



THE MEDITERRANEAN QUEST TO “FIND THE BLUE!”

Teachers' guide
to Blue Schools activities
in the Mediterranean Sea Region



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BACKGROUND INFO

The Blue Schools Challenge

❏ WHAT IS A BLUE CHALLENGE?

It's an environmental educational initiative, designed by and for pupils and teachers, aimed to include the sea among the other fundamental elements of the Earth system.

Its goal is to help pupils become informed and eco-responsible citizens who understand the sea, and act consciously towards environmental and real-life issues on both local and global scales!



❏ WHAT DOES IT MEAN IN PRACTICE?



First, the school needs to **identify an ocean-related topic**, that is specific to its local Mediterranean Sea Region and relevant to the pupils. It can be related to biology, literature, history, culture, food, or anything!



Then, schools, teachers and pupils will **collaborate with marine educators and local partners** to develop and implement a school project targeting this specific topic.



At the end of the school year or of the Blue Challenge, the school will **share its results, success stories and recommendations** with the European Blue Schools network.

The ultimate aim is to make ocean literacy a significant part of the school curriculum through project-based learning. Another encouraged outcome after completing the “*Mediterranean quest to Find the Blue*” is to receive the European Blue School certification!



EU Blue Schools

❏ WHAT IS THE STORY BEHIND THE EU BLUE SCHOOLS AND THE BLUE SCHOOLS NETWORK?

While the ocean is the most distinctive feature of our planet visible from space, it is very likely that you have not learned about its importance while you were in school!

There have been several formal and informal initiatives in all parts of Europe on marine environmental education. The [EU4Ocean Coalition](#) was launched recently, alongside the [network of the EU Blue Schools](#), to complement and formalize these initiatives..

The EU Blue Schools Network brings together pupils and teachers that will co-design their Blue Challenges at school. You can consult online the list of [certified blue schools](#) already member of the network.



❏ WHY JOIN THE NETWORK?

It could be that you already have an ongoing project that you can adapt, or you are starting from scratch! In any case joining the network and earning the Blue Schools Certification has many benefits:

- ▶ Joining forces with existing national to complement and formalize these initiatives. The EU Blue Schools Network brings together pupils and teachers that will co-design their Blue Challenges and international ocean literacy initiatives;
- ▶ Increasing the impact and visibility of local school projects;
- ▶ Sharing experiences with other teachers at the EU/Mediterranean regional level;
- ▶ Collaborate with other EU/Mediterranean schools, scientists and stakeholders;
- ▶ Promote an EU/Mediterranean marine citizenship.

The ultimate outcome of a completed “Blue Challenge” is to earn the EU Blue School Certification, a process that is described in the recently published [Handbook for Teachers](#).



THE MEDITERRANEAN BLUE SCHOOLS PROJECT

What is it about?

“Supporting the development of socially-inclusive Blue Challenges in schools in the Mediterranean Sea basin”.



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The BlueS_Med project aims at developing, testing and evaluating innovative approaches to integrate ocean/marine issues and challenges in the curriculum and educational activities of schools in different Mediterranean countries.



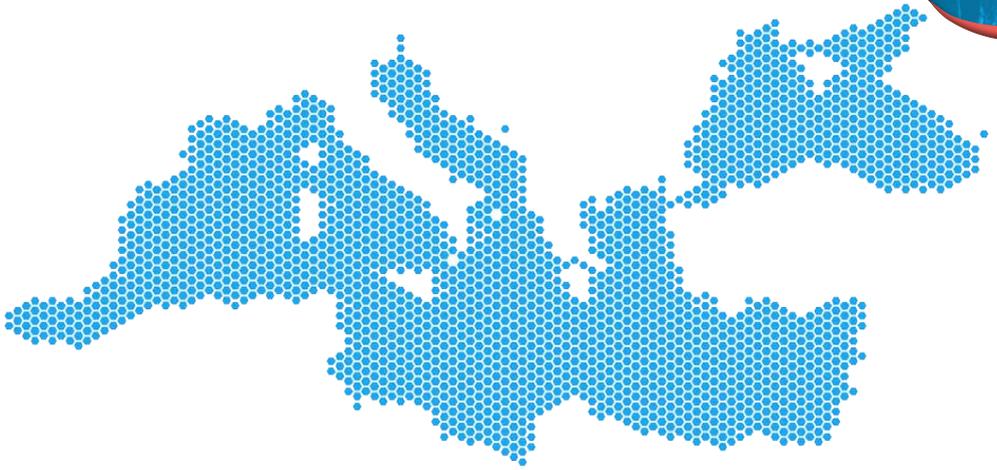
A Mediterranean Blue Schools network?

The Mediterranean Sea connects three continents, with both EU and non-EU countries who share history, cultural heritage, marine ecosystems and economic activities.

The Blue Schools Med network is established under the EU Blue Schools;



Network of
European
Blue Schools



PROJECT PRINCIPLES



Co-building

The BlueS_Med project will be designed with the help of partners, schools, local stakeholders, but most importantly, the pupils!

Inclusivity

BlueS_Med will mobilize pupils of diverse social groups and ages through an unbiased gender approach



Sustainability

BlueS_Med will minimise the project footprint and maximise social and environmental benefits!

Interactivity and proactiveness

BlueS_Med will make use of e-tools to support peer-to-peer exchanges. BlueS_Med will prioritise practical actions that underline human-ocean relationships



When and how is the project taking place?

PROJECT PHASES

The project will last three years, and will end in September 2023.



1. Conception phase

Get to know the partners, their scope of work and experience, but also gather general knowledge and define guidelines for upcoming Blue Challenges in schools: benchmarking, monitoring, evaluation and dissemination frameworks!

And the teachers' role...

Schools and teachers' input crucial to set realistic, useful and achievable goals.



2. Development of the Blue Challenge

Design and develop the Blue Challenge in each school based on the guidelines and the framework proposed in the first phase.

Schools and teachers will work closely with pupils, marine scientists and local partners and stakeholders to design a relevant challenge for their area!

3. Practical implementation

Implement the Blue Challenge in schools and/or the local community!

Schools and teachers have the primary responsibility at this stage: implement the activities, but also monitor, evaluate, and share updates, content and results!

4. Evaluation and dissemination

The project partners will analyse monitoring and evaluation results and data to come up with recommendations and best practice for future similar activities.

Schools, teachers, pupils, marine educators and local partners and stakeholders participate and share their personal experience!



PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The project activities are quite different, and are coordinated by different partners:

1. Intellectual Outputs

Deliverables produced by project partners summarizing key project outputs.

And the teachers' role...

Schools and teachers will contribute by providing information and content!

2. Transnational Project Meetings

Regular meetings that bring together all participating partners and key stakeholders to discuss experience and follow-up events.

Schools and teachers will represent the educational point of view and share their recommendations!

3. Short Term training and learning events

Training activities and initiatives that involve teachers and pupils.

Schools, teachers and pupils will participate, ask questions and learn as much as they can!

4. Multiplier events

The last stage of the project will aim to evaluate and disseminate results, through national and regional multiplier events!

Schools, teachers, pupils, marine scientists and local partners and stakeholders will participate to these events!





HOW TO DESIGN A BLUE SCHOOLS CHALLENGE: STEPS, IDEAS AND INSPIRATION

Since the project is being developed under the auspices of the European Blue Schools, the consistency of the proposed Blue Challenges with this initiative will help the involved schools to create synergies and opportunities for collaboration.

PROJECT THEMES



- ▶ Healthy Ocean
- ▶ Food from the Ocean
- ▶ Climate and Ocean
- ▶ Landscape and Ocean
- ▶ Maritime Culture and Heritage
- ▶ Migration and Ocean
- ▶ Communication and Ocean

Your activities can be incorporated in any classroom lesson, but is also encouraged to take place through outdoor learning, and benefit from the lovely Mediterranean climate.



Evidently, incorporating the Mediterranean components is essential!

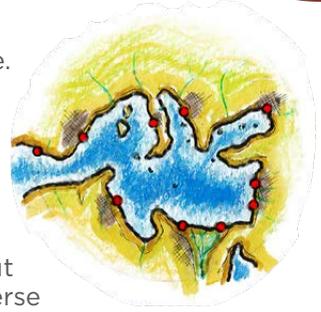
Think about the natural and cultural specificity of the Mediterranean, its peculiar socio-economic setting, its geographical and historical strategic importance, its rich and diverse marine life, and the many maritime activities hosted by this sea basin!

❖ GET INSPIRED FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN!

The Mediterranean Sea is a very unique marine space. It joins together three continents, and is connected to the Atlantic Ocean on its West, and to the Red and Black sea on the East.

These physical and geographic features gave it a unique biodiversity status, but also led it to become a central commercial and cultural hub throughout history. Its beautiful coasts, turquoise waters and diverse cultural heritage made it a central tourist attraction for worldwide tourists.

Based on these simple facts, you can design your blue challenge by selecting a topic that is specific to the Mediterranean, and that pupils can relate to! Below is a list of potential ideas!



Marine Biodiversity

- ▶ Flora and Fauna
- ▶ Endemic species
- ▶ Invasive species
- ▶ Endangered species



Economic activities

- ▶ Importance of Tourism
- ▶ Traditional activities: boat building, ship repair, artisanal fisheries, sponge diving, etc.
- ▶ Impacts of activities on the marine environment?

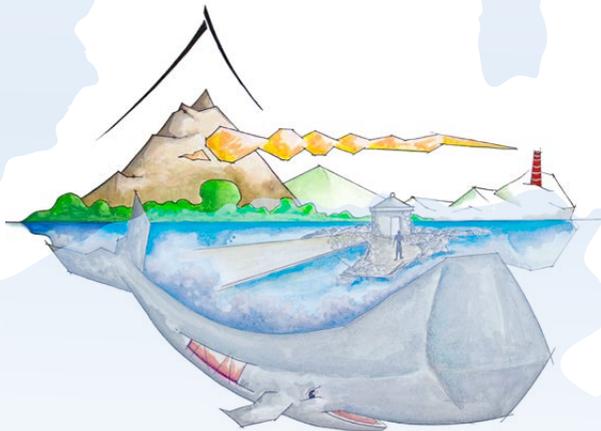


Cultural heritage

- ▶ Languages
- ▶ History and Arts
- ▶ Coastal cities and architecture
- ▶ Underwater Archaeology
- ▶ Culinary art and traditional dishes
- ▶ Relationship between people and the sea
- ▶ Similarities and diversity between the North and the South

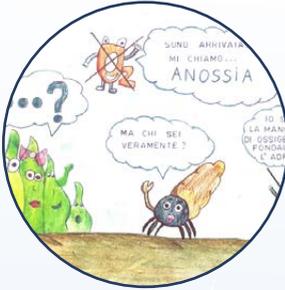
■ ■ A STEP BY STEP APPROACH

- ▶ Define the project scope: themes, duration and objectives
- ▶ Find the marine scientist closest to your school
- ▶ Involve a local stakeholder as project partner
- ▶ Set an action plan and build your crew
- ▶ Register and apply for the EU Blue Schools Network!
- ▶ Get active with field visits and participation in events with local partners
- ▶ Encourage pupils to engage with other peers across the Mediterranean
- ▶ Keep project partners in the loop and ask for their assistance – they are here to support you!
- ▶ Monitor, record and evaluate your progress
- ▶ Tell your local community all about your Mediterranean quest to Find the Blue!
- ▶ Send your project to the EU Blue Schools Network platform!



PROJECTS' EXAMPLES

Teachers and pupils have created remarkable marine projects across Europe in the past years. Here are some examples of creative Blue Challenge projects to spark your imagination!



The Research Language!
by CNR, Italy



Ocean Acidification
by DUTH, Greece



SPLASH!
by ERI, Italy



Adopt a beach
by CNR, Italy



Educational Marine Managed Areas!
by OFB, France



Acquaintance with Valencia!
by HCMR, Greece

... And many more!

You can consult the [*EU Blue Schools Handbook*](#) for more ideas!



BLUE SCHOOLS MED  is coordinated by



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