



CLIPPER
Interreg Europe

 European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

 Région
PAYS DE LA LOIRE

**Creating a Leadership for
Maritime Industries
New opportunities in Europe**

Pays de la Loire's Action Plan

INTRODUCTION:

The **Regional Strategy for Economic Development, Innovation and Internationalisation (SRDEII)** highlights the regional priority of supporting the emergence of sectors with high potential: the blue economy has been identified as a “major source of opportunities for the Pays de la Loire”. The **European Regional Strategy “A more productive Europe for a more effective Region”** and the **Regional Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation (RIS3)** identifies maritime industries as powerful regional policy makers.

In Pays de la Loire, the distinctive maritime nature of the region, as manifested by its economic and employment dynamics, is a fact, as these figures show:

- 368 km of coastlines.
- Over 50,000 maritime jobs in Pays de la Loire
- First port on the French Atlantic seaboard, providing 25,000 jobs;
- Birthplace of the world’s largest ocean liners, built in Chantiers de l’Atlantique and its subcontractors, which account for over 8,000 jobs (14 ships to be built by 2026 by Chantiers, representing orders worth 12 billion euros);
- France’s principal test site at sea location for marine renewable energies (MRE), with 1,364 MRE jobs in the region
- 2 offshore wind farms projected to be producing 1000 MW of power by 2020
- Turnover of 1.2 billion euros in nautical industries in Pays de la Loire and over 6,100 jobs

Due to its situation in Europe, Pays de la Loire has all the necessary assets to be a leading player among maritime regions. Pays de la Loire Region therefore wants to consolidate its traditional maritime sectors and support the development of innovative sectors: the growth of emerging sectors such as marine energies needs to be harmonised with traditional activities such as fishing, shellfish production and shipbuilding. The coexistence of these activities is a source of wealth, enabling production processes and technologies to be transferred between the different sectors. The Pays de la Loire Region therefore intends to preserve an essential balance between the so-called traditional maritime economy and the new sectors.

For this reason, just year ago, in June 2018, the Region adopted **its strategy for a regional maritime ambition**. The Region is using this strategy to harness all its skills – employment and training, education and culture, economic development, research and innovation, regional development and the environment – to create and support economic, technological, demographic and ecological opportunities, which are key to the Region’s development and standing for decades to come.

In this context and as part of the European INTERREG Europe programme, Pays de la Loire Region has led the CLIPPER project (Creating a leadership for maritime industries – New opportunities in Europe) since January 1st 2017. The project follows on from work carried out within the “Maritime industries for blue growth” group of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), organised by the Pays de la Loire Region. **The LeaderShip 2020 report**, to which this group made a considerable contribution, emphasises that Europe’s shipbuilding and maritime engineering skills could be a driving force for growth and jobs, especially in new markets such as marine renewable energies. Based on the

recommendations of this report, CLIPPER unites regional partners around shared maritime issues so they can act on regional public policies that support the competitiveness of SMEs in the sector.

CLIPPER brings together a consortium of seven European partners, from the regions of Liguria (Italy), Asturias (Spain), Schleswig-Holstein (Germany), Southwest Finland, Split-Dalmatia (Croatia), Fife (Scotland) and the CPMR. The aim of the project is to improve public policies supporting maritime industries by working on four competitiveness levers for SMEs in the sector:

1. Individual performance
2. Improving the value chain
3. Internationalisation
4. Risk sharing (finance and investment tools).

To better apprehend the issues at stake, the thematic scope of maritime industries should be specified as defined by the LeaderSHIP 2020 report. Under CLIPPER, maritime industries means: **“all businesses working in the fields of design, construction, maintenance and repair of all types of ship and other maritime craft, including the whole systems, equipment and services supply chain, which receive support from research institutes and teaching establishments”**.

INTERREG EUROPE’S OBJECTIVES

CLIPPER is an interregional cooperation project part of the INTERREG EUROPE programme. The aim of this programme is to improve policy instruments, through concrete (implementation oriented) actions, inspired by the lessons learned from the project partners during the exchange of experience process. At first, Pays de la Loire Region targeted its ERDF Operational Programme 2014/2020. However, all the funds have been allocated since the launch of the project, and the Regional Operational Programme is currently in a negotiating phase for the next programming period. In consequence, any improvement of the current ERDF ROP would be vain and without any real impact. That is why the Region ultimately decided to redirect its improvements on another policy instrument: Regional Maritime Ambition voted in June 2018.

AN ACTION PLAN TO GO FURTHER IN THE REGIONAL MARITIME AMBITION

The Regional Maritime Ambition (2018-2022) is built on three pillars:

- Promote our maritime identity to the general public and youth so that blue growth rhymes with blue consciousness;
- Answer to the numerous blue growth challenges to consolidate traditional maritime sectors and support the emergence of new sectors;
- Preserve and promote sea and coastline, taking into account the fragility of natural environments, climate change and demographic attractiveness.

More specifically, concerning maritime industry, blue growth challenges are at the heart of seven strategic sectors that must be supported with an equal attention: naval industry’s development, supporting the dynamism of fishing and aquaculture sectors, further development of coastal tourism, affirming the leadership of nautical industries and boating activities, the construction of a sustainable industrial sector for marine renewable energies, the transition from laboratory to industrial stage for marine biotechnology, and the expansion of Nantes Saint Nazaire Port and of its hinterland. Their development is based on important maritime training efforts at all levels to answer to skills needs, on

research and innovation, on energy transition, on digital revolution and on the mobilisation of adapted financial means.

A year after the Regional Council's adoption of its maritime Ambition, **the CLIPPER plan is an operational version of the regional maritime strategy for maritime industries**. In particular, it will act on the second pillar "Blue Growth Challenges" by implementing new actions in favour of maritime industry SMEs. The action sheet format enables the Region to develop practical, refined, quantitative and phased actions, and thus confirm its collective ambition for the competitiveness of maritime industries in the Pays de la Loire with all our partners.

The current action plan is the culmination of two and a half years of sharing good practice in Europe and extensive consultation with local stakeholders as part of a Pays de la Loire CLIPPER working group. By means of the seven action submitted, the Region is activating all the levers at its disposal to support the competitiveness of SMEs in the maritime industry sector: funding, internationalisation, innovation, Europe and its opportunities, by mobilising the whole regional ecosystem.

A WILL TO PURSUE COOPERATION AMONG CLIPPER PARTNERS

The CLIPPER project brings together seven European regions around shared maritime issues. The areas of common concern and the differences between partner regions represent collaboration opportunities to consolidate beyond the CLIPPER project.

Currently, the international strategy adopted in December 2016 largely concerns support for businesses and sectors of excellence in Pays de la Loire through the prism of a country-led approach. Thus, CLIPPER offers an opportunity to strengthen certain currently dormant or as yet unforged links.

In view of the shared or related issues faced by stakeholders from Pays de la Loire and its CLIPPER partners regions, and in view of the relationship of trust that has been forged between Pays de la Loire Region and each of the partners participating in the project, the Region will strive to encourage the emergence of projects between economic stakeholders from these maritime regions. It is also looking into the possibility of setting up specific actions targeted at certain regions.

- **Schleswig Holstein:**

Pays de la Loire Region and the state of Schleswig-Holstein are connected by a cooperation agreement signed in December 1992 and renewed in May 2008.

Concerning maritime industries, besides their joint participation in the CLIPPER project, the two regions cooperated on marine renewable energies as part of the RenRen project (renewable energy regions network) from January 2010 to December 2012, the objective of which was to set up an inter-regional European network to share experience and cooperate on the subject of renewable energies. Schleswig-Holstein has good project engineering in the MRE sector and is advanced in the installation and development of offshore wind turbines. Pays de la Loire's participation in RenRen has enabled various stakeholders in the MRE sector in Pays de la Loire and Schleswig-Holstein to meet and open channels of cooperation. Also, in 2013 the GRETA (training centre) in Le Mans started an offshore wind turbine maintenance training programme with the support of a body in Schleswig-Holstein that specialises in the field. Economic missions were then programmed in 2015 around several sectors including MRE. In the framework of CLIPPER, relationships have been formed between Atlanpole, Pôle Mer Bretagne Atlantique and the Northern Germany Maritime Cluster.

With the other CLIPPER partner regions, relationships are, as yet, not as formalised. There are a number of shared issues concerning maritime industries, however, which could serve as a basis for future cooperation:

- **Southwest Finland** is the home of the Meyer shipyard in Turku, which has as its particular specialism *greenship* (LNG, Hydrogen, etc.) and *smartship* technologies, two very interesting subjects in view of the subjects entrusted by the Strategic Committee of the sea industries sector to the Pôle Mer Bretagne Atlantique and EMC2.
- **Fife County (Scotland)** is at the forefront of marine renewable energy technology. The region is home to the ORE Catapult Levenmouth demonstrator (the world's largest wind turbine, which offers unrestricted access for research). Work is also under consideration on the subject of ship and wind turbine dismantling. Relationships have been established since 2018 between WEAMEC and St Andrews University about MRE (connected via CLIPPER).
- **Asturias (Spain)** offers an interesting ecosystem centred on the construction of offshore wind turbines (Windar and its sub-contractors). Cooperation could be possible on port issues relating to dredging, clean port, connected port as well as connections between Saint Nazaire and Gijon. In the framework of CLIPPER, relationships have been formed between Atlanpole, Pôle Mer Bretagne Atlantique and FAEN (Asturian Foundation for Renewable Energies).
- **Liguria (Italy)** is home to the Fincantieri shipyard. Numerous projects could be developed between maritime players in Liguria and Pays de la Loire, particularly around the port of Genoa. For example, the PIAQUO project delivered by Naval Group brings together stakeholders from Pays de la Loire, Brittany and Liguria among others, with the aim of reducing the noise impact of maritime traffic and ensure its real-time adaptation to the ecosystems it passes through. In the framework of CLIPPER, relationships have been formed between Atlanpole, Pôle Mer Bretagne Atlantique and DLTM (Ligurian Maritime Technologies cluster).
- **Split Dalmatia (Croatia)** has a developing maritime industry ecosystem. In particular, sailing and the large cruiser market could be an interesting basis of cooperation with Pays de la Loire in the coming years.

ACTION SHEET 1

PUBLICISE OPPORTUNITIES IN EUROPE

Maritime Ambition targeted objective:

Take full advantage of European funding opportunities

Background

European programmes are likely to provide practical responses to the issues faced by the Pays de la Loire area. Their priorities in fact intersect regional skills and priorities in a number of strategic areas, including economic development and in particular support for the blue economy. They are a major source of funding, yet Pays de la Loire has not made sufficient use of these European sector support programmes. They present real opportunities for many stakeholders working on the development and attractiveness of Pays de la Loire, especially SMEs. In fact, they are an important financial lever (particularly in the form of grants) and help businesses to increase their turnover by expanding their markets and developing new collaborations in new markets, particularly through diversification, an approach encouraged by several European programmes.

Blue growth is considered a priority for the European Commission. It is being supported by some 239 million euros between 2018 and 2020. With a view to increasing the ways and means in this field, the European Commission has included this theme in several European measures. Horizon 2020, for example, aiming at industrial primacy, scientific excellence and societal issues, has published more than 80 calls for maritime-related projects since the start of the programme in 2014. Horizon 2020 is sub-divided into several sub-programmes such as FCH JU (*Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking*) and CEF (*Connecting Europe Facility*), which relate to specific subjects: hydrogen / transport, but which also apply to the maritime sector. The Erasmus+ programme, routinely used to promote the mobility of young people within the EU, can also fund projects for professionals in the maritime sector. And so does the COSME programme (financial support for SMEs).

The Executive Agency of SMEs (EASME) also manages funds and programmes, some of which are dedicated to the maritime sector. Between 2014 and 2019, 20 maritime projects representing a total of €92 million have received up to €9.5 million in European funding. Currently*, nine maritime-related calls for projects are still open on the European “funding-tenders” platform for innovative projects, research or coordination projects, or for conducting studies.

Concerning EDRF funding, over the period 2014-2018, in relation to smart specialisation of “maritime industries”, mainly universities and research establishments have benefited from this funding.

Better knowledge of the opportunities offered by the EDRF and European sector support programmes would enable businesses to diversify their funding sources in an increasingly limited regional and local budgetary situation.

*April 2019

Lessons learned in CLIPPER through the exchange of experiences

The aim of CLIPPER is to support the competitiveness of SMEs in the maritime industry sector by improving public policy. However this support is only effective if the SMEs are aware of the opportunities and have the ability to seize them.

Discussions in the CLIPPER consortium have revealed real disparities between regions in terms of the mobilisation of European funding: in Spain, businesses are very aware of European issues and very often successful in calls for projects, unlike France, for example, where businesses are orientated more towards a wide range of existing local support than towards Europe, which is considered complex and time-consuming.

Similarly, like Schleswig-Holstein, maritime industries in Pays de la Loire rarely take ERDF funding opportunities. In fact, while the maritime sector is crucial for this north German state, only about 7% of ERDF funds are allocated to maritime industries, and only 20% of this goes to SMEs and for smaller amounts. The majority of ERDF funding to support maritime industries have been allocated to universities or clusters. Schleswig-Holstein has therefore decided to implement communication programmes aimed at SMEs: joint information events on European opportunities for SMEs, setting

up a website for more transparency and a suggestion box, publicise success stories financed through European fundings.

During a Pays de la Loire CLIPPER working group meeting on the subject of mobilisation of European funds by SMEs in the maritime industries sector, several courses of action were proposed and are now on the verge of being implemented by the Region.

Description of the action

- **Develop communication materials to make European funds more accessible for businesses:**

The implementation of maritime-related projects open to businesses will be monitored in order to identify significant opportunities and projects. Communication actions will be set up for these projects. The list of calls for projects will be published on the Region's Europe website. This list will also be posted on the websites of the Region and its partners in order to reach a larger number of project holders.

Communication actions such as *info-days*, the creation of digital media and preparation of a practical file will then be developed. Existing materials will also be updated to explain the workings of European funds and file progression.

- **Showcase EU-funded projects carried out in the region.**

Site visits for elected representatives have been organised on the regional territory since 2017. They will be renewed for projects delivered by Pays de la Loire companies, which have participated in European projects in the maritime sector. Evidence from peers, such as an account of regional successes, is a powerful means of communication for understanding Europe and making it attractive. These visits are also tools for raising the awareness of the press and citizens to the impact of European projects on the region.

- **Encourage sponsorship:**

The Region is looking into the possibility of setting up a database of approved contacts, which will identify businesses that have already taken part in European projects. These businesses could assist other businesses, on a voluntary basis, along the lines of a Business Development Agreement, with the process of submitting a European file.

Assessment criteria

- Number of events organised and participation rates (info-days)
- Distribution of communication tools
- Weekly updates to the list of calls for projects on the Region's Europe website.
- Number of "sponsor" businesses listed

Timescale

2019-2021

Budget

Time spent (Region Pays de la Loire): 1 day per week (0.2 FTE or about €12,000)

ESIF communication budget: 120 000€ within the multiannual financial framework (trans-sector) to communicate on calls, infodays, flyers, etc. (ie: 17 000€ per year)

Stakeholders involved

Pays de la Loire Region

ACTION SHEET 2

SUPPORT AND COORDINATE THE SETTING UP OF EUROPEAN PROJECTS IN THE PAYS DE LA LOIRE

Maritime Ambition targeted objective:

Take full advantage of European funding opportunities

Background

Following internal and external diagnoses, notably from local economic actors, Pays de la Loire Region noticed its weak participation in European projects. The sources of these weaknesses: internally, public policies departments emphasise the lack of human resources within the Regional council dedicated to editing, filing, monitoring and managing projects, resulting in a small number of Regional participation in European project (partner or leader); externally, local stakeholders criticise the complexity of European project's filling rules and the burden of the red tape in the management of said European projects.

Simultaneously to these diagnoses, as part of the CLIPPER project, a working group comprising businesses, networks, local authorities and financial organisations was set up. This diverse working group has brought stakeholders together to talk about the cross-cutting subject of maritime industries. Preparation of this action plan has been based on the work of this group. Members of this group are also members of other bodies, including the Hub Europe and, in particular, the MRE Europe Working Group. The Hub Europe brings together Pays de la Loire's research and innovation organisations. It stems from a request from local Pays de la Loire stakeholders active in the research and innovation sector, which are involved in European projects, and is jointly managed by the Pays de la Loire Region, Solutions&Co (Economic development agency for Pays de la Loire) and the Pays de la Loire's representative office in Brussels. The MRE Europe Working Group was set up in 2018 by WEAMEC at the Region's request. Its aim is to develop MRE research and innovation projects in Europe, by enabling better coordination of the various stakeholders in the regional MRE ecosystem. Following the Region's work on CLIPPER, and in order to support public policies department, a unit with expertise in setting up European projects has been set up. The Region plans to assist its own departments and stakeholders in Pays de la Loire to set up European sector support funded projects. For this purpose, a team has been created to meet the needs of the Region's public policies departments and project holders wishing to venture into a European project.

Lessons learned in CLIPPER through the exchange of experiences

The consortium's work underlined the importance of interconnections between the different components of maritime value chains and in particular between the different clusters. Interclustering has been identified essential to ensure a good meshing of the ecosystem and the region. From this standpoint, Pays de la Loire clusters were taken as example by other CLIPPER partners. However, this interclustering must intensify on Europeans matters and in particular to support the setting up of European projects: The *Hub Europe* and the WEAMEC Europe MRE WG are working in this direction in particular thanks to feedbacks and good practices highlighted through CLIPPER.

On that regard, feedbacks from Asturias concerning the National Contact Point Network (NCP) highlighted the under-mobilisation by Pays de la Loire stakeholders of this essential tool to support project leaders on the European stage. Indeed, these NCPs give advice on the setting up of projects, administrative procedures and contracts matters, file and help with the writing, support the research for partners. NCPs also rely on numerous dissemination events organized in the regions. The various advisory support systems set up in CLIPPER's partner regions are also inspiring good practices, and in particular, the Schleswig Holstein investment bank's measures, which provide business advice on financing opportunities, eligibility requirements, application procedures, etc. Similarly, the support provided by actors such as FINPRO in Finland or Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) is also an important source of inspiration for the support of projects that the Pays de la Loire Region intends to develop.

Furthermore, when questioned about the mobilisation of European funds by SMEs in the maritime industry sector in the Pays de la Loire, the members of the Pays de la Loire CLIPPER stakeholders group raised several obstacles which call for support from the Region:

Above all, stakeholders stress the complexity of the European funding files (ERDF and sector support programmes), not only in respect of file editing and checks but also in relation to the vernacular used. This complexity, though not insurmountable according to the stakeholders, currently requires either specific internal resources or sometimes costly external support. Similarly, was also mentioned the need to identify European opportunities, and collaborators to share their methods with and to coordinate with, in order to spread these opportunities across the region.

In addition, the lack of knowledge, particularly in off-network businesses, but also in the structures and networks themselves, not having been trained or assimilated in the workings and language of European projects, prompts the implementation of measures to mitigate the bad press and prejudices concerning European funding which can often discourage companies.

Description of the action

• Train companies contacts

Training cycles within the Region and with other economic developers from the Regional Agency will be organised on a regular basis. These will enable teams to acquire basic knowledge of the EU's various sector support programmes and the workings of the structural funds, particularly ERDF.

Similarly, conference cycles will be organised by the Hub Europe to raise awareness of first level relays and companies about these issues. Specific conferences on funding opportunities for maritime projects will be set up.

• Support businesses in setting up European projects

○ A unit of experts dedicated to supporting and setting up European projects within the Pays de la Loire Region

A unit with expertise in setting up European projects has been established within the Region's European Policies Department. Its aim is to increase the number of European projects applied for, in order to consolidate its position on the European regional scene. The Region thus possesses a unit specialising in setting up and delivering European projects. In conjunction with the Region's other policies departments, the European action section, to which the unit belongs, identifies the needs and priorities of the Region and the policy departments, and gears its actions towards the relevant European programmes and calls for projects. The unit supports the technical department in writing, submitting and monitoring the project.

The unit is also available to local stakeholders in Pays de la Loire for setting up European sector support funded projects.

○ APPUI CONSEIL EUROPE (ACE): a pool of expert consultants

To help project holders with writing their response and to increase their chances of getting grants, the Region allocates funds to each project holder to pay for a set number of hours of support from a consultant specialising in European projects. For this purpose, it has identified a team of consultants with experience in the administrative and technical compilation of European files. The ACE 2020 measure, armed with €75,000, is divided into lots: innovation and competitiveness of SMEs, biodiversity and the energy transition and finally youth, learning and citizenship. The measure aims to support the development of European projects, particularly those related to European cooperation and European regional strategy.

The services offered by the consultancy firms include proofreading, advice on responding to the demands of the specific European programme, drafting a strategic part of the file, putting together a realistic finance plan and finally looking for partners and help with setting up a consortium.

○ Make use of the Europe task officers in technopoles and competitiveness clusters

Atlanpole, like the Region's other technopoles, supports SMEs from detection to submission of the file, for all types of European projects. Europe task officers help these SMEs find partners and carry out a diagnosis of the business's ability to go to Europe. On a case by case basis, support may be

offered for compiling and editing the file, recommending approved consultants for this compilation, help with writing, proofreading, etc. In addition, Atlanpole helps businesses to better assess their ability to seek European funding: Horizon 2020, SME Instrument, Eurostars, ERDF, etc. and offers a free diagnosis.

EMC2's Europe Desk is also a driving force behind the emergence of European projects, through collective actions such as TASK FORCE Europe and Topic Interest Groups, which can be a relevant framework for directing businesses towards European funding opportunities. On a more individual basis, EMC2's Start'Europe service can identify funding opportunities in Europe and determine which schemes are the most promising for the business.

- **Group projects for preparing responses to European calls for projects**

The WEAMEC Europe MRE WG provides project holders with effective support for the setting up of European projects through commented re-readings of project proposals, or a forum to discuss the proposal by surrounding itself with experts in the field. In 2019, EMC2 also set up working groups: Topic Interest Groups, which aim to rally businesses and academics around targeted European calls for projects and to support them with their projects.

- **CAP EUROPE: The Pôle Mer's new service**

Pôle Mer Bretagne Atlantique provides a new offer of support for European project development. This service offer will allow members to be accompanied at different stages of a European project and according to their needs:

- Identification of European opportunities: the Pôle helps the company that requests it to identify the most relevant financing windows for its project, informs its members about these opportunities at thematic meetings and organizes qualified meetings with European bodies when relevant.
- Help with project's elaboration: Europe and technical experts of the Pôle help the company in decrypting the specifications of the various calls for projects, provide administrative, technical and financial support in the drafting and constitution of the application file.
- Project expertise: the Pôle Mer sets up reading committees formed of at least three experts, provides a commented analysis of the project, and supports its consolidation. It also puts the project leader in touch with relevant National Contact Points (NCPs). Project follow-up: the Pôle proposes to accompany the project management and to help the project leader in the communication and the dissemination of the results.

Finally, among the Pôle Mer Bretagne Atlantique partners are consulting firms, banks or media that can provide a targeted service in the context of the European development of the Pôle's members: feasibility study, drafting of the project, legal assistance, financial consolidation, project management, communication, etc.

In its European actions, the Pôle Mer relies heavily on technopoles and Europe working groups of the two covered Regions (Hub Europe in Pays de la Loire and Réseau Noé in Brittany) which allows it to strengthen the territorial network for the deployment of this new offer.

- **Coordinate projects at European scale**

Each head of network will be called upon to list their organisation's priorities and the various project holders that surround it, in order to highlight the themes on which to look for relevant European funding. The plan is to dispatch maritime themes between these heads of network (Pôle Mer, EMC2, WEAMEC, etc.) and provide overall coordination with support from the Region.

- **Organise a network of maritime stakeholders for Europe**

At Hub Europe meetings, depending on relevance, Hub members interested in subjects relating to maritime industries will be able to meet to discuss focused European opportunities and current calls for projects, inviting, as appropriate, stakeholders who have participated in the CLIPPER group (Chantiers de l'Atlantique, Naval Group, Geps Techno and other maritime SMEs, maritime centres and clusters (Pôle Mer Bretagne Atlantique, EMC2, Atlanpole, NINA, Weamec, Neopolia, IWSA, IRT Jules Verne, etc.), the Grand Port Nantes-Saint Nazaire, research bodies (Centrale Nantes, University

of Nantes, ISEMAR, IFREMER, etc.), banks (Crédit Maritime, Banque Populaire Grand Ouest, Caisse d'Épargne), specialised investment funds, the Regional Chamber of Commerce (particularly the EEN team) and a number of local authorities).

At the same time, the WEAMEC MRE EUROPE Working Group will also continue its work and keep Hub Europe members informed of its activities. By identifying together, the available resources in the ecosystem, this working group actively monitors the possibilities for European collaboration by identifying international MRE calls for project and encouraging their dissemination via a dedicated website. It also identifies relevant international MRE events.

Assessment criteria

- Number of awareness raising actions and their audiences
- Number of ACE 2020 files and success rates
- Number of files supported by the centres, technopole and IRT and their success rates

Timescale

On a continuous basis

Budget

ACE 2020: €75,000 (total budget)

Lot 1 SMEs innovation and competitiveness: 20 000€

Lot 2 biodiversity and energy transition: 10 000€

Lot 3 youth, citizenship and training: 30 000€

Maritime question currently represents 2,5% of the scheme.

Time spent Region: 0.2 FTE (about €12,000)

Regional funding of Europe referents:

- EMC2 (€7,800 for 3 years), 199K€ ERDF for this programming period
- Atlanpole (0,75 FTE/year for Europe support to maritime) 8M€ ERDF for this programming period
- Pôle Mer Bretagne Atlantique (4 FTE/year for project in which the cluster is project partner representing a budget of approximately 200K€ + the support of the cluster's members in their European projects)

Stakeholders involved

Pays de la Loire Region; Solution &co; CCI; WEAMEC; Atlanpole; PMBA; EMC2; IRT Jules Verne

ACTION SHEET 3

MOBILISE MARITIME SMEs TO ENSURE THEIR NEEDS ARE INCLUDED IN FUTURE ERDF PROGRAMMING

Maritime Ambition targeted objective:

- Take full advantage of European funding opportunities
- Further influence European policy to prepare for the future

Background

The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and in particular the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) are an important lever of support for regional policies. Optimal use of these programmes lies in finding the perfect match of ESIF intervention possibilities and the strategies and objectives identified across the region. Mobilising the ERDF should therefore supplement regional policies, particularly for supporting research and development programmes, improving the competitiveness of businesses and supporting the energy transition and protection of the environment, in keeping with all regional strategies and in particular the Maritime Ambition. For the 2014-2020 programme, nearly a billion euros in European credits are managed by the Pays de la Loire Region, under the cohesion policy (ERDF and ESF) but also under the 2nd pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy (EAFRD) and the Common Fisheries Policy (EMFF). More specifically, over 17 million euros from ERDF are devoted to improving the competitiveness of SMEs under the current programme. The ERDF also supports innovation, research and development projects, in conjunction with the Region's smart specialisation in maritime industries, which are likely to bring out new innovative applications for the sector in Pays de la Loire. For example, the MER integrated platform for construction engineering (PRIIC-Mer), aimed at studying the behaviour of civil engineering structures and materials in the marine environment, will help to confirm the region's excellence in this sector.

The future of the European Union's regional policy is currently under debate. The European Commission has presented its proposals which give an indication of regional policy for the period 2021-2027. In this context of reflection and negotiation, it is the Region's responsibility to start planning the next programme.

This planning involves identifying the needs and issues of the Pays de la Loire region with a view to then developing appropriate programmes to deal with regional issues and applying appropriate solutions to them. The Pays de la Loire Region wants to be able to rely for the duration of this period of reflection on an extensive partnership consisting of local public authorities and social and economic partners. In this context, to get planning under way, a wide-ranging consultation programme was initiated from January to March 2019.

Lessons learned in CLIPPER through the exchange of experiences

In Schleswig Holstein, only about 7% of the ERDF funds managed by the Land were allocated to maritime industries of which only 30% benefited SMEs and for small amounts. In order to understand this under-mobilization of ERDF funds by SMEs in the maritime industries, the University of Kiel (CLIPPER partner) set up a working group associating SMEs, academics and institutions to work together to finance maritime industries in the region. This group worked in particular on the mechanisms for allocating funds and adapting the ERDF's strategic axes to SME issues.

In addition, the creative animation methods used throughout the first phase of the project during the consortium meetings (for example, the Serious Game designed specifically for the project and integrated into the CLIPPER toolbox), allowed the emergence of problems, interesting solutions and tools that have been included in the action plans of the various partners.

These working methods will serve as useful inspirations for the preparation of the ERDF OP 2021-2027 and the integration of the needs of SMEs in the maritime industries into the European regional strategies.

In addition, among the good practices developed in the CLIPPER Toolbox, the partners notably recommended that public policy tools be put in place in accordance with a renewed Regional Innovation Strategy for Intelligent Specialization (RIS3), incorporating fully the stakes of the maritime industries.

Description of the action

The CLIPPER stakeholders' group, set up in April 2017, is a wide-ranging panel representing the whole ecosystem of maritime industries in Pays de la Loire. For the two and a half years of the first phase of the project, discussions were centred on issues relating to European programming and business funding. Preparation for the future period of ERDF programming, based on a renewed regional innovation strategy for smart specialisation (RIS3), will therefore be able to rely on this working group and its output.

As part of the new programming of the ERDF Operational Program, special attention will be given to maritime specificities.

Pays de la Loire Region has started working on post 2020 at various levels. At regional level, two steering committees. The first political committee gathers the Region's President, the General Director of Services, its deputy directors and directors, and a technical committee gathering directors and technical experts. From January until November 2019, a diagnosis phase has been engaged by the service in charge of post 2020, in each department of the Region. The Region will rely on this diagnosis to highlight regional priorities for the next programming period.

In January 2020, for each fund thematic groups will be created, among which a maritime sub-group, ensuring that maritime industries will have their place in the 2021-2027 ESIF.

The CLIPPER stakeholders group will be involved in the preparation of future programming actions. At national level, the Region takes part in the Europe Directors Working Group, which works with the Prime Minister services on negotiation over the next programming period. These services then relay to the European Commission issues expressed in the region.

In the future 2021-2027 ERDF programme, support for projects from maritime industries appears entirely possible. Two strategic EU objectives for 2021-2027 programming could be used for this purpose:

- A smarter Europe (innovation, economic transformation, support for SMEs)
- A greener, carbon-neutral Europe (energy transition, renewable energies and combating global warming).

The maritime aspect of these objectives will be included when preparing the operational programme, as a priority theme for Pays de la Loire. Stakeholders from Pays de la Loire will be mobilised during consultation prior to the adoption of the new programme, and particular attention will be given to projects related to the maritime economy. Work on preparation of the new programme started earlier this year and will be upscaled in the second half of the year but will mostly take place in 2020.

Assessment criteria

Number of meetings organised and number of "maritime" participants

Timescale

2019-2020: preparation period for the future OP model

Budget

Time spent Region: 1 FTE (96 000€) within the European Policies Department

Stakeholders involved

Pays de la Loire Region, members of the Pays de la Loire CLIPPER working group

ACTION SHEET 4

INFLUENCE EUROPEAN MARITIME POLICY IN PREPARATION FOR THE FUTURE

Maritime Ambition targeted objective:

Further influence European policy to prepare for the future

Background

The Region relies on its representative office in Brussels which keeps a watch on what is happening in Europe, facilitates dialogue with European decision-makers and collaborates with recognised networks in Brussels. The Pays de la Loire Region initiated the creation of the Atlantic Arc Regions network which currently meets in the Atlantic Arc Committee of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), which the Pays de la Loire Region has chaired since June 2016 (term renewed for two years in June 2018).

The Region also engages in targeted lobbying on subjects of strong regional interest such as the shipbuilding industry, marine renewable energies and the accessibility of the Grand Port Maritime Nantes Saint Nazaire, owing in particular a connection to the Atlantic corridor. This dynamic is consistent with the present widespread trend among European stakeholders – parliaments, governments, professional bodies, regional authorities – of moving towards a more proactive maritime policy. Some major issues have recently come before the European Union, such as international governance of the oceans, the skills of workers in the maritime technologies sector, marine pollution and the ships and ports of the future. Climate change, which is having substantial impact on coastal areas, is a priority for the European Union.

Lessons learned in CLIPPER through the exchange of experiences

In 2012, at the initiative of the Pays de la Loire Region, a number of European regions signed a memorandum to create a working group called “Maritime Industries for Blue Growth”. The group contributed to the setting up of the Leadership 2020 strategy: “The sea, pool of opportunities for the future” adopted in 2013, which sets out a number of recommendations for protecting the sector. The CLIPPER project emerged directly from the working group and is committed to implementing certain LEADERSHIP actions.

The European authorities have therefore identified CLIPPER as a gateway and an important inter-regional working group for the future of maritime industries. In addition to chairing the Atlantic Arc Committee, CLIPPER is a platform that enables the Pays de la Loire Region to influence future maritime industrial policy in Europe.

As Leadership 2020 nears its end, the CPMR, as part of this same “maritime industries” working group (currently chaired by Southwest Finland, a CLIPPER member with which Pays de la Loire works closely), is pushing for the adoption of Leadership 2030. For this purpose, on 7 March 2019 the Pays de la Loire Region, as Chair of the Atlantic Arc Committee and coordinator of the CLIPPER project, presented the CPMR’s draft policy position on maritime industries at the CPMR Office, pleading for a major European maritime industry strategy.

Description of the action**• Work to set up an over-arching maritime industry strategy in Europe**

The maritime industry sector in Europe is faced with considerable challenges. The European Commission itself considers the future for maritime industries to be uncertain. This uncertainty is due to the weakness of global demand and increasing international competition, particularly from China in the construction of complex ships. Due to its distinctive know-how Europe has real protectionism in this area, which it is important to preserve for the long-term future of European shipbuilding. Maintaining a maritime industry, jobs and maritime industrial know-how in Europe is fundamental, not just for current jobs, but also because maritime industries are an essential knowledge base for the strategic sector of defence and the development of emerging sectors, including marine energies and marine biotechnologies.

The policy position adopted by the CPMR, under the impetus of the Pays de la Loire Region, highlights this objective, and expresses three principal policy messages for supporting it:

1. Develop a European strategy for maritime industries...
2. ...which supports specific objectives around which to coordinate European policies:

- Promote European interests in the global context
 - Train and attract workers and prevent social dumping
 - Innovate for more sustainability and competitiveness
3. Synergise European funding with regional strategies.

As part of the CPMR, the Region will monitor the work coordinated by the Southwest Finland Region to support the setting up of a new LeaderSHIP strategy, in conjunction with European stakeholders (particularly Sea Europe, European association of maritime civil and naval industries). As such, the Region will visit Brussels regularly to meet representatives of the Commission's various directorates-general, parliamentarians, and European maritime associations.

• **Ensure the Pays de la Loire economic stakeholders' interests are heard in Brussels**

The Region relies on its representative office in Brussels which keeps a watch on what is happening in Europe, facilitates dialogue with European decision-makers and collaborates with recognised networks in Brussels. The Office is available to assist the region's stakeholders in finding new European funding and works to protect the interests of Pays de la Loire in the European institutions. The Region and its representative office will be able to keep watch on European opportunities targeted at SMEs in the maritime industry sector, in conjunction with the issues raised by CLIPPER, especially in relation to the 2021-2027 programme. Given that the CLIPPER action plan starts when the next European funding programmes are being prepared, the Region will be able to play a role in sending messages about these issues to the European institutions, in connection with regional stakeholders.

These are also taking action, such as the Pôle Mer Bretagne Atlantique, which as part of its renewed Europe strategy is setting up a Brussels "Road Show" programme. Pôle Mer plans to send some of its members to Brussels 2 or 3 times a year to meet representatives of various general departments of the Commission as well as influential stakeholders on the Brussels scene, to bring the cluster and its members to their attention and to protect their interests. The Pôle prepares its visits with the Pays de la Loire representative office in Brussels by building a programme tailored to answer the member needs on the one hand (lobby functioning, making itself known in Brussels, better apprehend access to European funding, particularly the EIB and ECB mechanisms, meet with actors at the origin of calls to express messages on the big issues of the thematic at stake, prepare future European call for tenders...); and on the other hand the Pôle Mer itself (label recognition, advertise about the functioning and network of the Pole Mer in Brussels).

EMC2 is going to place a resource in Brussels so it can detect European opportunities and provide appropriate representation for the cluster and its members on the European scene. The actions of stakeholders from Pays de la Loire will, as far as possible, be coordinated by the Pays de la Loire office in Brussels.

To reinforce the European integration of Pays de la Loire MRE ecosystem and its challenges, WEAMEC participate to for major lobbying European institution in favour of marine renewable energies (wind Europe, ETIPWind, EERA JP Wind, Ocean Energy Europe). This action provides Pays de la Loire stakeholders access to information about the future European calls in advance, participation to winning consortia at European level and allows taking part in the writing of key document influencing the elaboration of future calls. In the frame of the 2021-2027 programming preparation, WEAMEC will reinforce its action, in coherence with the objectives fixed for the WEAMEC Europe MRE WG to which the Region participate.

Assessment criteria

Number of demands to the Pays de la Loire representative office in Brussels by stakeholders in the region.

Pôle Mer centre: number of Road Shows and number of participating members from Pays de la Loire

Timescale

2019-2021

Budget

Representative office in Brussels: 0.2 FTE (about 12,000€)

Pôle Mer centre: about €4,000 for the Road Shows in Brussels

Stakeholders involved

Pays de la Loire Region, Office in Brussels, CPMR, PMBA, EMC2, WEAMEC

ACTION SHEET 5

LAUNCH A MARITIME INDUSTRY RESOLUTIONS CALL WITH ASTURIAS

Maritime Ambition targeted objective:

- Support innovation in the blue economy
- MRE: continue efforts towards innovation and technological performance

Background

In a situation of increased need for competitiveness, innovation remains a strategic lever for many stakeholders. In this regard, the Region is seeking to facilitate access to innovation for the largest number of businesses, and to develop skills and resources in the region that will enable businesses to carry out innovation projects. The regional Maritime Ambition is a reminder that when it comes to maritime industries the important thing is to prioritise R&D activities and at the same time find a balance between support for upstream and downstream projects.

The Region has therefore developed and is supporting a comprehensive innovation support ecosystem that can be mobilised by businesses in this sector: competitiveness clusters to support collaborative projects (Pôle Mer Bretagne Atlantique, EMC2, S2E2), a technopole with specific expertise in the maritime economy (Atlanpole), the Composites, Océan and Smart Factory technocampuses, centres of excellence such as IRT and CEA-Tech, and a business cluster (NEOPOLIA).

Maritime industries are at the intersection of a number of sectors: digital, energy, transport, construction, manufacturing, etc. This intersection between sectors would appear to be essential to innovation and the development of maritime industrial sectors in Pays de la Loire for both large groups and SMEs needing to diversify, innovate and forge solid partnerships in order to remain competitive and grow.

The Resolutions scheme, set up by the Region in 2016, meets these objectives. Resolutions encourages “open innovation” by organising a meeting point between the needs expressed by mature businesses and the solutions offered by start-ups and applied research laboratories.

Lessons learned in CLIPPER through the exchange of experiences Industrial performance is one of the SMEs competitiveness levers identified by the project. In this respect, the CLIPPER partners have shared good practices, including:

- **The Resolutions scheme** presented by the Pays de la Loire Region is of particular interest to the partners. On the basis of British experience (IC Tomorrow), the Pays de la Loire Region would like to encourage fast marketing of new and effective solutions, in order for Pays de la Loire to become a territory where businesses develop and quickly consolidate by stimulating their growth through innovation. Resolutions is a scheme that can easily be transferred to other regions. It relies on the skills offered by various sectors and is disseminated by a large innovation ecosystem. It also encourages maritime industries to adopt solutions that operate in other sectors.
- **The Tractorres programme** set up by the development Agency of Asturias (IDEPA): this call for collaborative projects aims at financing differentiating projects, driven by big companies, allowing to meet the challenges that the Region has set on the mid-long term in sectors identify in the Asturian RIS3. This call for project was designed to promote cooperation between big players (tractors) and SMEs, and regional research centres, regional test sites and Universities R&D groups.

Internationalisation is another SME competitiveness lever identify in the framework of the project. The consortium’s work notably led partners to imagine a new scheme for an international strategic alliance facilitating collaboration between two or more enterprises and thus facilitating their entrance on new markets, through the development of a new innovative product for instance.

Description of the action

Launch a maritime industries Resolution call in 2020 with Asturias:

Resolutions is a call for innovation created by the Pays de la Loire Region to give local businesses access to the most effective innovative solutions on the market and thus solve their development problems. Pays de la Loire Region and the Principality of Asturias will launch in 2020 a common Resolutions call on a maritime industry subject. The Resolutions model as it currently works will be extended to this partnership according to the following standard procedure:

1- Call for issues:

- Formulation of challenges: economic actors from Pays de la Loire and Asturias are invited to state their maritime industry-related development issues (subject to be specified)
- Selection of challenges : challenges are selected by a jury in each region and the holder of the challenge receive targeted coaching (by Solutions & Co and FAEN) to restate its development issue into an innovation opportunity.

2 – Call for solutions:

- Applications from solution providers: the opening of the call for solutions is formalised by an event on the selected subject, in the course of which the reformulated issues are presented. Solution providers are invited to apply on the website with an on-line application form and a short video. *The current Resolutions website will be translated in English and Spanish to adapt itself to this new format.*
- Selection of solutions: a panel will select 3 solution providers for each issue. The solutions will be presented at an event and each entrepreneur will announce the winner for the issue he stated. Each winning solution will be allocated €20,000 for its development. The Region in whose territory the project will be developed will allocate the grant.

3- Team work:

- Co-development of the solution: the entrepreneurs and solution providers will work together to develop the solution and give feedbacks about the realisation to both regions.

Assessment criteria

Number of issues proposed
Number of solutions submitted
Number of solutions deployed

Timescale

From 2020

Budget

€17,000 for staff cost and translation / communication expenses (Solutions&Co's budget)
€20,000 investment grants per solution to be developed = 60 000 €for Pays de la Loire Region (same for IDEPA)

Stakeholders involved

Pays de la Loire Region, Solutions&Co, IDEPA, FAEN, PMBA, EMC2, Weamec, Neopolia, NINA, Asturian maritime innovation ecosystem.

ACTION SHEET 6

FACILITATE ACCESS TO ALL FORMS OF FUNDING FOR MARITIME SMEs

Maritime Ambition targeted objective:

Financial and political levers in favour of maritime projects

Background

Risk sharing, particularly financial risk sharing is an important issue for businesses in the maritime industry sector, and even more so for SMEs. In fact, the imbalance of information between funding organisations (especially banks) and businesses is particularly great in the maritime sectors, due to the specific characteristics of these sectors, which are often perceived as (very) risky because of the international extent of the markets and the importance of innovation, especially in emerging sectors such as marine renewable energies (we will note however that the risk and insurance against this risk is very different depending on the project and sector of activity). These maritime risks, real or perceived, accentuated in certain phases of development, make it necessary to secure funding organisations prepared to give what are considered more risky loans. In addition to security instruments, which are one of the bases of the Region's funding policy, security must also assess the real risks in more detail. To de-risk the project, funding organisations should have more detailed knowledge of the specific characteristics of the maritime sector and its specialist ecosystem.

The Region is striving to ensure that businesses do not encounter difficulties with equity capital, which is a factor of weakness in a period of crisis and an obstacle to the implementation of development projects. The Region therefore intervenes in equity capital through various investment funds, but it takes into account the highly competitive nature of the capital-investment market. Its intervention is therefore only lawful in those investment segments less covered by the private market. Its primary objective is to maximise the lever effect on private investors by ensuring they do not, despite proven potential, opt out of the riskiest projects. The Region provides an impetus to encourage the implementation of new offers in the region and acts as a driving force for greater mobilisation of private stakeholders and local savings in less well covered market segments. The Region wants to increase its equity capital action by increasing its investment capacity. To do this, it structured its approach by bringing all its holdings in funds or underlying capital-risk companies together within a fund of funds. Pooling within a single structure like this will enable it to optimise its asset management and to recycle the products of sales and dividends so they can be reinvested, for the benefit of the Pays de la Loire economy, in new vehicles of investment or by enhancing the existing vehicles. The creation of the fund of funds has enabled external financial resources to be mobilised (bank debt) in order to increase the Region's action in favour of market sectors or segments that appear to be priorities the seed market segments and interventions in creation and primo-development (€100,000 to €700,000) but also sectors with high potential around blue growth and green growth as well as around modernisation of industry (Industry of the Future).

Finally, to spread the risk, businesses are increasingly encouraged to turn to disintermediated and appropriate engineering competitions (bond market, crowdfunding, insurance mechanisms, savings products, etc.) to diversify their sources of funding and consolidate their projects. This is particularly applicable to the manufacturing sector, where there are specific needs, as in the case of maritime industries (heavy investment, considerable need for working capital, heightened sensitivity to economic cycles, international competition, etc.).

Lessons learned in CLIPPER through the exchange of experiences Risk sharing, particularly for financial risks, is one of the competitiveness levers for SMEs identified by the project. In this regard, the CLIPPER partners have worked on the definition of risk and have tried to understand how it is perceived and consequently accepted or otherwise. The group therefore developed the idea that, even if risk sharing between more parties is desirable, it is preferable that the risk is reduced by providing the experience and knowledge to manage this risk fully. The problem consists of finding good stakeholders to accept the companies' risk profile at the various stages of growth. Perception of risk depends on the experience and knowledge of the matter possessed by the person who will

bear the risk. For this reason, the Pays de la Loire CLIPPER stakeholders group, when questioned on this point, suggested that if maritime industry ecosystems on the one hand, and financial organisations on the other, knew more about each other, risk would be assessed more accurately, with the result that the risk on the project finances would be reduced and the competitiveness of the business increased.

Similarly, the CLIPPER partners have studied the different investment policies implemented in the Regions. A map of investment funds of the Pays de la Loire, Fife and Schleswig-Holstein has been created. Particular interest has been given to public-private co-investment funds. Finally, the CLIPPER partners are particularly interested in alternative methods of funding, following the example of Fife, which has created a local *crowdfunding* platform for funding maritime projects in particular.

Description of the action

- **Acculturate financial organisations to maritime issues**

Present the issues facing maritime industries in Pays de la Loire to the financial market

Maritime events are an opportunity to raise the awareness of financial organisations to the specific characteristics of the maritime sector: Salon Nautic, Vendée Globe, Seanergy, Start West, etc. The Region will benefit from these many opportunities to promote dialogue between financial organisations and economic stakeholders in the maritime industries. Maritime Financing Conferences will be held on these occasions. The association NINA (Nautisme Innovation Numérique Atlantique) will set up specific information / training workshops, in connection with the nautical cluster (in creation), to support the nautical SMEs in the different stages of project financing (meeting with specialized lawyers, investment funds, business angels, BPI France).

In addition, more specific presentations on the issues of MRE, shipbuilding, hydrogen, etc., as well as the operation of specialist centres and clusters could be put forward to the local financing place through NAPF, association which gathers local financing actors (banks and investors) and companies and whose goal is to facilitate exchanges between them.

For example, 2 to 3 times a year, the Pôle Mer Bretagne Atlantique organises *Blue Connections* to raise the awareness of its financial organisations club to maritime matters (visits to iconic sites, presentation of innovative projects, etc.).

- **Regional financial engineering mobilised for the benefit of maritime projects**

The Region's objective is to consolidate the equity capital of regional businesses, which are often structurally under-capitalised, with the aim of sustainably anchoring jobs and skills in the region.

Concerning maritime projects, in the context of the fund of funds, the Region undertakes to continue its investment policy in favour of its Maritime Ambition by adapting its investment policy to the needs of the region and mobilising all its partners (influencers and finance organisations) to this issue. The Region will thus endeavour to develop appropriate funding solutions for these projects (appropriate finance for the inherent risks of the maritime sector).

- **Provide information about alternative financing and FINTECH's actions: new sources of opportunities for the maritime sector**

Alternative methods of finance are raising for businesses. The Region will endeavour to facilitate the knowledge of maritime stakeholders of these opportunities.

Maritime companies will be invited to participate to events organised by the regional financing place in order for them to be able to cease the various financing opportunities available in the Region (e.g.: NAPF meetings "The FINTECH support western companies" on November 5th 2019).

The Region will launch in 2020 a Resolutions call on FINTECH subjects. This call will be particularly relayed to maritime actors in order to find innovative solutions to the specific financing challenges of the sector (risk sharing, hazards, etc.): maritime actors will be encouraged to participate to propose challenges in link with financing issues of their particular sector.

Assessment criteria

Number of awareness raising events

Number of maritime projects funded

Amount of investments
Lever effect on private funds

Timescale

In line with events from 2019 to 2021

Budget

10 man-days per year (about €2,700 - Region)

Stakeholders involved

NAPF, centres and clusters, holdings and underlying investment funds of the Pays de la Loire, business Angels, NINA

ACTION SHEET 7

FACILITATE ACCESS TO THE BLUE ECONOMY INVESTMENT PLATFORM FOR STAKEHOLDERS IN THE PAYS DE LA LOIRE

Maritime Ambition targeted objective:

Financial and political levers in favour of maritime projects

Background

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) is currently developing an approach aimed at promoting innovation and mobilising investment in the blue economy by setting up a reservoir of potential projects: *Blue Invest Platform*

In the summer of 2018, EASME (The European Commission's Executive Agency for SMEs) published a call for tenders in order to select a service provider to set up and manage a support mechanism for facilitating access to funding for SMEs, start-ups, early stage and developing businesses in the blue economy. The aim is therefore to select a number of projects and businesses, to support them in their preparation for seeking funding and thus facilitate public and private investment in the blue economy. This platform will be set up by the end of 2019- beginning of 2020 by the DG MARE with the support of a European consortium led by PricewaterhouseCoopers. A dedicated webpage was published in September 2019 on maritime webpages of the European Commission's website.

Lessons learned in CLIPPER through the exchange of experiences Risk sharing, particularly for financial risks, is one of the competitiveness levers for SMEs identified by the project. In this respect, the methods of co-investment and promotion of projects, secured and validated by a panel of assessors, which will be set up as part of this *Blue Invest Platform*, are in line with the recommendations of the CLIPPER project.

The CLIPPER partners have actively participated in the work of the DG MARE in setting up this platform. They will be the preferred contacts in the implementation and operational phases for facilitating the detection of potential projects.

Description of the action

The Blue Invest Platform aims at facilitating blue economy companies' access to public and private capital. To achieve this objective, the service provider of this platform will :

- Create, organise and promote a "blue investment and innovation community" that brings together public and private maritime investors, businesses – particularly SMEs, accelerators, maritime clusters and relevant business networks as well as business support and consultancy networks. This community will take shape via an annual *Blue Invest* event, in thematic workshops and seminars in each maritime basin, and on a digital networking platform. A Blue Invest Academy will also be set up in that goal and will provides courses, training events and webinars to accompany SMEs and allow them to accelerate their development in matters of investment, access to market and internationalisation.
- Develop coaching, mentoring, consultancy and support services to help maritime businesses to assess their propensity to invest and overcome their weakness in the subject, in order to support their development and their investment projects in the blue economy. It is also possible for local actors to become coach.
- Support EASME in respect of EMFF calls in order to assess proposals to award grants to SMEs.
- Set up a blue economy investment platform. This platform could be structured according to the various options to be defined by the service provider. It will make proposals on the use of European financial instruments and funds to support access to financing for maritime companies. A new instrument, including the EMFF, the European Investment Bank and other funds, is also under discussion.
- Establish and supply a pipeline of maritime projects that could be financed, serving as the basis of the investment platform for the blue economy that will be set up.

The Region will ensure that projects and actors from Pays de la Loire have extensive access to this platform. It will be kept informed and consulted about new developments concerning financing methods and will facilitate local and European contacts.

Assessment criteria

Number of SMEs from Pays de la Loire participating in events, coaching programmes, etc.
Number of Pays de la Loire projects funded

Timescale

From the setting up of the platform (end of 2019)

Budget

No Regional council budget

Stakeholders involved

Pays de la Loire Region, DG MARE, EASME, centres and clusters, CPMR

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Stamp of the organisation (if available): _____