Science Diver

Cross-sectoral skills for the blue economy market

ScienceDIVER Newsletter 3, April 2021

Science DIVER Continues to Explore the Depths

A common European framework for scientific diving is foreseen to meet the Blue economy's increasing need of skilled and qualified scientists to perform underwater dive-based research and to attract young students to pursue a valuable scientific diving career. This framework is the possible way to mitigate existing asymmetries in acknowledgment of scientific divers and find suitable approaches toward harmonization to overcome the gaps and allowing easier mobility of scientific divers. A common mutual professional recognition is one of the pillars for the harmonization of scientific diving in Europe.



Our Recent Achievements

Series of Workshops

A series of online workshops – of which 3 international and 2 national in the focus countries Greece and Italy – have been organized to make the scientific diving community aware about the project findings emanating from performed parallel studies and to discuss the outcomes.

"Capacity Building and Harmonization of Scientific Diving in Europe"

The ScienceDIVER project team organized a series of virtual workshops entitled "Capacity building and harmonization of scientific diving in Europe". The framework for the seminars, held in December 2020 was tailored in three consecutive webinars, dedicated to topics concerning professional acknowledgment, legal framework and training framework and gathered a large community of scientific divers. The interest in the event crossed Europe's borders and attracted 165 unique participants from Africa, Asia, Australia, North and South Americas, revealing the importance of discussed matter in global aspect. The majority of the audience was represented by diving scientists and experienced divers.

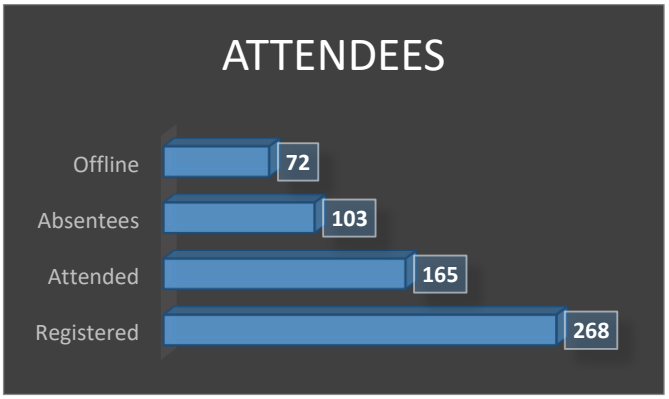
The workshops aimed at raising awareness on the project goals and activities towards creation of common framework for scientific diving in Europe. Representatives of the project partners introduced the project to the audience and presented the outcomes of performed studies that examined the current state of scientific diving and impediments deriving from the distinct legislative framework and lack of harmonization. Distinguished experts were invited to express their thoughts on the discussed issues and share their points of view and the applied practices in their countries.

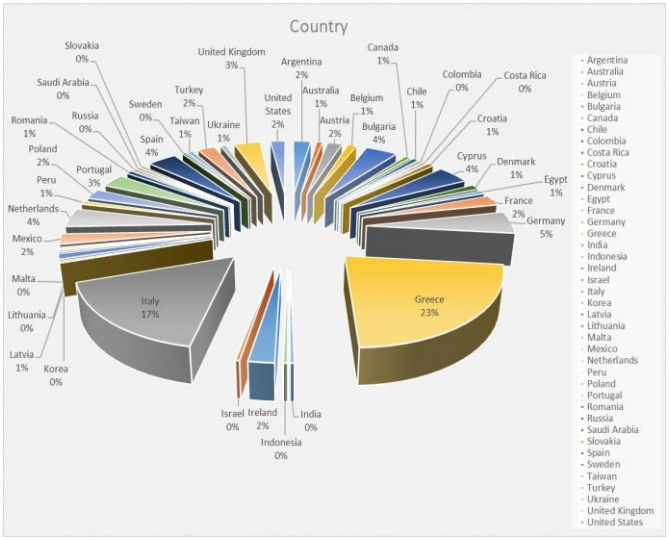
The opening of the series of workshops was done on 2 December 2020 with the webinar **"Professional acknowledgment"**, which addressed topics related to the professional recognition of scientific divers. Based on the interaction with the audience (answering the questions raised) followed the presented projects' outcomes and the expressed points of view, it was confirmed that the **scientific diving is highly complex matter with extremely different rules and systems** across the countries and difficult to harmonize, especially with regards to insurance and other sensitive topics.

The international online workshops engaged the attention of a total number of 165 attendees, of which approximately 70 took part in all three webinars.

The event gathered participants from more than 40 countries around the world and 86% of them are divers. The following figures present attendees' interest and participation by country.

The series continued on 9 December 2020 with the online seminar on **"Legal framework for scientific diving"**, trying to identify legal gaps and potential good practices.





The discussion concerning the existing legislation and the request of new Directive for scientific diving showcased that though **there is not a paved way yet, the scientific diving community will pursue harmonization of regulations** with common efforts. It was pointed out that the goal is to find the best solution on the basis of an applicable model.

The last workshop of the series, held on 16 December 2020 was devoted to the issues of the **"Training framework for scientific diving"**, bridging legislation and recognition. The key presented on the basis of the preliminary results of the data gathered on the matter and the comparative analysis of six main training schemes that have been investigated. The recognition of the offered training courses and the need for updates were discussed and it was

reconfirmed that **harmonization is a key point.** Additionally, it was proposed **to reconsider scientific diving training in dependence of the particular environmental conditions** where the scientific tasks are applied.

Summarizing, it's obvious that ***despite the long-lasting efforts, the progress made so far and the achievements*** *of the* ***scientific diving community, a common legal framework, the standardization of the training framework and the mutual professional recognition are*** the pillars for the harmonization of scientific diving in Europe.

Workshops follow up and Q & A

National Webinars in Greece and Italy

The three international events were followed by national virtual workshops in Greece and Italy, which took place on 6 April and 16 April. 2021 respectively.



The event in Greece had 101 subscriptions and the maximum number of attendees that was achieved during the event was 62. Through the constructive discussion it became clear that the first priority for Greece is the creation of a legal framework. It is a precondition for the development of educational programs, for the updating of the current professional diving framework and consequently for the professional acknowledgment of scientific divers. There should be a close collaboration with the educational and research institutions to shape the educational framework for the SD in every scientific field, as only these stakeholders have the necessary experience.

The event held on the 16th April 2021in Italy in the form of an online workshop has presented the result of the ScienceDIVER project as well as the best practices adopted by the most relevant public institution in the matter of scientific diving.

The national webinar in Italy highlighted a lot of interest in scientific diving, considering the number of participants at the event. During the event, a mean of 150 people has attended the presentations. The presentations described the Italian situation and have clarified some legal aspects in the matter of scientific diving. During the Q&A session, the discussion focused on how to be certified, highlighting the need to set a wider and clearer European common framework to certify scientific divers. The event was defined by the participants as a success and it was agreed to collaborate also in future on this basis.

Advisory Board is Going to Support SchienceDIVER in Future

ScienceDIVER partners have already started approaching various stakeholders that are either directly or indirectly connected with scientific diving and could potentially help to commonly accepted framework for this challenging part of scientific work. This task should be reviewed by an Advisory Board that will involve representatives of national diving associations/scientific diving committees or similar bodies from participating countries or relevant EU organizations.

The role of this board will be mainly executive and advisory in policy issues and texts/ articles that the ScienceDIVER project creates. In more detail, it can provide reviews on different suggestions/ proposals concerning policy issues that arise through the work of the Science Diver project before they are circulated in the Community.

The Advisory Board can also provide the ScienceDIVER project with proposals or bring to light matters that have come to their understanding concerning Scientific Diving that can possibly assist in the implementation of the project or, on the contrary, issues that might pose a threat on the implementation of the project.

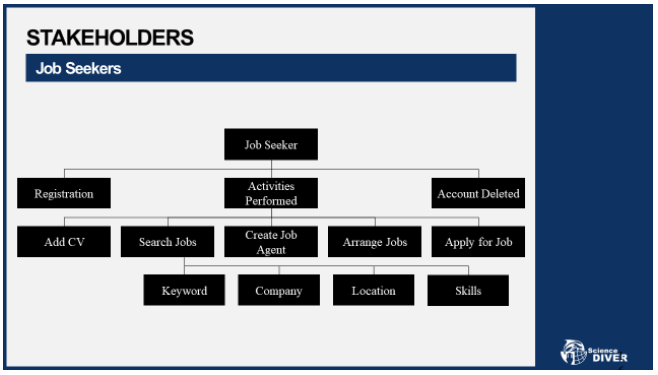


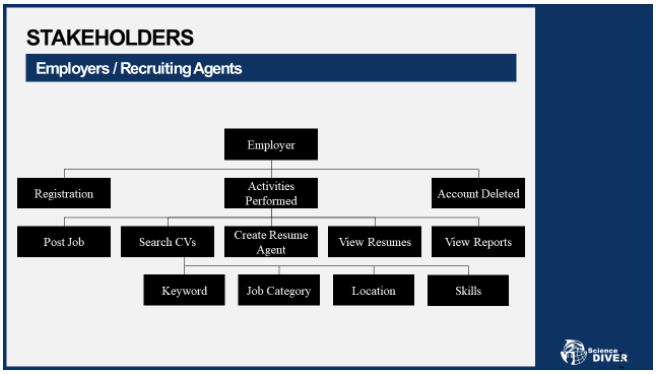


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Blue Careers Platform – Bridging the Gap in the Blue Economy Sector

ScienceDIVER aims to facilitate the exchange, flow and co-creation of knowledge related to scientific diving through scientific training and certification processes. The platform acts for the benefit of both job seekers and employers in the Blue Economy Sector. It aims to incorporate advanced techniques for job matchmaking using ranking algorithms and artificial intelligence and to provide skills training and other educational offerings. As an innovative and sustainable ICT supporting tool, the BlueCareers platform offers online guidance and services to young job seekers, training providers, policy makers and maritime industry actors (job providers).





A mobile version of the platform is envisaged to be developed too.

Pilot Training Programme Development

Design of a Pilot Vocational Training Programme for Scientific Diving According to the Outcomes and Proposals of the Above Workshops and Studies.

A pilot training programme will occur to train scientists in becoming scientific divers. The Academic Institutions (AI) (UNICAL, STU, AUTH) have a ready to use mechanism for the facilities to provide the needed training. The AI will cooperate with the industry to assess the current needs in human resources and also indicate which lecturers with working experience are potentially needed for the training program. After this step, the AI will cooperate with the diving agencies, in order to analyze the needs in diving skills and also find potential lecturers that could train the students in those skills. Training will include practical and theoretical lessons on e.g. diving tasks, equipment, using scientific equipment, safety etc. The Pilot Training programme Manual contains training methodology and material in English and translated in 4 languages – Greek, Bulgarian, Italian and German.

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6th European Conference on Scientific Diving

The European Conference of scientific diving is held each year in different country, with the aim to provide the diving scientists across Europe with a large international platform to share their latest results, obtained research achievements and outcomes.

Following postponement in 2020, the 6th issue of ECSD was hosted virtually by the Freiberg University of Mining and Technology, Germany on 21–22 April 2021.

ScienceDIVER team had the opportunity to present the project and current findings on the ground of the performed studies, as well as five workshops involving the scientific diving community to discuss and conclude the need of united efforts toward establishment of a common framework for scientific diving and harmonization.

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With the contribution of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund of the European Union