

MATES – A BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE

Press release: June 2019

The ambitious **Blueprint project, MATES**, which focuses on the **shipbuilding and offshore renewable energy industries**, held a project-milestone workshop on 28 May in Brussels, Belgium. The workshop, ‘Skills Intelligence to Boost Maritime Technologies’, provided a key opportunity for validation of the project’s results to date.

The results, gathered from extensive research and stakeholder engagement, were presented to over 60 attendees, including representatives from the European Commission (DG-Mare, DG-EMPL, DG GROW and DG-RESEARCH) and EU umbrella organisations. Presented in a [strategic report](#), the results show how **MATES** aims to tackle the current and future skills gaps in the maritime technology sectors. The strategy looks at both the shipbuilding and offshore renewable energy sectors in terms of occupational profiles, skills gaps and challenges in education and training. A foresight exercise helped to identify lines of action which will be addressed through eleven **MATES**-led Pilot Experiences due for roll-out later in 2019. These experiences will involve the development of tailored training materials, summer schools, hackathons and exchange visits as well as the development of replica work environments and transfer of occupational profiles to the [European classification of Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations](#).

A workshop poll showed that invited participants agreed with the **MATES** strategy presented for both the shipbuilding industry and the offshore renewable energy industry, ranking it with an average of 8 points over 10. Rosa Fernández, one of the coordinators of the project at CETMAR, said: “The **MATES** strategy presented here today has relied on an extensive review of bibliography and background data and on the input from over 180 experts, mainly those from the shipbuilding, offshore renewable energy and education sectors. This has ensured all relevant stakeholders were well-represented in the process to shape the strategy, and the response today also shows the support for the strategy.”

Co-funded through the EU Erasmus+ Programme, **MATES** is one of five projects which make up the first Blueprint alliance. The alliance is a framework for strategic cooperation between stakeholders, in particular between industry and the education and training sectors, with an aim is to address skills gaps to ensure industries thrive. It is one of ten actions of the [New Skills Agenda for Europe](#) which aims to make the right training, skills and support available to EU citizens. Enrique Mallón, General Secretary of ASIME, the Galician Association of Metal Industries, points out that “it is important to note that MATES focuses on value chains rather than on single specific activities. ASIME works from the perspective of the metal sector, including a significant number of shipyards, but also the wider value chain which is also connected with the marine renewable energies sector. ASIME, as MATES partners, are mobilising and representing our industrial associates, ensuring the engagement of more than 200 companies involved in the shipbuilding, ship repair, offshore renewables and auxiliary industries”.

According to Julie Fionda (Deputy Head of Skills and Qualifications Unit, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion), who attended the **MATES** workshop, “Blueprint projects are a cornerstone of the European Union’s strategy for skills development and intelligence. Their outputs will be influential for skills policy at European, national and regional levels”. **MATES** is already advancing in the regional roll out of the strategy, as it was presented by representatives from the regional Administrations from Galicia (Spain) and Azores (Portugal) at the end of the workshop.

While the Blueprint projects cover a variety of sectors, **MATES** focuses on the value chain of shipbuilding and offshore renewable energy. **MATES** acknowledges the innovation potential of these sectors and aims not only to identify skills needs across Europe, but also to improve the sectors’ image, boost ocean literacy within the sectors and develop a long-term strategy - one which aims to be a blueprint for the future.



Participants at the MATES Validation Workshop 28 May, Brussels, Belgium.

Notes for Editors

The **MATES** Project is co-funded under the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. Erasmus+ is the European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport. It runs for seven years, from 2014 to 2020. Erasmus+ aims to modernise education, training and youth work across Europe. It is open to education, training, youth and sport organisations across all sectors of lifelong learning, including school education, further and higher education, adult education and the youth sector.

The **MATES** project will run from 2018-2021 with an overall budget of €4.9 million. “**MATES** - *Maritime Alliance for fostering the European Blue economy through a Marine Technology Skilling Strategy*”.

MATES is coordinated by the Centro Tecnológico del Mar - Fundación CETMAR. The main objective of Fundación CETMAR is to promote cooperation among institutions, research centres and the marine economy sectors, and to encourage the involvement of such sectors in collaborative research and development, for a more sustainable use of the marine environment and its resources. More information is available at www.cetmar.org. The Project Coordinator is Lucia Fraga Lago (mates@cetmar.org).

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