



## Output 1.8

# **Advisory Board and Stakeholders Group report** **A report on the Alliance's relationship with its Stakeholders and its Advisory Board**

## Introduction

Output 1.8 is one of the deliverables corresponding to WP1, specifically **Task 1.5. Establishing an Advisory Board and a Stakeholders Group**. This task is defined as follows:

An Advisory Board will be set up and its members' role, responsibilities and support will be defined. The aim is to use this external group as expert pool for a successful implementation of SEA-EU results. The SEA-EU Advisory Board preliminary consists of 6-8 independent experts, with wide recognition and proven expertise in the fields of education and research. With its broad expertise, the Advisory Board will ensure that the SEA-EU Consortium is progressing along the correct path. Final selection of Advisory Group Members will be based upon Stakeholders Group recommendations, on the first six months of the project. The Advisory Board will ensure that SEA-EU is aligned and up-to-date with the other related activities and projects internationally. The Advisory Board will convene three times during the project (physically or virtually) to provide feedback at relevant key project milestones: to select and define the scenarios (first year); to review and provide expert feedback on the project evolution (mid-term); and to validate the final project results against the original targets (end of the project).

A large (composed of around 30 external entities; at least one third of which companies) Stakeholders Group of people with a broad thematic expertise shall be invited for a general presentation of intermediate results of the project. Their opinion will be taken into account during the development of the project and the definition of the objectives. The composition of the Stakeholders Group will be a balanced sum of experts recommended by the members of the Consortium, with emphasis on attracting members from the most important research centres, associations, companies and other stakeholders conducting their activities in the Member States of the Consortium but also outside. They will be regularly informed on the project advances and will be invited to take part in the Consortium Workshops, public debates and relevant events, in which their views will be gathered so that they were able to influence the project outcomes.

In the proposal, these bodies are described as follows:

- **Advisory Board (AB):** composed of 8-12 external independent experts, with world-wide recognition and proven expertise in internationalization of education and research. Advisory board will actively follow the project throughout its duration (see task 1.5 for further details).
- **Stakeholders Group (SG):** composed of at least 30 Members of international higher education institutions, research organizations, companies and other stakeholders, of which at least 50% representing the marine/maritime sector, and at least 30% representing the private sector (see task 1.7 for details).

This report (OP1.8) aims to report on the relationship that these two bodies have had with the Alliance, as well as the information, suggestions and improvements arising from the meetings and discussions established with them.

## Stakeholders Group

### Members

Julián Blasco Moreno	Director ICMAN-CSIC
Francisco Cano	Councillor of Citizen Participation and Social Movements
Gala Dominguez	Coordination Equa
Gerardo Landaluce Calleja	President of the Algeciras Bay Port Authority
Elena Corrales	Head of the R&D at Navantia Bay of Cadiz Shipyard
François Houllier	President of IFREMER
Forough Dadkhah	City of Quimper
Celine Liret	Oceanopolis
Marie-Josée Vairon	Director
Guy MORDRET	Head of Anaximandre
Piotr Margoński	Director
Piotr Borawski	Deputy Mayor of the City of Gdańsk
Jacek Juchniewicz	President of Polish Trout Breeders Association - PTBA
Jowita Zielinkiewicz	Head of Innovation and Fund Acquisition Department
Jacek Dubicki	Managing Director
Katja Žanić, PhD	Adriatic crops
Tonči Glavina	State Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism
Gabrijela Medunić-Orlić	Executive Director
Ivan Potkrajčić	Member of the the Supervisory Board BlueSun hotels&resorts
Damir Vidošević	Sales & marketing executive, Waterman Hotels & Resorts
Mr Eugenio Busuttil	Institute of Engineering & TransportCentre for Maritime Studies
Captain David Bugeja	Chief Officer & Harbour Master
Mr. Vincent Attard	Executive Director
Mr Alex Montebello	Malta Freeport Terminals CEO
Mr George D. Mantas	Business Development Director

## Advisory Board

### Members

Laura E. Rumbley	Associate Director, Knowledge Development and Research, European Association for International Education (EAIE)
Elspeth Jones	Emerita Professor of the Internationalisation of Higher Education, Leeds Beckett University, UK.
Nadia Améziane	Vice-Director of the French Museum of Natural History
Doris Jorde	Director, Center for Professional Learning in Teacher Education, University of Oslo, Norway Professor in Science Education, University of Oslo, Norway Honorary Doctor, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
Prof. Lena Gipperth	Director Centre for Sea and Society University of Gothenburg, SWEDEN
Dr. Stephanie Kienast	Associate Professor Department of Oceanography   Dalhousie University
Jan-Gustav Strandenaes	Adviser on governance, corporate social responsibilities and UN related policies, PURE Consulting, Oslo, Norway; Adviser on governance and stakeholder engagement policies, Stakeholder Forum, London, UK; Member of the Board of the Stakeholder Forum, University of Utrecht, Netherlands
Dr. Norbert Steinhaus	Member of the board of Wissenschaftsladen Bonn
Miroslav Radman, PhD	Ph D, Professor Emeritus, Founder of the Mediterranean Institute for Life Sciences
Danica Ramljak, PhD	D.V.M., Ph.D., Senior Advisor of The World Bank
Dr. Ir. Ghada El Serafy	Specialist Advisor - Data Sciences and Mathematical Modelling
Dr Yigit Demirel	Lecturer of Naval Architecture, Ocean & Marine Engineering

## Stakeholders Group

### Specific tasks

SEA-EU sets out in its proposal the creation of this group of persons representing relevant entities in the territories of the Alliance. Specifically, the description of their role is as follows:

A large (composed of around 30 external entities; at least one third of which companies) Stakeholders Group of people with a broad thematic expertise shall be invited for a general presentation of intermediate results of the project. Their opinion will be taken into account during the development of the project and the definition of the objectives. The composition of the Stakeholders Group will be a balanced sum of experts recommended by the members of the Consortium, with emphasis on attracting members from the most important research centres, associations, companies and other stakeholders conducting their activities in the Member States of the Consortium but also outside. They will be regularly informed on the project advances and will be invited to take part in the Consortium Workshops, public debates and relevant events, in which their views will be gathered so that they were able to influence the project outcomes.

Based on this premise, the specific tasks of this group are to actively participate in group meetings, to receive and keep abreast of information shared with them regarding SEA-EU, to provide feedback, suggestions and advice, and finally, to proactively contribute to opportunities for collaboration that may arise.

It should be noted that WP5 of our project has a special impact on the Stakeholders, as they are directly involved in several sections, as can be seen below:

SEA-EU members share not just global but also some local challenges and similarities (geographically peripheral), so through the project we will **develop self-enforcing feedback mechanisms for exchange of experiences and best practices**, for connecting the local partnerships from different members of SEA-EU to form synergies and boost competitiveness. This task will entice stakeholders into a dialogue exploring the potential for a more territorially focused HE system through smart specialisation and programming and exploitation of ESI funds. To secure sustainability and management of RIS3 integration SEA-EU teaching network (developed in WP3) will also form the network of contact persons of 'quintuple helix' university nodes. All associated partners will be involved in the interdisciplinary workshops to ensure inclusion of all S3 stakeholders.

## Advisory Board

### Specific tasks

SEA-EU sets out in its proposal the creation of this group of persons representing relevant entities in the territories of the Alliance. Specifically, the description of their role is as follows:

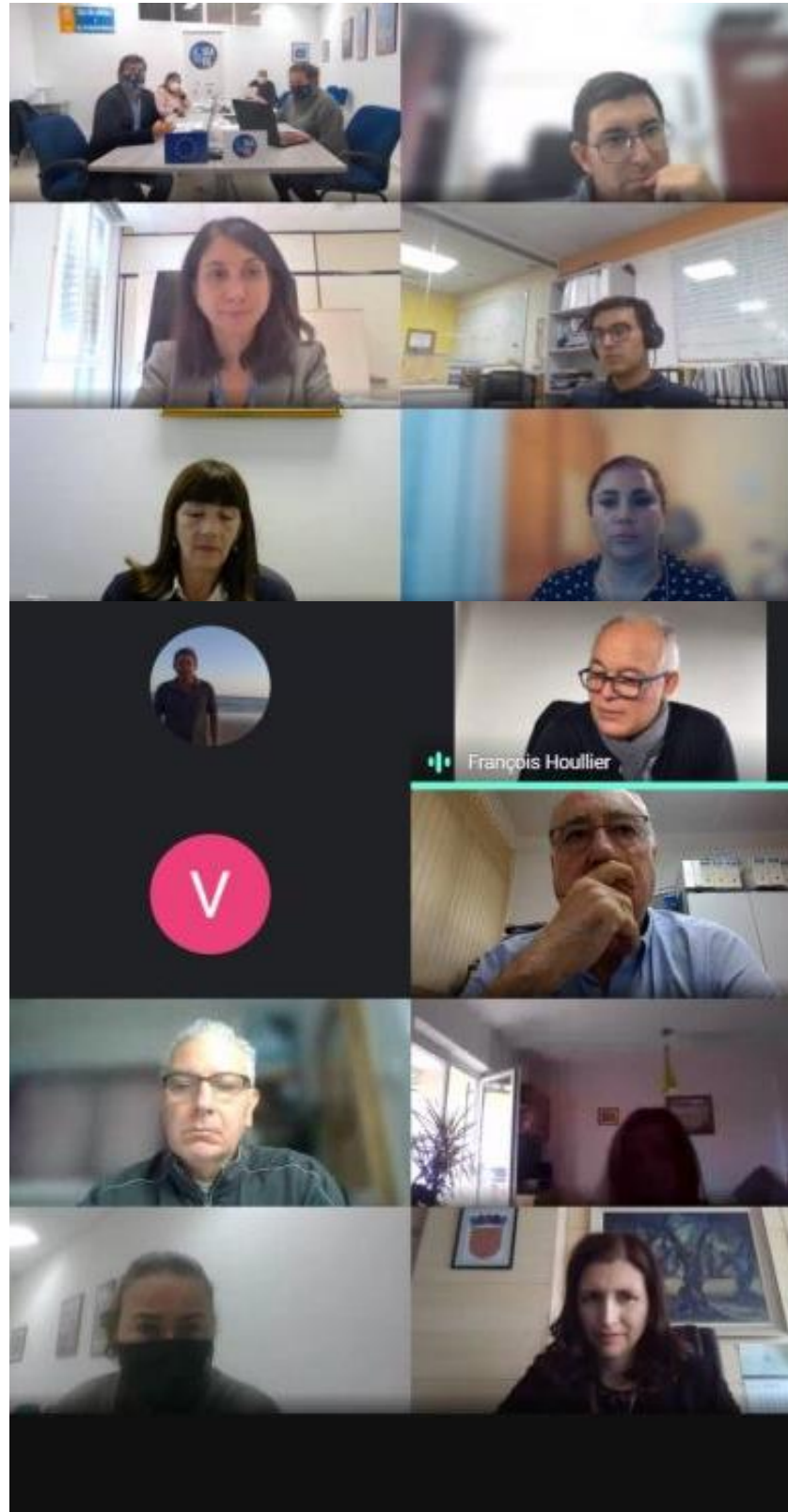
The SEA-EU Advisory Board preliminary consists of 6-8 independent experts (External independent experts, with world-wide recognition and proven expertise in internationalization of education and research). With its broad expertise, the Advisory Board will ensure that the SEA-EU Consortium is progressing along the correct path. Final selection of Advisory Group Members will be based upon Stakeholders Group recommendations, on the first six months of the project. The Advisory Board will ensure that SEA-EU is aligned and up-to-date with the other related activities and projects internationally. The Advisory Board will convene three times during the project (physically or virtually) to provide feedback at relevant key project milestones.

Based on this premise, the specific responsibility which is encountered on numerous occasions throughout the project is to contribute to identify whether the project is progressing along the correct path. This responsibility is embodied in a practical way in a task:

Feedback of the Advisory board and the Stakeholder group at the mid-term and at the end of the project will be crucial for the project evolution and will contribute to review and delineate the long-term objectives of the alliance. Their inputs will be therefore of paramount importance for sharing and disseminating our results beyond the alliance.

This feedback has been given in each of the meetings held with them, and in more depth in the preparations for the evaluation of the midterm report, as well as for the preparation of the renewal proposal (SEA-EU 2.0) and the final 3-year report.

## Stakeholders Group Meetings





## Advisory Board Meetings





## Balance and Results

This section presents the result of having identified the benefits obtained by the group's members as well as by the Alliance. What they have learned or gained from each other and what business or collaboration opportunities have arisen from the relationship over the past three years.

In addition, the barriers and obstacles that have been identified and suggestions for improvement are presented.

### Opportunities and barriers for the Stakeholders Group

Feedback has been collected from all members of the Stakeholders Group, asking different questions covering aspects of personal and professional benefits, barriers encountered in the process, opportunities arising from the collaboration and general assessment of the activities in which they have participated, such as the Dipuactiva sessions, the WP5 practices, the co-mentoring or the Blue Talks, among many others.

#### According to your opinion which have been the main outcomes/results of SEA-EU 1.0

In this section, feedback has been received from members of the Stakeholders Group. This is an overall assessment of the best results that the Alliance has delivered to society in general. The results have been assessed in terms of the Alliance as a project and based on the proposal submitted to the European Commission.

**To establish an European network from zero**

**The best outcome is the level of integration between universities to get joint degree**

**3. Bringing the right people on the table**

**1. Common understanding of topics, targets, methodology**

**2. securing cooperability**

**result in a functional and operational network of universities**

Analysing the written responses as well as the comments in the conversation during the meetings, we can conclude that there is a very positive overall assessment that the main outcome of this first period is international cooperation. Several people emphasise that the Alliance makes it easier to bring people together who might not otherwise have sat down to collaborate, and that this in turn fosters mutual understanding and knowledge for better outcomes in cooperation.

### **Do you have any recommendation to improve the functioning of this body (the Stakeholders Group)?**

The second theme of the feedback from members was to get their views on areas for improvement in the Alliance and in working with them.

Of all the responses, it is worth highlighting the unanimous opinion of not losing the real objective of generating knowledge and improvements for the academic and research life of people in the university, as well as for future generations.

**The role of the research centers should be clearly identified and improvement. To define the process to do stage in the RI**

**integrate and involve stakeholders in the WPs.  
Example:  
Océanopolis and WP 5 and 6 ->  
Sharing experiences**

**What input/collaboration may be more valuable/suitable from port authorities as stakeholder**

Following discussions and feedback from stakeholders, it is concluded that the main suggestion for improvement is greater involvement in the Alliance's daily work. Clarify the role or inputs that each member can contribute and place them in specific working groups where they can be directly involved in tasks or work packages.

Stakeholders made it clear at all times that they are enthusiastic and willing to participate more actively, for example, in the new councils that are planned for the second part of the project.

### **How could our new partners describe the personal benefits of being a member of the Stakeholders Group to their selected candidates?**

This question was posed to find out how Stakeholders Group members value membership and therefore how they would recommend new members to contact their respective candidates to participate in this group during the second phase.

**The benefits are related to be member of a very attractive and dynamic ecosystem related to marine sciences in Europe.**

**Integrate a multi-stakeholder European community (universities, ports, cities...) -> Sharing, cross-views, mutual enrichment and co-creation**

The answers in this section are closely related to what seems to be the greatest benefit stakeholders find in the Alliance and which is already mentioned as an outstanding achievement of the Alliance: cooperation.

The feedback indicates that stakeholders would try to involve other companies by referring to international collaboration with other European organisations in a dynamic ecosystem of co-creation.

## Opportunities and barriers for the Advisory Board

Feedback has been collected from all members of this group, asking different questions covering aspects of personal and professional benefits, barriers encountered in the process, opportunities arising from the collaboration and general assessment of the activities that they have been able to review and evaluate both in the meetings held with them and in the reports that have been shared with them.

The feedback to the different questions is shown below, an analysis of all the answers has been carried out in order to establish uniform assessment criteria.

### According to your opinion which have been the main outcomes/results of SEA-EU 1.0

In this section, feedback has been received from all members of the Advisory Board. This is an overall assessment of the best results that the Alliance has delivered to society in general. The results have been assessed in terms of the Alliance as a project and based on the proposal submitted to the European Commission.

**The creation of something legitimately new and valuable: the construction of the SEA-EU governance framework as well as the stakeholder network, and the momentum (so far) to animate them into**

**The establishment of a culture (or a habit) of using data as fundamental building blocks for decision-making and approaches.**

**The creation of a common platform for collaboration relating to transdisciplinary ocean related education, to which also other universities in Europe might link up to is a great achievement, particularly under the**

**The progress from SEA-EU 1.0 to the second project is phantastic. Taking the the role of co-creation, the stronger involvement of students and the inclusion of more universities is a big step forward**

Analysing the responses, we can find a generalised opinion that there are 4 main achievements of these first three years.

The creation of a governance structure, under the responsibility of WP1, to facilitate joint work and set the path towards an SEA-EU university entity. The design of subcommittees, working groups, information flows and internal communication systems that have constituted a foundation stone for building the supercampus university that SEA-EU aims to be.

The joint potential platform, one of the outcomes of WP2, has been one of the most and best valued results for the progress in collaboration that it represents. This platform offers a database of all the research groups and infrastructures of the universities, available to

establish research collaborations.

The creation of the two observatories, chosen as flagships of the Alliance, a Sustainable Blue Economy Observatory and a Migration and Human Rights Observatory.

The role given to students has been especially valued in the group of members of the Advisory Board, feedback that has come from other entities and from the European Commission since SEA-EU has created the figure of the SEA-EU Student Council and, in addition, has included student nominations in the highest decision-making bodies: the Governing Board and the Executive Committee. In addition, in recent months, communication with students has been improved, always established with a liaison person between the technical staff and the students, and it has been decided to organise a face-to-face meeting of students prior to each Governing Board, as a result of a direct request from the students.

Finally, the incorporation of 3 new partners in the second stage is very well valued and, although it is not an output as such of the project, it can be considered a successful result of the project as it is a sign of the continuity and the good results obtained.

### **Do you have any recommendation to improve the functioning of this body (the Advisory Board)?**

The second theme of the feedback from members was to get their views on areas for improvement in the Alliance and in working with them.

Of all the responses, it is worth highlighting the unanimous opinion of not losing the real objective of generating knowledge and improvements for the academic and research life of people in the university, as well as for future generations.

**Advisory Board should receive short quarterly reports on the progress and should be provided with the ability to comment/suggest on your future activities.**

**Make the advisory board a body which not only comments on progress but involve members more into specific planning of activities (including communication). This doesn't only have to happen on the project level but could also be**

**Try to be transdisciplinary. Avoid academic silos.**

**Receiving monthly "nudges" to point us to updates. This would not imply providing extensive, detailed reports, but rather simply keep us regularly engaged, informed and, ultimately, MORE useful to the project.**

**more involvement in the working groups and activities from the AB and stakeholders would have enhanced the collaboration for students mobility**

**Continue with what you are doing, and don't loose focus of actual learning objectives (e.g. ocean science and data literacy, critical thinking, EU and indeed global citizenship)**

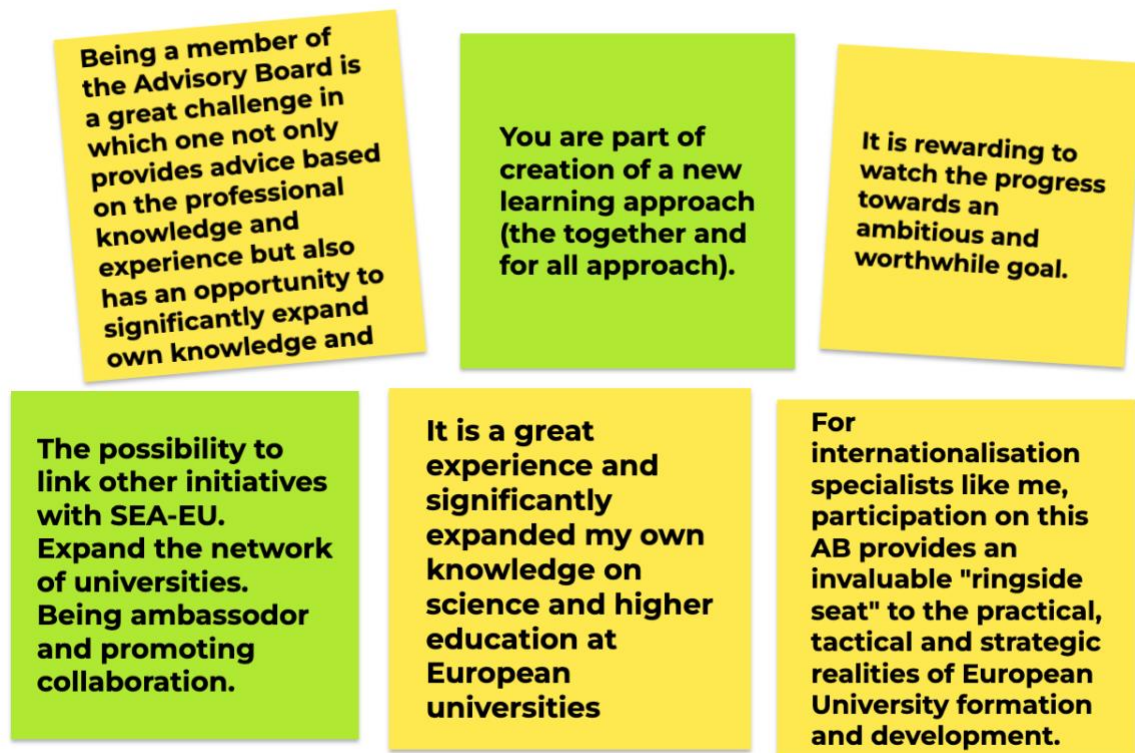
The members of the Advisory Board have a commitment to receive information at the meetings scheduled by the project, and this has been respected given the high demand for their respective positions. Even so, they have all agreed and asked to receive information more frequently, not only in the reports required by the project, in order to be aware of everything that is going on, as they want to be able to contribute more.



This is linked to the second request, to have more possibilities for real participation in tasks and working groups, not only the participation obliged by the project. Many of them are experts in specific topics that would have been of great help in specific tasks or actions. They advise us not to get lost in bureaucracy and project issues, losing the real direction of the Alliance, and in the same way, not to get lost in knowledge silos, as we want to be a transdisciplinary Alliance.

### **How could our new partners describe the personal benefits of being a member of the Advisory Board to their selected candidates?**

This question was posed to find out how Advisory Board members value membership and therefore how they would recommend new members to contact their respective candidates to participate in this group during the second phase.



They all emphasize that it is an enriching and rewarding experience since it is about participating in the evolution of Higher Education. Many of them highlight the personal benefit they get, which ranges from the possibility of seeing from the inside how something as innovative as European universities is built, to the possibility of learning from other great professions and establishing networks with other universities.

## Conclusions

For the SEA-EU Alliance, the role and participation of stakeholders and experts on the Advisory Board is crucial.

This has been a first pilot phase full of trial-and-error learning, and the collaboration of professionals and experts has been a key element of the SEA-EU Alliance's work.

SEA-EU has as one of its main objectives to reverse all the progress in research and education in its territories, and this necessarily involves all the local actors represented in the Stakeholders Group. With them we started a process of mutual listening through which we have begun to co-create the transformation of the university based on the needs of our society.

In addition to this, another key aspect in the development of this first pilot phase has been the help and advice of the Advisory Board, made up of leading international experts, who have followed the progress of the project with great interest, offering not only their suggestions but also their networks and contacts to give support and visibility to the activities.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the request, shared by the Alliance itself, to increase the level of involvement of both the Advisory Board and the Stakeholders Group, for which the Alliance will have to refine the role and tasks in which each member can contribute, as well as establish more regular communication.

The inclusion of these two bodies in the SEA-EU structure is therefore considered to be very positive and the transformations that will take place in the second phase are seen as improvements. During these first years of work we have detected an improvement to be taken into account as we have learnt that the groups were too heterogeneous, therefore, from now on we will count with with more specific stakeholder groups such as, for example, the Cities Council or the Ports Council.

