

MATES TO CLOSE GAP BETWEEN SKILLS DEMAND AND SUPPLY IN THE MARITIME SECTOR

Press release: April 2018

While it is evident that skills are a pathway to employability in the maritime sector, there is still a great divide between industry requirements and provisions made by existing education and training systems.

With this in mind, a new European Commission (EC) Erasmus+ funded project, MATES, aims at tackling the ensuing skill shortages in the maritime sectors of offshore renewable energy and shipbuilding, and in doing so, will contribute to a more resilient labour market.

The labour market in the maritime sector has several current and future challenges to withstand; not only the digitalisation of industrial processes, but also geopolitical and socioeconomic changes on a global scale and the rising demand for more sustainable practices amongst others. Both the offshore renewable energy and shipbuilding sectors are strongly linked and require new capacities to succeed in this increasingly digital, green and knowledge driven landscape.

As an EC ‘Sector Skills Alliance’ Blueprint project, **MATES**, intends to deliver sector-specific solutions using an industry-led framework. It will develop a skills strategy that addresses the main drivers of change to the offshore renewable energy and shipbuilding industries and as part of that strategy, will pilot 11 case studies to test newly-developed **MATES’** concepts on digital skills, green skills, mobility, innovation management, curricula development and ocean literacy.

Blueprint projects are part of the EC’s ‘A New Skills Agenda for Europe’ launched in 2016. Their purpose is to tackle skills gaps with regard to occupational profiles in a specific sector by identifying the demand (through existing or emerging labour market needs) and by enhancing the supply side (through the responsiveness of education and training systems).

MATES is coordinated by Centro Tecnológico del Mar - Fundación CETMAR in Spain, and brings together 17 partners from eight European countries, encompassing a wide range of expertise. At the recent kick-off meeting (7 and 8 February 2018 in Brussels, Belgium) Lucia Fraga, **MATES** Coordinator at Fundacion CETMAR, said, *“MATES is an important and timely project for the offshore renewable energy and shipbuilding sectors. We have brought together a strong team with a multidisciplinary background with experts from industry and academia. Everyone involved is to eager to tackle the challenges to safeguard the wellbeing of maritime communities and the overall competitiveness of the industry.”*

Over the coming months, **MATES** will work with key industry stakeholders at regional workshops to start the identification of baseline information which will feed other activities in the project. Outcomes will be posted on the **MATES** project website, available soon at www.projectmates.eu

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For further information about **MATES** please contact the Project Coordinator, Lucia Fraga (mates@cetmar.org) or the Communications Officer, Olivia Daly (olivia@aquatt.ie).



Photo: Participants of the **MATES** consortium at the project's kick off meeting in February 2018, Brussels, Belgium

Notes for Editors

The **MATES** project will run from 2018-2021 with an overall budget of €4 million. “**MATES** - *Maritime Alliance for fostering the European Blue economy through a Marine Technology Skilling Strategy*” is funded by the European Commission's Erasmus+ funding programme.

MATES is coordinated by the Centro Tecnológico del Mar - Fundación CETMAR. The main objectives of Fundación CETMAR is to promote cooperation among institutions, research centres and the maritime and fishery sectors, encourage the involvement of dependent sectors of the sea in research and development, and promote the efficiency of all activities related to the use and exploitation of the marine environment. More information is available at www.cetmar.org. AquaTT is the project dissemination partner www.aquatt.ie.