



MARITIME FORUM

Knowledge Innovation Communities and the blue economy

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A number of Knowledge Innovation Communities have been set up or are in the process of being set up that aim to improve the link between education and research. A study has analysed how these Communities can help create innovation in the blue economy.



In 2012, the European Commission set the way forward for unleashing the potential of Europe's oceans, seas and coasts to help the EU economy back on track, while at the same time safeguarding its biodiversity and protecting the marine environment. The Communication "Blue Growth opportunities for marine and maritime sustainable growth^[1]" was developed on the basis of a comprehensive overview of the Blue Economy in Europe, which showed that the economic potential within the Blue Economy is significant, provided that appropriate investments in among others research and innovation are made.

Within this context, an initiative to develop a Marine KIC "Our Blue Future - The Integrated and Sustainable Development of the Seas and Oceans"^[2] was launched in 2010 in order to promote the creation of a Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) focusing on the sustainable development of marine resources. The Marine KIC initiative is led by a European partnership of marine industry, technology, research institutes, universities, public sector and regional clusters led by the German Marine Research Consortium KDM. It seeks to promote the competitiveness of Europe's RTD-based maritime economy through the EIT. It is motivated by the size of the Blue Economy and its potential in the future.

The above initiative, as well as the growing insight in Europe's maritime economy, has led to the question: to what extent could KICs provide a substantial support for the development of the EU's marine/maritime economy? After all, a reinforced knowledge base which is better interconnected with industry and excellent education institutions may lead to a better and more sustainable use and development of our

seas and oceans via technological development, more innovative activities and broader knowledge diffusion. DG MARE is at this very moment assessing to what extent KICs could contribute to this development, or whether there are other alternatives to achieve the same objective. Therefore, the general purpose of this study is to provide intelligence and background knowledge that can feed into this assessment exercise.

More in particular, this study has as objectives to:

1. Assess to what extent the current KICs cover sufficiently the themes and activities related to the 'Blue Economy', and how the current situation could/should be adjusted to ensure a sufficient coverage and support in the future;
1. Consider and evaluate three policy options in this regard, i.e.:
 - a. Establishing a new, 'own' Marine / Maritime KIC, which would concentrate its activities on the Blue Economy;
 - b. Using the marine / maritime components of the current KICs in support of the Blue Economy;
 - c. Creating new links between their activities to create a 'KIC Platform' focusing on the Blue Economy.

 [final report of study](#) [2]

[1] COM(2012) 494 final;
http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/blue_growth/documents/com_201... [3]

[2] <http://www.marinekic-initiative.eu/index.php?sp=en&id=home> [4]

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[3] http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/blue_growth/documents/com_2012_494_en.pdf

[4] <http://www.marinekic-initiative.eu/index.php?sp=en&id=home>