networking Slots into the Programme Structure

Instead of depending only on informal interactions, future editions might feature dedicated time blocks for peer exchange, moderated discussions, or facilitated networking activities.

Structured networking can improve collaboration among participants and boost cross-sector knowledge sharing, which is especially vital in Blue Economy ecosystems.





### 4.3. Ensure Post-Course Engagement through the Knowledge Hub

To encourage ongoing engagement after completing the course, pilot participants should stay actively connected to the cross-border Knowledge Hub developed within WP3.

The Knowledge Hub can act as a natural platform for ongoing communication, information exchange, and networking among participants and stakeholders. Connecting pilot activities with the Knowledge Hub guarantees long-term engagement and impact without establishing additional separate follow-up structures.



## Conclusion

The pilot launch of the MareSkill micro-credential programs confirms that the developed educational approach effectively meets the needs of students and professionals in the Blue Economy sectors. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation results show high levels of participant satisfaction, strong perceived relevance of the content, and particular appreciation for practical and hands-on learning components.

The evaluation process also offered clear and constructive suggestions for further improvement. These mainly focus on increasing the time spent on practical activities, enhancing structured networking opportunities, and maintaining engagement after the course ends. The recommendations in this document aim to improve the current model without changing its proven structure and focus.

Connecting future pilot editions with the Knowledge Hub established under WP3 enables the project to further enhance long-term engagement, knowledge sharing, and professional networking among participants and stakeholders. This integrated strategy improves sustainability and makes sure that the impact of the pilot courses goes beyond their immediate deployment.

The validated and improved micro-credential model provides a strong foundation for further application and adaptation within the Programme area. Its modular design, practical focus, and cross-border cooperation framework offer significant potential for replication and transfer in other institutional or regional settings addressing Blue Economy challenges.



## References

### Project social media channels:

- MareSkill LinkedIn page:
  - <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7368954781693911041>;
  - <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7384275029146038272>;
  - <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7391558482111528960>;
  - <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7391152671459733504>;
- MareSkill Facebook page:
  - <https://www.facebook.com/mareskillinterregitalycroatia/posts/pfbid0285apUYysnbaonJnbPUT9grRKAButLeFLXV2m819ehWHuBPGaz2a2piYxcNWgfYxAI>;
  - <https://www.facebook.com/mareskillinterregitalycroatia/posts/pfbid022z4VAu2dnFr5ASneKpTEuQkT2r4eQRRvDQeRePoB96R7LK4Sy4HYsSETknBd1VgTI>;
  - <https://www.facebook.com/mareskillinterregitalycroatia/posts/pfbid02dYiow4wggw4ZRo3hA58qgVtusSegyiqDdqkKkLo6VbQ5daTYz3MDWQqBxgPoxNADGI>;
  - <https://www.facebook.com/mareskillinterregitalycroatia/videos/678524451694911/>;

### Web coverage:

- Project web:
  - <https://www.italy-croatia.eu/web/mareskill/dettaglio?articleId=26857311&groupId=7943331>;
  - <https://www.italy-croatia.eu/web/mareskill/dettaglio?articleId=27593299&groupId=7943331>;
  - <https://www.italy-croatia.eu/web/mareskill/dettaglio?articleId=27262474&groupId=7943331>;
  - <https://www.italy-croatia.eu/web/mareskill/dettaglio?articleId=27275564&groupId=7943331>;
  - <https://www.italy-croatia.eu/web/mareskill/dettaglio?articleId=27299757&groupId=7943331>;

