

Lucía Fraga's (CETMAR), acceptance speech at the Atlantic Project “Blue Skills and Ocean Literacy” Award ceremony at the 8th Atlantic Stakeholders Platform Conference on 21 October 2021, in Dublin, Ireland.

I am collecting this award on behalf of the MATES project consortium, as project coordinator, but I would like to do it especially on behalf of my teammates at CETMAR who are not here today: Rosa Fernández, who has been the soul of MATES since its inception, and Amaya Soto, Susana Bastón and Flor Arenaza, who work daily to create a team. Without them I couldn't be here today.

The maritime sector is going through a period of rapid evolution. **Innovation and technology play an increasingly important role**, allowing to respond to the growing demand for **more sustainable practices and products**, but also contributing to the **adaptation of the sector to current large-scale geopolitical and socio-economic changes**. Applying new maritime technologies we **build more sustainable and efficient vessels**, and we improve our knowledge of the ocean and **the possibilities of harnessing the energy of the sea**.

But to guarantee **a good use of these opportunities** it is necessary to have a prepared workforce, and we are currently facing the following challenges:

- Mismatches between the training offer and the demand for market skills.
- Poor communication and cooperation between education centers and industry.
- Generational replacement is lacking: maritime careers are little known and unattractive.
- The knowledge of the ocean and the awareness of our interrelation with the sea (ocean literacy), is not very widespread.

Overcoming these challenges is key to maintaining a competitive maritime industry. The MATES project contributes to this process by developing a **Maritime Technologies Skills Strategy**, with a collaborative approach. For this we have created a **European network of experts and innovation ecosystems**, oriented to maritime technologies and training. Thus, the 17 partners of the consortium have joined forces with more than 200 experts from the industry, training centers, administrations and research, to guide the strategy.

In the almost 4 years of work since the beginning of the project, in 2018, many of the proposed results have been achieved:

- A detailed report on the supply and demand of current skills, and a prospective of future skills needs, have allowed us to establish a series of prioritized lines of action to align supply and demand.
- We have developed 11 pilot experiences aimed at putting these lines of action into practice in different regional contexts. These pilot experiences have made it possible to develop training for workers and university students, but also to introduce new methodologies such as spaces that simulate the work

environment in vocational training centers, or to bring ocean knowledge and maritime careers closer to high school students.

- **A Maritime Technologies Skills Strategy with recommendations and an action plan** for the different groups of stakeholders involved in the value chain of shipbuilding and offshore renewable energies.

All these results are being transferred to the Large-Scale Consortia of the Pact for Skills, a new instrument of the Skills Agenda to promote the commitment of all sectoral actors in the training processes.

I'd like to use this opportunity to **invite attendees to make contributions and suggestions to the Maritime Technologies Skills Strategy**, which has been presented on September 29th, and will be in the process of evaluation and debate with all interested parties, until 30 of November. You can access this first version of the document from the link of the presentation (), which also indicates the contact email. The final document will be presented in the first quarter of 2022.

Finally, the MATES project is **coordinating a consortium to promote the Pact for Skills in offshore renewable energies**. All organizations interested in contributing to the training processes in this sector, whether from the industrial sphere, training providers, or other actors, are invited to join and contribute.

Thank you very much again for this award and for your attention.