



MEP&M
Development of Regional Joint Master Program in
Maritime Environmental Protection and Management

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Project no. 619239-EPP-1-2020-1-ME-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the MEP&M Project Newsletter!

Dear Students, Stakeholders, and Friends,

We are thrilled to bring you the latest updates and insights from the Maritime Environmental Protection and Management (MEP&M) project, a forty-three months initiative under the Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) program.

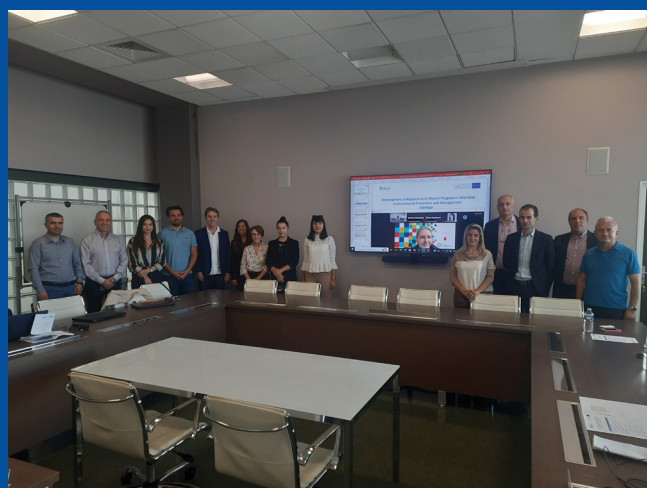
Over the past forty-three months, this initiative has aimed to address critical environmental challenges faced by Montenegro and Albania. By fostering innovation and collaboration, the consortium has successfully developed a regional joint Master program, enhancing educational and professional capacities in maritime environmental protection.



Project Overview

The MEP&M project, funded under the Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) initiative, was launched in 2021 to tackle pressing environmental issues in the Western Balkans.

These include the protection of the marine and coastal zone environment from global climate change and local pollution. The project involved key partners: University of Montenegro, University of Ismail Qemali (Vlore), Aleksander Moisiu University of Durrës, University of Cadiz (Spain), University of Ljubljana (Slovenia) and Université Côte d'Azur (France). The project was also supported by non-academic partners such as the General Maritime Directorate in Albania, the Nature and Environmental Protection Agency, and the Ecological Center "DOLPHIN" from Montenegro. These partners contributed to the co-development of curricula, staff training, awareness raising, information sharing, promotion, and other collaborative efforts.



Key Objectives



Develop a Joint Master Program: The cornerstone of the project was the creation of an interdisciplinary Master program in Maritime Environmental Protection and Management (MEP&M), delivered in English following the distance learning mode of lecturing.



Enhance Human and Technical Capacities: The project aimed to build up the capacities of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Montenegro and Albania through staff training and the procurement of necessary equipment.



Foster Regional Cooperation: Strengthening networks among HEIs, governmental institutions, and enterprises in the blue economy sectors was crucial for regional collaboration and addressing environmental challenges.

Major Achievements

Development of the Master Program

- ▶ **Curriculum Design:** A comprehensive curriculum was developed, incorporating the latest methodologies and pedagogical approaches. The program includes modules on marine pollution, climate change mitigation, and sustainable maritime practices.
- ▶ **Accreditation and Launch:** The program was successfully accredited and launched, attracting students from the Western Balkans and beyond. The first cohort of students will commence their studies this September/October 2024.

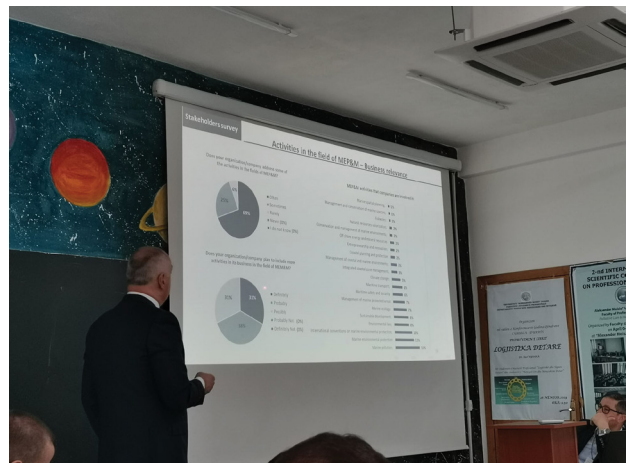


Capacity Building

- ▶ **Staff Training:** Faculty members underwent extensive training to deliver the new curriculum effectively. Training sessions focused on e-learning methodologies and the latest trends in maritime environmental protection.
- ▶ **Equipment and Resources:** State-of-the-art equipment and e-learning resources were procured, ensuring that the program could be delivered efficiently and to a high standard.

Enhanced Collaboration

- ▶ **Networking Events:** Multiple events and workshops were organized to enhance collaboration among stakeholders. These events facilitated knowledge exchange and fostered partnerships between HEIs, government bodies, and the private sector.
- ▶ **Joint Research Initiatives:** Collaborative research projects were initiated, addressing regional environmental issues and contributing to the body of knowledge in maritime environmental protection.



Work Package 1: State of the art on Maritime Environmental Protection and Management (Led by the Université Côte d'Azur, France)

Overview

The first work package focused on preparing for the introduction of the new joint interdisciplinary master program in Maritime Environmental Protection and Management (MEP&M).

1.1 Overview of MSc Programs in the Field of MEP&M at EU Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

Key Activities:

- ▶ Conducting a comprehensive review of existing master programs related to Maritime Environmental Protection and Management across European Higher Education Institutions.
- ▶ Gathering and analyzing information on program structures, curricula, specializations, and teaching methods.
- ▶ Identifying key institutions offering relevant programs and their respective strengths and weaknesses.

Outcomes:

- ▶ A detailed report or database of MSc programs in MEP&M within EU HEIs was delivered.
- ▶ Identified insights into common program elements, specializations, and innovations in the field.
- ▶ Identification of leading institutions and exemplary practices was reported.

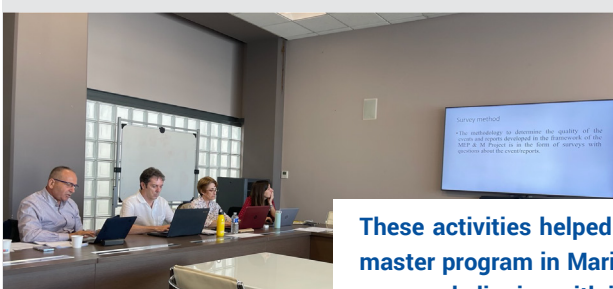
1.2 GAP Analysis

Key Activities:

- ▶ Evaluating the current state of MSc programs in MEP&M to identify gaps or areas where existing programs may be lacking.
- ▶ Comparing the current offerings with industry needs, emerging trends, and best practices.
- ▶ Gathering feedback from stakeholders, including students, professionals, and academics, to assess the relevance and effectiveness of existing programs.

Outcomes:

- ▶ A comprehensive gap analysis report was provided highlighting deficiencies and opportunities in current MSc programs.
- ▶ Recommendations for addressing identified gaps and aligning programs with current and future needs.
- ▶ A framework for developing new or improved educational offerings in MEP&M was reported.



These activities helped to create a foundation for developing a new, relevant, and effective master program in Maritime Environmental Protection and Management, addressing current gaps and aligning with industry needs.

1.3 Reporting on Actions and Model for Introduction of New Joint Interdisciplinary MSc Program in MEP&M in English Language

Key Activities:

- ▶ Developing a report outlining the proposed actions and strategy for introducing a new joint interdisciplinary MSc program in MEP&M.
- ▶ Designing a model for the new program, including its structure, curriculum, and delivery in English.
- ▶ Collaborating with partners to ensure the program meets international standards and addresses the identified gaps.

Outcomes:

- ▶ A detailed report on the proposed actions for launching the new MSc program.
- ▶ A clear model or blueprint for the new program, including its interdisciplinary approach and structure.
- ▶ Recommendations for implementation and potential partners for collaboration.

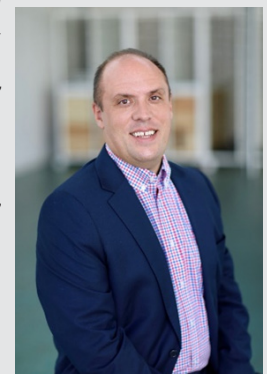
"Within European project MEP&M, through the WP1 all has been done successfully. This work package referred to identify state of the art in education and research in the field of MEP&M to be implemented through MSc program at partner countries higher education institutions (HEIs).

We have used the methodology, and we have identified the best practices from European Union HEIs in the field of education and research in field of MEP&M with adequate teaching methodology, GAP analysis, and delivering guidelines for development of joint interdisciplinary MSc program in MEP&M and teaching methodologies at PC HEIs. Major milestones were the delivering guidelines for development of master degree curricula in MEP&M and teaching methodologies at partner countries higher education institutions based upon GAP analysis report, with designated specific educational needs in field of MEP&M in PCs.

We have achieved the main goal of WP1, that was to identify appropriate model and to develop guidelines for novel joint master' degree program in MEP&M with novel teaching and learning methods through e-learning at the Montenegrin and Albanian HEIs."

Prof. dr Srdjan Redzepagic

Director of the Balkan Institute of Science and Innovation of the Université Côte d'Azur, Nice, France



Work Package 2: Development and implementation of master degree program (Led by the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia)



Overview

This work package was dedicated to developing the curriculum and necessary materials for the MEP&M program.

2.1 Development of Master Program Curricula

Key Activities:

- ▶ Conducting needs assessments to determine industry or academic requirements.
- ▶ Defining program goals and learning outcomes.
- ▶ Designing course structures and syllabi.
- ▶ Consulting with academic and industry experts.
- ▶ Integrating feedback from stakeholders.

Outcomes:

- ▶ A detailed curriculum outlined, including course descriptions and learning objectives.
- ▶ A structured sequence of courses and electives.
- ▶ Documentation of how the program aligns with academic and industry standards.

2.3 Development of E-Lectures

Key Activities:

- ▶ Designing content for online delivery, including video lectures, slides, and interactive elements.
- ▶ Selecting appropriate technology platforms for e-lectures.
- ▶ Recording and editing lectures.
- ▶ Ensuring accessibility and usability of digital content.

Outcomes:

- ▶ A library of e-lectures available to students.
- ▶ Functional and engaging online learning materials.
- ▶ Positive feedback on the usability of e-learning resources.

2.2 Development of Teaching Materials and Methodology

Key Activities:

- ▶ Creating or sourcing textbooks, lecture notes, and supplementary materials.
- ▶ Developing instructional strategies and teaching methods.
- ▶ Designing assessment tools and evaluation criteria.
- ▶ Reviewing and testing materials for effectiveness.

Outcomes:

- ▶ A set of comprehensive teaching materials and resources was proposed.
- ▶ Established teaching methodologies tailored to the program.
- ▶ Effective assessment tools to measure student progress were delivered.

2.4 Accreditation of Master Program

Key Activities:

- ▶ Preparing documentation for accreditation bodies, including curriculum details, faculty qualifications, and resources.
- ▶ Submitting applications and responding to queries from accrediting agencies.
- ▶ Hosting site visits or reviews by accreditation teams.

Outcomes:

- ▶ Formal accreditation or recognition from relevant bodies was achieved.
- ▶ Validation of the program's quality and adherence to standards realized.
- ▶ Potential for program enhancements based on accreditation feedback was provided.



2.5 Start-Up and Self-Evaluation of Master Program

Key Activities:

- ▶ Launching the program and enrolling the first cohort of students.
- ▶ Monitoring the initial implementation and operation of the program.
- ▶ Collecting feedback from students, faculty, and stakeholders.
- ▶ Conducting internal evaluations to assess program effectiveness.

Outcomes:

- ▶ The program will start on September/October 2024

Work Package 3: Capacity Building through staff training and equipment purchase (Led by the Universidad de Cádiz, Spain)



Overview

Training is a crucial component of our project, ensuring that all stakeholders are well-prepared to deliver and support the MEP&M program.

3.1 Procurement of Equipment and E-Books

Key Activities:

- ▶ Identifying and listing the equipment and e-books required for the program or institution.
- ▶ Conducting procurement processes, including selecting vendors, obtaining quotes, and purchasing the necessary items.
- ▶ Ensuring the equipment and e-books meet the program's needs and specifications.

Outcomes:

- ▶ Acquisition of the required equipment and e-books.
- ▶ Installation and integration of new equipment into the educational environment was done.
- ▶ Updated resources available to support the new program or enhance existing facilities.

3.2 Technical Staff Training for the New Equipment

Key Activities:

- ▶ Organizing and conducting training sessions for technical staff on how to use and maintain the new equipment.
- ▶ Providing manuals, guides, and hands-on training to ensure staff are proficient with the new technology.
- ▶ Evaluating the effectiveness of the training and making adjustments if needed.

Outcomes:

- ▶ Technical staff trained and capable of operating and maintaining new equipment.
- ▶ Increased efficiency and effectiveness in using new technologies.
- ▶ Documentation of training processes and staff proficiency.

3.3 Redesign of English Websites of Montenegrin and Albanian HEIs

Key Activities:

- ▶ Assessing the current websites of Montenegrin and Albanian HEIs to identify areas for improvement in content, design, and functionality.
- ▶ Collaborating with web designers and developers to create a redesigned, user-friendly English version of the websites.
- ▶ Updating website content to reflect the new program and ensure it meets international standards.

Outcomes:

- ▶ Enhanced English-language websites for Montenegrin and Albanian HEIs with improved design and functionality.
- ▶ Increased accessibility and appeal of the institutions to international audiences.
- ▶ Updated content that effectively promotes the new program and institutional offerings.

3.4 Know-How Transfer to Teaching Staff Related to MEP&M

Key Activities:

- ▶ Developing and implementing training programs or workshops for teaching staff on Maritime Environmental Protection and Management (MEP&M).
- ▶ Sharing best practices, research findings, and teaching methodologies related to MEP&M.
- ▶ Providing ongoing support and resources to help staff integrate new knowledge into their teaching.

Outcomes:

- ▶ Teaching staff equipped with up-to-date knowledge and skills related to MEP&M.
- ▶ Enhanced teaching quality and program delivery.
- ▶ Improved capacity of staff to contribute to and support the new program effectively.



These activities focused on enhancing the capabilities of both technical and teaching staff while upgrading institutional resources to support the development and delivery of the new master program or improve existing offerings.



Work Package 5: Dissemination and Exploitation of Project Results (Led by the University "Ismail Qemali" Vlorë, Albania)



Overview

WP5 focused on the dissemination and exploitation of the results generated by the project. It aimed to ensure that the project's findings and innovations are effectively communicated to relevant stakeholders and exploited to their fullest potential.

Key Activities:

- ▶ Created and executed comprehensive plans for how project results will be shared and utilized.
- ▶ Developed and maintained a project website and established social media profiles to communicate progress and results.
- ▶ Produced various materials to share the project's visibility and findings.
- ▶ Organized and participated in events like conferences, info days, and seminars to promote the project and its results.
- ▶ Developed a strategic roadmap for how the project's results will be exploited commercially or otherwise.
- ▶ Investigated opportunities for continued collaboration with European partners beyond the project's conclusion.

Outcomes:

- ▶ A detailed plan that outlined strategies for disseminating information and maximizing the impact of project results.
- ▶ An active online presence that provided updates, information, and resources related to the project.
- ▶ A suite of high-quality dissemination products that effectively convey the project's achievements and insights.
- ▶ Increased visibility and engagement with the project's target audiences through well-executed events.
- ▶ A structured plan that outlined potential pathways for leveraging the project's results and ensuring their sustainability.
- ▶ Established avenues for ongoing partnerships that can enhance the impact and reach of the project's results.



Work Package 6: Project Management (Led by the University of Montenegro)



Overview

WP6 focused on the management of the project to ensure that it ran smoothly, stayed on track, and met all administrative and reporting requirements.

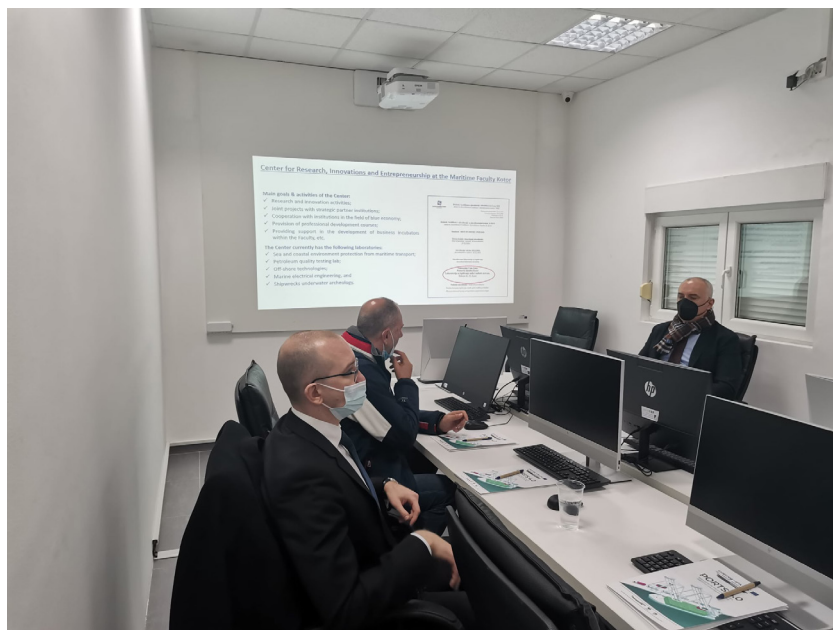
Key Activities:

- ▶ Set up the organizational and administrative structures required for effective project management, including roles, responsibilities, and communication channels.
- ▶ Organized and conducted regular meetings to review progress, address issues, and ensure alignment with project goals.
- ▶ Overseen the daily operations of the project, including task execution, resource allocation, and adherence to the project plan.
- ▶ Prepared and submitted periodic progress reports and a final report to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) as required.
- ▶ Conducted external audits and financial reviews to ensure transparency and accuracy in financial management.



Outcomes:

- ▶ Created an operational management framework that supports efficient project execution and coordination.
- ▶ Provided effective communication and coordination among project partners, leading to timely problem-solving and decision-making.
- ▶ Smooth and effective execution of project activities, maintaining progress according to schedule and budget.
- ▶ Compliance with reporting requirements, providing EACEA with detailed accounts of project progress, outcomes, and financials.
- ▶ Verified financial statements and audits that confirm proper management of project funds and adherence to financial regulations.



Impact and Future Prospects

The MEP&M project has had a significant impact on the participating institutions and the wider community:

- ▶ **Increased Competitiveness:** Montenegrin and Albanian HEIs have enhanced their international competitiveness through improved educational offerings and stronger research capabilities.
- ▶ **Skilled Professionals:** Graduates of the MEP&M program will be equipped with the skills and knowledge to tackle environmental challenges, contributing to national and regional efforts towards sustainable development.
- ▶ **Sustainable Practices:** The project has promoted sustainable practices in the maritime sector, aligning with the EU's goals for environmental protection and sustainable development.



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Conclusion

As the MEP&M project concluded, we reflect on the substantial progress made in maritime environmental protection and management education. The collaboration and dedication of all partners have been instrumental in achieving the project's objectives. We look forward to the continued impact of the MEP&M program and the ongoing efforts to protect our marine and coastal environments.

For more detailed information about each work package and their specific activities, please refer to our project website <https://www.mepm.ucg.ac.me/index.php#>.

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Contact Us: Have questions or suggestions? Reach out to us at: mep-m@ucg.ac.me.



We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all partners, participants, and supporters for their dedication and contributions to the MEP&M project. Together, we are paving the way for a brighter future in education.

MEP&M Project Partners



Univerza v Ljubljani

