EXCELLENCE HUBS COMMUNITY 2026 JOINT EVENT – ATHENS, 26–27 OCTOBER 2026

Blue Economy Cluster – Break-out Session

Session brief and agenda | Monday 26 October 2026, 14:40–15:40, common room, Serafio Center

Organised by BCThubs (Task 5.3 – Excellence Hubs liaison and outreaching) • Facilitator: Fabio Figurella, DAN Europe Foundation – ffigurella@daneurope.org • Final version – 23 October 2026

Purpose

The Excellence Hubs Community has grouped four EH projects under the Blue Economy theme – BCThubs, SeaTecHub, MarTe and INNO2MARE – and asked BCThubs to organise the Monday-afternoon break-out session for this cluster. The session has one practical goal: to turn the four projects (and any other EH project with a marine or maritime interest) into a working Blue Economy EH Cluster. The cluster is formalised in two steps: the Athens Manifesto – a one-page declaration of the shared objectives, signed in the room at the end of the session – and a Memorandum of Understanding on sharing the technologies implemented in our projects and planning their joint exploitation after the grants end, circulated in draft and signed by each project once its internal approval is completed.

The format follows the organisers' guidance: do online, before Athens, what can be done online (read the Manifesto and the draft MoU, send comments, prepare a two-minute pitch) and use the sixty minutes in the room for what needs people face to face: one brainstorming session with the whole group, conclusions on joint actions with owners and dates, and the signature of the Manifesto.

Expected outputs

- **1. A map of what we can share –** technologies, services, test sites, datasets, training and facilities each project is ready to open to the others, and what each project needs.
- **2. A signed Manifesto –** the one-page Athens Manifesto of the Blue Economy EH Cluster – objectives only, no legal or financial obligations – sent in advance and signed on the spot by the projects present, including any project attending the workshop that wishes to join (the informal slot on Tuesday 27 Oct, 15:45–17:30, is available for late signatures). The draft MoU, also sent in advance, sets out the terms of the cooperation: each project signs it by correspondence once its internal approval is completed, and every other EH project can accede with the form in Annex 2.
- **3. Two or three joint actions for 2027 –** e.g. a joint proposal, a cross-hub technology pilot, a joint event, a shared policy message to the EC – each with an owner and a date.

Agenda (60 minutes)

Time	Item	Who / how
14:40 (5’)	**Welcome and framing**	Fabio Figurella (BCThubs): objectives, rules of the room, the three outputs
14:45 (10’)	**Lightning round – what we offer, what we need**	Two minutes per project, one voice each: BCThubs, SeaTecHub, MarTe, INNO2MARE, then guest projects (SolarHub, WaterWise, others)
14:55 (5’)	**The Manifesto and the MoU in one slide**	Both sent in advance: the six objectives of the Manifesto are recalled; the MoU open points (signatories, duration, accession) are noted for the follow-up
15:00 (25’)	**Brainstorming – one session, whole group**	Three questions on the wall: what can we share? what can we integrate and exploit together? which joint actions for 2027? One facilitator, one flipchart; everybody speaks, nobody presents
15:25 (10’)	**Conclusions**	The group fixes 2–3 joint actions with owner and date and agrees the timeline for signing the MoU
15:35 (5’)	**Signature of the Athens Manifesto**	The four maritime projects and every project attending the workshop that wishes to join sign the Manifesto in the room; rapporteur agreed for the one-minute report at 15:40 (who joined, what was agreed, next step)

The slot is confirmed at 60 minutes. Set-up confirmed with the organisers: one table (or a circle of chairs) for 15–20 people and a flipchart; no projector. The agenda, the Manifesto (signature copies), the one-slide MoU summary and the accession forms (Annex 2) will be printed and available in the room.

Who is at the table

EH project	Countries	Contact point (registered for Athens)	Focus
BCThubs	GR, MT, BG	Fabio Figurella (DAN Europe); Stamatia Kamaka, Vasileios Hatzikamagiannis, Foteini Katsiakou (RoT); Polyvios Raxis (Atlantis)	Blue Culture Technologies for underwater cultural heritage: 3D/4D reconstruction, electro-resistivity, VR/AR, augmented diving, diver health & safety, marketplace, scientific-diving training
SeaTecHub	CY, HR	Charalambos Rotsides (CMMI)	Eco-innovative technologies for healthy and productive seas: low-cost IoT sensors, hydrophones, data toolkits; aquaculture, smart ports, maritime security
MarTe	EE, LV	Liis Kikas (KIK)	Marine technology hub for a sustainable blue economy in the Baltics: offshore energy, smart vessels and ports, policy revision
INNO2MARE	SI, HR	Marko Šimic (University of Ljubljana)	Digital and green transition of maritime regions: maritime education, marine traffic safety, energy efficiency; scale-up strategies
Guests registered for the session	GR	Nikolaos Stamatopoulos (EUSOME – ATHENA RC); Anastasia Sakkoula (COALition – KiNNO)	Projects attending the Blue Economy break-out as guests; invited to the lightning round and to sign the Manifesto if they wish
Open seats	–	SolarHub (sustainable maritime fuels), WaterWise (host), HERIFORGE and any EH project	The Manifesto and the MoU are open to every Excellence Hubs project (MoU Article 9)

What each project is asked to do before Athens

- **Prepare a two-minute pitch –** one slide or half a page: three things you can share with the cluster (technology, service, site, dataset, course) and three things you are looking for.

- **Read the Manifesto and confirm –** if not already done, by e-mail to ffigurella@daneurope.org before Monday or directly in the room, the name of the person who will represent the project in the session and sign the Manifesto in Athens (coordinator or mandated partner) – or, if the signatory cannot attend, a signed copy to bring to the session. MarTe has already confirmed (Environmental Investment Centre, on behalf of EIC and MarTe).
- **Comment on the draft MoU –** comments on the draft MoU are welcome at any time until the end of November, when the consolidated text is circulated for signature by correspondence; each project follows its own internal approval procedure, with no deadline set by the session.
- **No online pre-meeting –** given the few days left, no call is held before Athens: the open points (lightning-round order, MoU comments such as data sharing) are discussed directly in the room on Monday and, where needed, in the informal slot on Tuesday.
- **Fill in your row of** Annex 1 of the MoU (designated legal entity after the grant, contact point, technologies offered).

Timeline

Date	Step
22 Oct	Agenda, Athens Manifesto, draft MoU v0.1 and session deck sent to all participants registered for the Blue Economy break-out session
23 Oct	Final agenda and materials sent to the contact points of the four Blue Economy projects and to the participants registered for the break-out session; confirmation of attendees and signatories of the Manifesto. No online pre-meeting: open points discussed in Athens
26 Oct	Break-out session 14:40–15:40: brainstorming, conclusions and signature of the Athens Manifesto by the projects present; one-minute report to the common room at 15:40
27 Oct	Informal slot 15:45–17:30: bilateral follow-ups and late signatures of the Manifesto
Nov 2026	Signed Manifesto circulated to all EH projects; comments on the MoU consolidated; each project starts its internal approval; cluster contact list and shared folder
Dec 2026	First online cluster meeting; MoU signed by correspondence by the projects that completed approval; Blue Economy track at the 2nd 'Widening the Big Blue Horizon' conference (Burgas, 3–4 Dec); joint input to the EC Feedback-to-Policy workshop (Brussels, 1 Dec)
Q1 2027	MoU signed by all four Blue Economy projects; accession of further EH projects (Article 9); first joint actions under way

Rules of the room

- One voice per project in the lightning round; in the brainstorming everybody speaks and nobody presents; bilateral detail is parked for Tuesday afternoon.
- Every joint action leaves the room with a name and a date.
- The session is not streamed or recorded; the one-minute report to the plenary is the only public output.