

UPDATE 2020 JUNE

A step up!

Update from the project coordinator, STC Group

Everyone with a SkillSea heart believes that we can and need to contribute to a brighter future for new and present maritime professionals. The entire maritime sector, including its Maritime Education and Training institutions, acknowledge the importance of safeguarding the sector's competitiveness and safety while considerable transformations in terms of digitalisation, automation and energy transition occur. Creating a strategy for future-proof skills development, on a European scale, both for the next generation maritime professionals as for the current maritime labour force, is a crucial step. And this is what we are up for!

After a first year of hard work in which many SkillSea partners did well in starting up (and completing) researches and gap analyses, strategy frameworks and

concept educational packages, the project has now entered a phase in which project results are expected. The coordination of the project in this first year was considered a challenge. This has led to a course change in coordination in which the foundation pillars of the project, such as project governance, quality management and work package coherence have been reviewed and re-assessed. This led to an action plan that will result in improved steering and smoother cooperation between partners. It is of importance to say that this was the outcome of open and genuine input from all SkillSea work package leaders as well as our social partners ETF and ECSA.

Covid-19 has affected the entire shipping industry tremendously. It has also somewhat affected our project but hasn't dwindled the commitment or resolve – rather it maybe has allowed us to 'come together' more often albeit virtually and thus helped us progress further.

3 questions to **Martin Dorsman, Secretary General, ECSA**



1. What is the role of the SkillSea Board?
I firmly believe

that the SkillSea Board is the helmsman of SkillSea, if we can refer to SkillSea as a vessel. It is based on the good cooperation between ECSA, ETF and STC; and the well-functioning social dialogue in the sector. It is here to provide guidance, recommendations and coordination amongst its partners. It sets the course by directing the project from its start-up until its closure, by providing managerial and policy know-how.

2. What are your thoughts on the first outcomes of the SkillSea project?

The first outcomes are quite promising and show the projects' dynamics, the effective synergy between the partners, as well as the huge potentials, challenges and complexity of our stakeholders. Although, there is still room for improvement and corrective actions, in order to reach our optimal results; we are confident in our ability to make suggestions and set goals that meet the evolution of the sector. The modern EU maritime professionals need to adapt to the new state of play and SkillSea is aiming to ensure that they possess key digital, green and soft management skills.

3. When we finish the SkillSea project by the end of 2022, what would be the greatest achievement for SkillSea in your opinion?

It will be the development of a sustainable skills' strategy for the shipping industry, which will ensure EU maritime professionals' competitiveness. The creation of new tools and educational packages, through the forecasting of new skills will make the sector future-proof, adaptable and more attractive to younger generations. I fully trust that SkillSea will be a great success and will create a blueprint for a strong and attractive EU shipping industry.

First outcomes: current skills needs



One of the first finished SkillSea deliverables found that more than 50% of seafarers believe that important topics are missing from the international Standards of Training, Certification & Watchkeeping (STCW) Convention and one-third consider that current training is 'overburdened with obsolete knowledge'.

Report D1.1.2 on current skills needs, executed by Work Package 1 (WP 1), analyses the gaps between current maritime training and the actual skills required at sea. Researchers surveyed more than 1,600 maritime professionals – 1,149 seafarers and 474 shore-based personnel - to get their views on the adequacy of current maritime training and education and what they consider to be the most important skills needs.

Damir Zec, a SkillSea project member who coordinated this research, noted that 'New environmental regulations for the maritime sector, as well as the impact of technology and digitalisation, are changing the skill sets required for jobs at sea and in the maritime sector ashore.' He added that 'It is clear that soft and leadership skills, together with a set of new skills, will be a must if European maritime professionals and the EU maritime industry as a whole are to retain their competitive position.'

The biggest gaps between current training and actual functional needs are with maintenance (reported by 47% of all respondents) and electrical, electronic and control engineering (40%). Importantly, around 30% of seafarers said current STCW competencies for marine engineering and controlling the operation of the ship are not adequate for onboard duties.

24% said they fell short for navigation and 20% said competencies for radiocommunications are not in line with actual onboard needs. The survey also showed that the areas where seafarers consider the most serious skill deficiencies currently lie are: subjects requiring creative thinking and problem-solving (62%); familiarity with digital technologies, including cyber-security (61%); teamwork and inter-personal relations (55%); and subjects related to maritime law, insurance and P&I coverage (54%).

The survey of 474 shore-based staff also showed concerns about STCW not addressing competences for shore-based staff training and also identified some of the skills that will be increasingly important over the next decade, including teamworking, software use, and communications. In addition, the report notes that STCW Convention makes no reference to digital skills and contains only general references to pollution prevention and 'minimal' requirements for management-level functions. It does not consider increasingly important concepts such as problem-solving, creative thinking, analysis and evaluation and does not specify competencies needed to manage increasingly sophisticated ships. The report also warns that 'an effective transfer of knowledge of shipboard operations and expertise needs to be assured if the present position of EU maritime industry is to be maintained'.

Organisation of focus groups by WP 3

Two focus groups (industry & workforce) have been planned per region in the Autumn of 2020. Region 1 includes Northern countries & Western Europe (Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, UK, Ireland, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands). Region 2: Southern Europe (Spain, Portugal, France, Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, Italy, Malta). Region 3: Eastern Europe (Romania, Estonia, Poland). The aims of the focus groups will be the assessment of the state of play and skills to enhance employability.

Further information (dates & modalities) will be announced in due course through the project website. Contingency plans will be in place to cater for any travel or group work restrictions valid at that time. More info available via: Christina Troumpetari, ctroumpetari@eef.edu.gr, Eugenides Foundation.

Future skills needs



Digitalisation and modern technologies have been rapidly changing the maritime sector in recent years. That is why European maritime professionals, both at sea and ashore, need more digital and soft skills to stay ahead of the industry.

The research report D1.1.3, written by the partners of Work Package 1 (WP 1), examined the main trends in

the shipping sector: education, technological developments such as autonomous vessels and clean energy, collaboration between clusters and digitalisation. The report shows that more training should be given in sustainability, greening and digitalisation. Future seafarers also need to develop soft skills in leadership and management. In addition, there is a need for transition programs that make the shift from working at sea to working on shore easier.

Finally, the WP 1 researchers recommend that the STCW training (the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers) be extended to include maritime law, corporate finance, autonomous shipping and other new technology-based skills.

The research report is input for other Work Packages of the SkillSea project. The full report can be found on the [SkillSea website](#).

Update from the Green Skills desk



Following from the Athens consortium meeting last January, the green skills task force has started working on this educational package. After productive deliberations, the focus will be mainly on three areas, which match the findings from Work Package 1 (WP 1). A sample of three areas where the collaborators will focus their research:

- 1) Low carbon industry:** This includes ship design, alternative fuel, such as ammonia, hydrogen, LNG, methanol, battery packs and others. The use of green technologies, alternative motive power, low sulphur systems, superior hull design will be focused within the research. Data modelling to achieve peak performance of speed/fuel

consumption will be explored within the context of weather routing systems.

- 2) Business management and climate resilience:** This includes ship energy efficiency management plans, sustainable reporting, energy costs and trading, life cycle assessment costs, transport management and risk assessment models. The study will look at methods of calculating energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions within the maritime transport industry.

- 3) Green legislation:** The study looks at environmental challenges to promote green shipping. It looks at the interplay of legislation, taxation and policy within a maritime context. The effect international and national laws within this ecosystem will be explored. EU laws governing emissions and discharges will be studied. The concept of sustainable operation of ships within this green economy will be developed.

The group expects to produce a full education package (ready to pilot) on a Learning Management System by July 2020.

Next meeting: virtual consortium meeting SkillSea, 6 July 2020

Make sure to regularly check the website: www.skillsea.eu. You can also find SkillSea on social media, make sure to follow our accounts and share the latest SkillSea news with your relevant contacts!