

# NEWSLETTER - 2

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## About BLUE-ERA:

The Blue Era Sustainable Blue Economy Masters Program is a collaborative effort between universities in Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan, France, Italy, and Greece. This exciting new program is designed to address the needs of local economies in the southern Mediterranean by providing students with the knowledge and skills they need to pursue careers in this important field.

Our ultimate objective is to use ocean resources on sustainable manner for local economic growth needs, improved livelihoods, entrepreneurship to local needs and generating employment (empowerment of youngs) while preserving the health of ocean ecosystems.

## Outcomes of the UPGRADE project:

Our main objective is the establishment of a new master's degree program for sustainable blue economy in the south Mediterranean region (Region 3 countries: Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan).

Expected outcomes are of highly qualified graduates in fields of sustainable blue economy. Thanks to the BLUE-ERA consortium for their significant contribution in the development of exchanges of knowledge, expertise and good practice tools for professional and entrepreneurial integration, employability and professionalization of students will be promoted. The sustainability of the

proposed plan will guarantee the continuation of the master's program far beyond the end of the project. In addition, the interconnection between laboratories and future research collaborations will strengthen the research capacity in the field of blue economy, including the establishment of co-supervised postgraduates and PhD fellows..

## MEET our PARTNERS

Participating countries in this proposal are two universities from each country in the south (Egypt, Tunisia and Jordan) in addition to three universities from the EU (France, Italy, and Greece). During the project period (3 years), there will be many activities; including gap analysis, lab installation and field trips for the practical work, capacity building for the staff and students, summer and winter schools, and training in European universities.

- **Project Coordinator ULCO – France**
- **University of the Aegean (UAEGEAN) Greece**
- **Universidad de estudios de Palermo (UNIPA) – Italy**
- **Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT) – Egypt**
- **Alexandria University (AU) – Egypt**
- **University of Sousse (US) – Tunisia**
- **University of Monastir (UM) – Tunisia**
- **University of Jordan (JU) – Jordan**
- **Al Albayt University (AABU) – Jordan**

**BLUE ERA Activities October 2024 to May 2025****BLUE ERA MASTER PROGRAMS FIRST INTRODUCTORY CALLS – NOV 2024**

The consortium on the project launched the introduction of the generated master programs under blue era. These programs were as follows:

- MSc in Sustainable Blue Economy and Coastal Resource Management - Offered by Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport, Egypt - <https://blue-era.univ-littoral.fr/empower-egypts-marine.../>
- MSc in Sustainable Blue Economy and Coastal Resource Management - Offered by Alexandria University, Egypt - <https://blue-era.univ-littoral.fr/drive-marine-innovation/>
- MSc in Blue Entrepreneurship and Environmental Management - Offered by University of Sousse, Tunisia - <https://blue-era.univ-littoral.fr/empower-tunisias-blue.../>
- MSc in Blue Economy and Environmental Sustainability - Offered by University of Monastir, Tunisia - <https://blue-era.univ-littoral.fr/lead-tunisias-marine.../>
- MSc in Blue Economy and Environmental Sustainability at AI - Offered by University of Al al-Bayt University, Jordan - <https://blue-era.univ-littoral.fr/advance-jordans.../>
- MSc in Blue Economy and Coastal Sustainability - Offered by University of Jordan, Jordan - <https://blue-era.univ-littoral.fr/shape-the-future-of.../>

**BLUE ERA SECOND CONSORTIUM MEETING – ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY EDUCATION – FEB 18**

The Second Consortium Meeting of the BLUE ERA Project was successfully held at the University of Palermo, Italy, from January 27-29, 2025. This meeting brought together representatives from partner universities, research institutions, and industry stakeholders to assess project progress and plan the next phases of implementation.

One of the most significant discussions centred on the establishment of the new MSc in Sustainable Blue Economy, which is being developed across six universities in Tunisia, Egypt, and Jordan. Partners provided updates on the accreditation process with the Supreme Council of Universities in each country and discussed the procurement of new equipment that will enhance research and training capabilities for students.

A major milestone was achieved as universities in Tunisia, Egypt, and Jordan confirmed their intention to officially launch the MSc in September 2025, marking the first intake of students into this pioneering program. This initiative will equip future professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to drive sustainable development in the marine and coastal sectors, strengthening regional and international cooperation in the blue economy.

Beyond strategic discussions, the meeting also facilitated knowledge exchange, networking, and engagement with industrial and scientific institutions, reinforcing the collaborative spirit of the BLUE ERA Project.



### AASTMT, AU, AND ULCO SIGN MOUS UNDER BLUE ERA AT FRANCO-EGYPTIAN FORUM - APRIL 9

The Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT) and Alexandria University (AU) participated in the Franco-Egyptian Higher Education and Research Forum (Cairo, April 7–8, 2025), coinciding with French President Emmanuel Macron's visit. Organized by the French Embassy and Egypt's Ministry of Higher Education, the event fostered academic and scientific cooperation.

AASTMT President Prof. Dr. Ismail Abdel Ghafar and AU President Prof. Dr. Abdelaziz Konsowa signed MoUs with ULCO (France), represented by Prof. Dr. Edmond Abi-Aad, under the EU-funded BLUE ERA project. The agreements focus on:

- Joint postgraduate programs
- Student/faculty exchanges
- Research in maritime tech, marine biotech, and digital innovation

The signing was attended by Egypt's Minister of Higher Education Dr. Ayman Ashour, France's Minister Philippe Baptiste, and SCU Secretary-General Prof. Dr. Mostafa Refaat. A closing ceremony at Cairo University, with President



Macron present, highlighted enduring Egypt-France academic ties.

This collaboration strengthens blue economy and sustainable coastal development through transnational education and research.



## HIGH-LEVEL FRENCH DELEGATION VISITS AASTMT TO STRENGTHEN ACADEMIC COOPERATION

Following the Egyptian-French Higher Education Forum in Cairo, a delegation from Université du Littoral Côte d'Opale (ULCO) visited the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT) in Abu Qir to advance their academic cooperation agreement. The delegation, led by ULCO President Prof. Edmond Abi Aad and VP Prof. Rachid Amara, explored AASTMT's facilities to assess its educational and research capabilities.

Hosted by Prof. Yasser El-Sonbaty, AASTMT VP for Education, and Prof. Kareem Tonbol, Dean of Scientific Research, the delegation toured key facilities, including:

- The Planetarium, showcasing interactive learning tools and AASTMT's academic offerings.
- The Integrated Simulation Complex, a leading maritime training center for navigation and port management.
- The College of Pharmacy, featuring advanced labs and research infrastructure.

The delegation praised AASTMT's innovation and industry-aligned programs, marking a pivotal step in implementing joint initiatives like student exchanges, collaborative research, and academic partnerships in maritime, pharmacy, and technology. This visit reinforces AASTMT's role as a global hub for excellence in education and applied research.

## ULCO DELEGATION VISITS ALEXANDRIA UNIVERSITY TO STRENGTHEN ACADEMIC COOPERATION

The president of Université du Littoral Côte d'Opale (ULCO), Prof. Edmond Abi Aad, and the PI of the Blue Era Project, Prof. Rachid Amara, visited the university of Alexandria on April 10<sup>th</sup> 2025 to advance their academic cooperation agreement. The visit provided an opportunity to discuss and review the state of progress of collaborations and to explore new project opportunities such as joint or double degrees, new joint scientific projects and student and teacher mobility.



## 22 TO 24 APRIL 2025 BLUE-ERA SUMMER SCHOOL WRAP-UP:

A Milestone Event in Boulogne-sur-Mer, France!

The *BLUE-ERA Summer School*, held from 22 to 24 April 2025 at the *Université du Littoral Côte d'Opale (ULCO)*, successfully concluded with vibrant participation and impactful outcomes. The event marked a significant step forward in fostering academic collaboration and promoting the sustainable blue economy across sectors.

### Highlights from the Program

#### **April 22 – Focus on the Blue Economy: Expert Conferences**

Participants engaged with leading experts on key blue economy topics:

- Circular Economy and Blue Innovations – Prof. Blandine Laperche
- Transport in a Warming World – Prof. Moez Kilani
- Climate Change and Marine Biodiversity – Dr. Gregory Beaugrand
- Monitoring Ocean Color from Satellites – Prof. Cédric Jamet
- Biomonitoring of Aquatic Environments – Dr. Mamadou Diop
- Marine Plastic Pollution: Sources, Impacts, and Solutions – Dr. Jérémy Thery
- Bioplastic and Biodegradable Use in Maritime Activities – Dr. Wajid Ali
- Practical Training on Aquatic Plastic Pollution – Prof. Rachid Amara

#### **April 23 – Immersive Field Visits**

Participants explored industry practices through site visits to:

- Boulogne-sur-Mer Fish Market
  - Delanchy Logistics
  - Copalis Company
  - Grand Port Maritime de Dunkerque
- They also joined entrepreneurial discussions at ULCO's Entrepreneurship Centre in Dunkirk.

#### **April 24 – Innovation and Project Development**

Sessions focused on educational innovation and BLUE-ERA project development:

- *Pedagogical Trends and Innovation* – Christine Hazbrouck, Prof. Sabine Duhamel & Team
- *Coastal Tourism and Integrated Coastal Zone Management* – Prof. Tzoraki
- Project presentations and discussions on BLUE-ERA's ongoing progress.

#### **● Key Outcomes**

- Strengthened collaboration among BLUE-ERA consortium members
- Fresh insights to enrich the BLUE-ERA MSc curriculum
- Increased academia-industry engagement
- Heightened awareness on marine sustainability and innovation

*Live streaming via Zoom* on April 22 and 24 broadened the reach, allowing global participation from students and professionals passionate about the blue economy.

With dynamic sessions, engaging field visits, and rich knowledge exchange, the BLUE-ERA Summer School reaffirmed our shared commitment to advancing sustainable blue growth.





Dr Khaled Tamzini from University of Sousse took part in the Arab World Academic Cooperation meeting on green economy careers, organised by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALXO). During the event, Dr Tamzini presented the Blue Era project.



### Student's exchange

As part of the Blue Era project and student exchange, ULCO has welcomed a student (Chatzigeorgiou Dimitrios) from the University of the Aegean for a 2-month internship on the issue of plastic pollution.

### Upcoming events

1- Winter School for Staff organised by  
UAEGEAN at Athens 3 – 5 November 2025

2- [Third consortium meeting] – University of  
Jordan, Jordan - December 2025

3- Participation of ULCO at the high-level  
2025 United Nations Conference to  
Support the Implementation of Sustainable  
Development Goal 14: Conserve and  
sustainably use the oceans, seas and  
marine resources for sustainable  
development (the 2025 UN Ocean  
Conference) Nice, France, from 9 – 13  
June 2025:  
<https://sdgs.un.org/conferences/ocean2025>

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For further information, please visit:  
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