

Fostering research, development, and innovation for a sustainable blue economy

The Waterborne Technology Platform and the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership (SBEP) announced enhanced cooperation which underlines both players' firm commitment to develop a sustainable blue economy

Brussels, 26 September 2023

In an effort to develop innovative solutions for a sustainable blue economy, the Waterborne Technology Platform and the [Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership](#) have announced their enhanced cooperation on 26 September 2023, on the occasion of the Waterborne Days. The collaboration will be laid down in a joint declaration in due course.

Both parties share a common interest in contributing to the European Green Deal that boosts the transformation towards the elimination of the Greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions. The parties share the understanding that reducing the impact of human activities on the oceans can only be obtained by combining expertise across sectors and engaging also the major sea-based industries toward a climate-neutral, sustainable, productive and competitive blue economy.

Waterborne transport moves nearly 90% of all international trade, more than 75% of external EU trade, and 40% of internal EU trade. Europe is a maritime continent. Extending outward to a distance of 22 million km from the baseline, the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the European Union (including EU overseas territories) is the largest in the world. The EU Blue Economy directly employs close to five million people, generating more than €750 billion of turnover. The potential of a climate neutral and sustainable blue economy to deliver innovation, value creation and employment is high, and its role in addressing global challenges such as energy security, environmental issues, climate change, and sustainable food provision is substantial. The ocean has an impact on human health and wellbeing in ways we are only beginning to understand, meaning that we need to take a wider view on how to foster sustainable and resilient coastal enterprises and communities.

Yet, waterborne transport is also responsible for around 13% of total EU transport emissions. Accordingly, the European Commission and the European waterborne transport sector have joined forces forming the [Partnership on Zero-emission waterborne transport](#) and increasing the development and uptake of zero-emission solutions for and by the European waterborne transport sector. In parallel, to design, steer and support a just and inclusive transition to a regenerative and circular blue economy EU Member States and Associated Countries together with the European Commission have formed the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership. The Partnership aligns EU, national, and regional research and innovation priorities and brings together science, industry, governance and society, to deliver knowledge and solutions for making ocean activities sustainable. The Waterborne Technology Platform and the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership announced their enhanced cooperation to foster synergies in research, development and innovation activities.

Mr. Eero Lehtovaara, Chair, Waterborne Technology Platform, said: *“Cooperation is key to achieving the objectives laid down in the European Green Deal. The membership of the Waterborne Technology Platform represents a broad base of maritime knowledge, specifically from an industrial and research perspective, and this membership develops and implements solutions to mitigate various forms of pollution. The cooperation with the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership is essential to ensure that these solutions are developed and deployed as soon as possible, to protect our oceans and waters”.*

Margherita Cappelletto, Coordinator of the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership added *“Acting in synergy with other key EU initiatives is essential to effectively pursue the goals of the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership. The signature of the first joint declaration marks a concrete step forward in the fruitful collaboration with the Waterborne Technology Platform.”*

WATERBORNE TP has been set up as an industry-oriented Technology Platform to establish a continuous dialogue between all waterborne stakeholders, such as classification societies, shipbuilders, shipowners, maritime equipment manufacturers, infrastructure and service providers, universities or research institutes, and with the EU Institutions, including Member States (www.waterborne.eu). The members of Waterborne TP comprise members as well as associated members from both maritime and inland navigation countries, representing about 19 Member States. In addition, the Associations member of the Waterborne Technology Platform represent the broader waterborne sector throughout the entire EU.

Enquiries concerning how to join and become more closely involved in the “Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport” partnership or other activities of the Waterborne TP can be sent to: Jaap Gebraad, Secretary General Waterborne TP, jaap.gebraad@waterborne.eu, tel: +32 493 835 626

The Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership (SBEP) is a network of 60 partner institutions from 25 countries that, together with the European Commission, are pooling research and innovation investments by aligning national R&I programmes at pan-European scale, while taking into consideration the sea-basin dimension. It aims to support a just and inclusive transition to a regenerative, resilient and sustainable blue economy, and works to foster cooperation between European states to act and implement strategies that assist community growth and improve ocean health. Any enquiries concerning the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership and how to engage can be sent to: SBEP Secretariat, sbep@mur.gov.it. Follow us on www.bluepartnership.eu and @BlueEconomyEU!