



# **Empowering the 4 helix of MED maritime clusters through an open source/knowledge sharing and community based approach in favour of MED blue growth**

## **D.3.9.1**

### **External Evaluation Report of the 4Helix+ Pilot Action**

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Abstract
This External Evaluation Report describes in detail the methodology, provides input for the implementation, and describes the lessons learned of the 4helix+ Blue Bootcamps as well as evaluates through a survey the impact of the Voucher Scheme. As such, it supports interested SMEs, KPs and other organisations to develop similar programs as whole or selected parts of it.

<sup>1</sup> WPL (Work Package Leaders); PP (Project Partners); AP (Associates); Stakeholders; Decision Makers; Other (Specify)

<sup>2</sup> PU (Public); PP (Restricted to other program participants); CO (Confidential, only for members of the consortium)

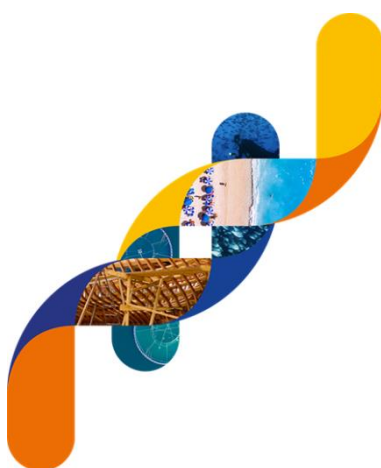
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## List of abbreviations and terms

SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
KPs	Knowledge Providers
AP	Associated Partner
BBc	Blue Bootcamp
CCI	Cultural and Creative Industries

## 1 Introduction



**4helix+** “Empowering the 4 helix of MED maritime clusters through an open source/knowledge sharing and community-based approach in favour of MED blue growth” is a project aimed at stimulating, coaching and funding innovation within the Blue Growth sector in the Mediterranean (MED) area. It was intended to improve the gap between the eight Mediterranean regional maritime clusters on one hand, and within their respective four helixes on the other, through an open source, knowledge sharing and community-based approach, resulting from cooperation with ‘new innovation agents’ and Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs).

The 4helix+ project has been to upgrade transnational innovation process in both traditional and emerging Blue sectors in the 8 MED regions by establishing and organizing a cyber space platform for exchange, matching and communication, Blue Bootcamps (BBc), a transnational brokerage event, regional info days and supporting specifically via the Innovation Voucher Scheme.

With its transnational partnership network and objectives, the project has contributed to relevant EU macro-regional strategies and innovation policies also through these partnering activities.

The core action of 4helix+ project has had as main activities and deliverables the offer of innovative support to SMEs in blue economy sector through services provided by Knowledge Providers (KPs) in Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) and Non Institutional New Innovation Agents, as a Pilot Action – testing project.

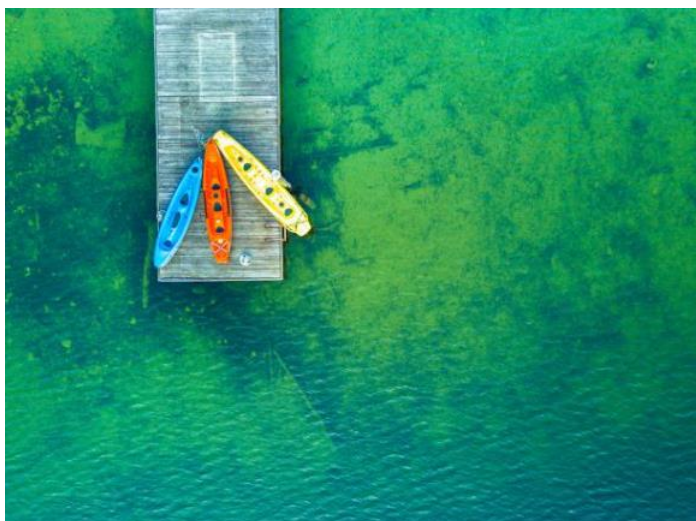
- ❖ the Testing of an **Innovation Voucher Scheme** offering **€ 480.000 funding** to selected Blue Economy Sector’ s SMEs to collaborate with KPs registered in 4helix+ KPs Gallery in order for them to elaborate and implement creative innovation projects through a Voucher (€10.000) to be exchanged for Advice and Expertise from the Knowledge Providers.;
- ❖ **coaching on creative innovation** to maritime sectors’ SMEs and Start-Ups within Blue Bootcamps/Info days (where SMEs can meet creative innovative Knowledge Providers)

❖ **Transnational brokerage event and Matchmaking Tool** for creative projects conceiving

<https://4helix-plus.interreg-med.eu/>

<https://4helix.unicam.it/>

## 2 Activities



As a first step of Blue SME support, there have been calls and info days to invite SMEs to register their profiles in the project platform, as well as various Knowledge Providers (KP) from the creative sector and also Non Institutional New Innovation Agents to support blue sector SMEs to innovate and grow by pushing at the same time for trans-boundary cooperation. Among the activities organized and outputs achieved:

- Regional info-days, Blue Bootcamps (BBc), Brokerage event;
- SME and Knowledge Providers database;
- Innovation voucher scheme;
- Cyber space;
- Long term capitalization;

## 3 Methodology

The methodology of data collection has been established by the project partners to keep documentation about participation of each category in the activities organized such as info days, Blue Bootcamps, brokerage event, etc.

The data collected shows that the number of SMEs, local KPs and international KPs has been quite satisfactory.

During the Bootcamps, questionnaires prepared by the Albanian Development Fund (ADF) and approved by the Lead partner – SVIM Sviluppo Marche Srl (IT), have been distributed to Associated Partners (APs); KPs; and blue SMEs. The Questionnaires template can be found in the Annex section. The analysis in the next sections is done with regards to the most relevant questions. The level of participation in the project activities has been extensive, resulting in introducing and networking between each other.

Most of the participants had the opportunity to learn about the project aim and registered their profiles in the Cyber space platform after the call for application was published. Through communication afterwards, SMEs have applied with a project by choosing a KP/expert to provide the innovation service. After the deadline of project registration to benefit from the Innovation voucher Scheme, the respective evaluation teams of each country have assessed the projects based on the given criteria. The number of project applications and those approved are shown in the table below.

	<b>Projects applications</b>	<b>Project Approved</b>	<b>Reserve list</b>
Albania	7	6	1
Croatia	14	6	8
France	8	6	2
Greece	16	6	10
Italy	15	6	9
Portugal	7	6	1
Spain – Andalusia	8	6	2
Spain – Catalonia	9	6	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>48</b>	

Besides this, another questionnaire was created by the end of the project implementation period (during August – September 2020) to gather feedback and input from beneficiary SMEs for the implementation and lessons learnt during the 4helix+ project as a whole in order to provide suggestions for future similar schemes to support innovation, particularly to blue economy sector. Of the 43 answers received totally, we removed the duplicates and considered 40 valid answers.

### 3.1 Registered KPs

SMEs and Knowledge Providers (KPs) profiles have been approved by respective country partners.

The total number of KPs registered profiles in the project platform is 164; KP profiles approved are shown in the table below for each country.

	<b>KPs registered</b>
Albania	15
Croatia	28
France	18
Greece	27
Italy	42
Portugal	11
Spain- Andalusia	10
Spain Catalonia	13

**164**



### 3.2 Registered SMEs

The total number of blue sector SMEs registered profiles in the project platform is 107; SME profiles approved are shown in the table below for each country and for each Pilot Region of project.

MED Region	SME registered
Albania	12
Croatia – Zadar County Region	16
France – Région Sud – Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur	10
Greece – Central Macedonia Region	20
Italy – Marche Region	18
Portugal – Lisbon Region	12
Spain – Andalusia Region	9
Spain – Catalonia Region	10

**107**



### 3.3 Blue Bootcamps

While at the same time, during the time-frame February-April 2019, in the framework of innovation support, there have been organized two-day events as Bootcamps in each of the 8 project regions, with a focus on specific Blue Economy subthemes:

Bootcamp City	Country	Dates	Blue Bootcamp focus
Lisboa	Portugal	07-08/02/2019	Coastal Tourism; Fisheries & Aquaculture; Marine biotechnologies
Sevilla	Spain	20-21/02/2019	Coastal and maritime; tourism Nautical Sector; Sea shipping-transport
Barcelona	Spain	05-06/03/2019	Shipbuilding and ship repair; Sea shipping/Transport; Coastal and Maritime Tourism
Marseille	France	11-12/03/2019	Shipbuilding and ship repair; Maritime transport services; Blue biotechnologies; blue renewable energy; Coastal and Maritime tourism
Thessaloniki	Greece	18-19/03/2019	Coastal and Maritime Tourism; Fishery and Aquaculture
Tirana	Albania	20-21/03/2019	Fisheries & Aquaculture; Coastal and Maritime Tourism

Ancona	Italy	28-29/03/2019	Fisheries & Aquaculture; Ship-building & Off-shore Industry; Coastal Tourism
Zadar	Croatia	09-10/04/2019	Coastal and Maritime Tourism; Aquaculture; Shipbuilding

The Blue Bootcamp is a hands-on experience where existing or aspiring Blue Entrepreneurs/ start-uppers from the region of the organizing partner have the opportunity to meet and work intensively with 4helix+ Knowledge Providers to explore and diagnose their individual innovation needs and to generate business ideas & solutions to be developed – thanks to funding from innovation voucher scheme.



### 3.4 Evaluation by Associated Partners

Associated Partners have provided their input based on the evaluation questionnaire distributed during the Blue Bootcamps where they participated, as in the table below:

Nr	Blue Bootcamp	Country	Event Date	Bootcamp focus	Associated Partner	Project Partner
1	Lisboa	Portugal	07-08/02/2019	Coastal Tourism; Fisheries & Aquaculture; Marine biotechnologies	No AP	
2	Sevilla	Spain	20-21/02/2019	Coastal and maritime; tourism Nautical Sector; Sea shipping-transport	Agencia de Innovación y Desarrollo de Andalucía IDEA	Official Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Shipping of Seville
3	Barcelona	Spain	05-06/03/2019	Shipbuilding and ship repair; Sea shipping/Transport; Coastal and Maritime Tourism	Associació de Cambres de Comerç de la Mediterrània	Barcelona Official Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Services and Navigation
4	Marseille	France	11-12/03/2019	Shipbuilding and ship repair; Maritime transport services; Blue biotechnologies; blue renewable energy; Coastal and Maritime tourism	Vertigo Lab, Bureau de Conseil et de Recherche en Economie de l'Environnement	SVIM-SVILUPPO MARCHE Srl
					MAKE IT MARSEILLE	Chamber of Commerce and Industry Marseille Provence
5	Thessaloniki	Greece	18-19/03/	Coastal and Maritime Tourism; Fishery	ΑΝΑΠΤΥΞΙΑΚΗ ΝΟΜΟΥ ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ	THESSALONIKI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND

			2019	and Aquaculture	ΗΣ ΑΕ - ΑΝΑΠΤΥΞΙΑΚΗ ΑΝΩΝΥΜΗ ΕΤΑΙΡΙΑ ΟΤΑ – ΑΝΕΤΗ. ΑΝΕΤΗ was invited to the Thessaloniki Blue Boot Camp but did not participate due to workload	INDUSTRY
6	Tirana	Albania	20- 21/03/ 2019	Fisheries & Aquaculture; Coastal and Maritime Tourism	<b>No AP</b>	
7	Ancona	Italy	28- 29/03/ 2019	Fisheries & Aquaculture; Ship-building & Off-shore Industry; Coastal Tourism	Vertigo Lab, Bureau de Conseil et de Recherche en Economie de l'Environnem ent	SVIM-SVILUPPO MARCHE Srl
8	Zadar	Croatia	09- 10/04/ 2019	Coastal and Maritime Tourism; Aquaculture; Shipbuilding	Hrvatski klaster konkurentno sti pomorske industrije	Croatian Chamber of Economy

Associated Partners Evaluation is on average as shown below:

- General Evaluation – average 4.75 (out of 5 – Excellent)
- Specific Evaluation – average 4.75 (out of 5 – Excellent)

- Outcomes – average 4.3 (out of 5 – Excellent)

General evaluation	
General preparation and organization of the training	5
Venue and logistics of the training	4.75
Relevance of the training's theme	4.75
Adequacy of training participants to address the theme	4.75
The visual aids and documentation/handouts provided	4.75
The exchanges and networking during the event	4.5
Specific evaluation	
Structure and contents of the event's sessions	4.75
Quality of the event's speaker(s) / moderator(s)	5
Clarity of the presentation(s)	5
Level of involvement and interaction of the participants	4.25
Outcomes	
Your knowledge/understanding acquisition/improvement	4.25
The relationships established/strengthened	4.25
The degree to which your expectations were met	4.5
The value of the event's results for your business/activity	4.25

- The aspects of innovation that they intend to engage in are: product / service; technological processes; and internal organizational.
- 50% of input was provided by female representatives and 50% by male representatives.

## 4 Feedback input from KP questionnaires

### 4.1 Aggregated for all Blue Bootcamp participant KPs

The total number of questionnaires collected by KPs/experts is 50.

KPs involvement in research, development and innovation were in these main areas: research in European and National programs, R&D in healthcare, tourism, education, space and environment; HW/SW system integration, web and mobile platform, wearables, Virtual Reality (VR) for touristic

tours; innovation consulting & technology development and transfer, crafting, business model development, business acceleration; new type of marketing, digital marketing, branding, new ways of communication; user experience innovation; consultancy with international development; industrial/mechanical/service design, design research, production /prototyping; digital fabrication, creative industry, strategic innovation, co-working space services, fab-lab product development services, etc.

80% of KPs have had projects with SMEs in blue economy during last three years. KPs having projects with SMEs in blue economy have experiences in sustainable practices, eco production, many new things that SMEs need to implement; there is business need & impact.

55% of KPs are engaged in transfer between regions/transboundary, while almost all the others were supportive on doing this.

Departments of KP organization/experts having expertise in innovation development are mostly specialized in production and processes, market /-ing and project application / Business plan / business development.

14%	technology and IPR protection
22%	<b>production and processes</b>
16%	resources and organization
27%	<b>market(ing)</b>
22%	<b>project application / Business plan / business development</b>

#### 4.1.1 Seville

KPs Involvement in research, development and innovation were in these areas: doing and research, innovative solution, product development, new technologies, crafting new type of marketing, new ways of communication.

All KPs have had projects with companies/SMEs in blue economy during last three years.

40% of KPs are engaged in transfer between regions/transboundary, others are supportive of this.

Departments of KP organization/experts having expertise in innovation development are mostly specialized in marketing:

0%	technology and IPR protection
14%	production and processes
14%	resources and organization
<b>43%</b>	<b>market(ing)</b>
29%	project application / Business plan / business development

### 4.1.2 Barcelona

KPs involvement in research, development and innovation were in these areas: R&D, marketing methodologies, innovation services, innovation & technology transfer, business model development, business acceleration, digital fabrication, creative industry, strategic innovation, etc.

69 % of KPs having projects with SMEs in blue economy during last three years.

61% of KPs are engaged in transfer between regions/transboundary, others are supportive of this.

Departments of KP organization/experts having expertise in innovation development are mostly specialized in marketing:

:

- 12% technology and IPR protection
- 18% production and processes
- 15% resources and organization
- 33% market(ing)**
- 21% project application / Business plan / business development

### 4.1.3 Thessaloniki

KPs involvement in research, development and innovation were in these areas: research areas and development of innovation in tourism, education, space and environment, market research, user experience innovation, developing creative and innovative solutions (also Design studio specialized in product development and innovation, industrial design, mechanical design and service design) etc.

60% of KPs have had projects with SMEs in blue economy during last three years.

30% of KPs are engaged in transfer between regions/transboundary, but mainly they are supportive of this.

Departments of KP organization/experts having expertise in innovation development are mostly specialized in production and processes and also marketing:

- 13% technology and IPR protection
- 25% production and processes**
- 19% resources and organization
- 25% market(ing)**
- 19% project application / Business plan / business development

### 4.1.4 Tirana

KPs involvement in research, development and innovation were in these areas: consultancy with international development, digital marketing innovation & technology development, design & production with focus on digital fabrication or parametric design, design research & prototyping.

All KPs have had projects with SMEs in blue economy during last three years (many experiences, sustainable practices, eco production, many new things that SMEs need to implement, there is business need & impact).

40% of KPs are engaged in transfer between regions/transboundary, others are supportive of this.

Departments of KP organization/experts having expertise in innovation development are mostly specialized in project application / Business plan / business development :

:

- 19% technology and IPR protection
- 19% production and processes
- 13% resources and organization
- 19% market(ing)
- 31% project application / Business plan / business development**

#### 4.1.5 Ancona

KPs involvement in research, development and innovation were in these areas: research in European and National programs, tourism, logistics, maritime transport, innovation & technology consulting, user experience innovation; consultancy with international cooperation; new ways of communication; web and mobile platform, digital marketing, design research, prototype production; etc.

All KPs have had projects with SMEs in blue economy during last three years (many experiences, sustainable practices, eco production, many new things that SMEs need to implement, there is business need & impact).

70% of KPs are engaged in transfer between regions/transboundary, others are supportive of this.

Departments of KP organization/experts having expertise in innovation development **are mostly specialized in marketing:**

- 17% technology and IPR protection
- 13% production and processes
- 23% resources and organization
- 34% market(ing)**
- 13% project application / Business plan / business development

#### 4.1.6 Zadar

KPs involvement in research, development and innovation were in these areas: research in European and National programs, R&D in healthcare, HW/SW system integration, web and mobile platform, wearables, VR, design with new materials, architecture with new essence of space, visual design, artistic research about photography and visual arts, blue marketing.

KPs having projects with SMEs in blue economy during last three years are 75%.

37.5% of KPs are engaged in transfer between regions/transboundary, but mainly they are supportive of this (ideas can be exchanged also - crossing mental boundaries; knowledge share as a way to improve and innovate; cooperation is key factor for innovation)

Departments of KP organization/experts having expertise in innovation development are mostly specialized in production and processes and also marketing:

:

27%	technology and IPR protection
<b>36%</b>	<b>production and processes</b>
18%	resources and organization
<b>27%</b>	<b>market(ing)</b>
18%	project application / Business plan / business development

## 5 Feedback input from SME questionnaires

### 5.1 Aggregated for all Blue Bootcamps participant SMEs

The total number of questionnaires collected by SMEs is 58.

When asked about the increase in investment level planned during the next year, the rate the importance of the following innovation areas for SMEs answered is on average as follows:

20%	Technology improvement
19%	Production capacity increase
20%	Process and organisation
23%	Marketing
17%	Staff (training, etc)

For SMEs operating in Blue sector, whether they are willing to connect with culture/creative industry, 96% SMEs answered positively.

About the way of planned improvements or developments, they answered on average as follows:

33%	use knowledge provider / voucher scheme for product development
21%	developed own system for product development
11%	look at competitors
14%	think it out with employees
20%	work with customers
1%	Other ( <i>research for current and new products</i> )

Whereas if their business strategy / model includes the following, the average answers are as below:

15%	improvement of existing outputs
19%	development of new products and/or services
10%	developing new ways of making money
17%	looking for new clients
15%	looking for new markets
12%	improvement of existing processes and organisation
8%	meeting quality standards
6%	training of staff and/or management

96% of participating SMEs answered that they plan to enter new markets in the next two years.

### 5.1.1 Seville

When asked about the increase in investment level planned during the next year, the rate the importance of the following innovation areas on average is as follows:

18%	Technology improvement
21%	Production capacity increase
18%	Process and organisation
21%	Marketing
21%	Staff (training, etc)

For SMEs operating in Blue sector, whether they are willing to connect with culture/creative industry, 66% answered positively.

About the way of planned improvements or developments, they answered on average as follows:

25%	use knowledge provider / voucher scheme for product development
13%	developed own system for product development
0%	look at competitors
25%	think it out with employees
25%	work with customers
13%	other

Whereas if their business strategy / model includes the following, the average answers are as below:

14%	improvement of existing outputs
7%	development of new products and/or services
7%	developing new ways of making money
21%	looking for new clients
21%	looking for new markets
14%	improvement of existing processes and organisation
7%	meeting quality standards
7%	training of staff and/or management

All 100% participating SMEs answered that they plan to enter new markets in the next two years.

### 5.1.2 Barcelona

When asked about the increase in investment level planned during the next year, the rate the importance of the following innovation areas on average is as follows:

22%	Technology improvement
20%	Production capacity increase
17%	Process and organisation
24%	Marketing
17%	Staff (training, etc)

For SMEs operating in Blue sector, whether they are willing to connect with culture/creative industry, 100% SMEs answered positively.

About the way of planned improvements or developments, they answered on average as follows:

29%	use knowledge provider / voucher scheme for product development
19%	developed own system for product development
19%	look at competitors
10%	think it out with employees
24%	work with customers
0%	Other (research for current and new products)

Whereas if their business strategy / model includes the following, the average answers are as below:

16%	improvement of existing outputs
22%	development of new products and/or services
9%	developing new ways of making money
16%	looking for new clients
9%	looking for new markets
19%	improvement of existing processes and organisation
3%	meeting quality standards
6%	training of staff and/or management

100% of participating SMEs answered that they plan to enter new markets in the next two years.

### 5.1.3 Thessaloniki

When asked about the increase in investment level planned during the next year, the rate the importance of the following innovation areas on average is as follows:

21%	Technology improvement
18%	Production capacity increase
22%	Process and organisation
23%	Marketing
17%	Staff (training, etc)

For SMEs operating in Blue sector, whether they are willing to connect with culture/creative industry, 100% SMEs answered positively.

About the way of planned improvements or developments, they answered on average as follows:

41%	use knowledge provider / voucher scheme for product development
17%	developed own system for product development
10%	look at competitors
17%	think it out with employees
14%	work with customers
0%	Other

Whereas if their business strategy / model includes the following, the average answers are as below:

11%	improvement of existing outputs
20%	development of new products and/or services
15%	developing new ways of making money
13%	looking for new clients
9%	looking for new markets
15%	improvement of existing processes and organisation
9%	meeting quality standards
7%	training of staff and/or management

100% of participating SMEs answered that they plan to enter new markets in the next two years.

#### 5.1.4 Tirana

When asked about the increase in investment level planned during the next year, the rate the importance of the following innovation areas on average is as follows:

19%	Technology improvement
20%	Production capacity increase
21%	Process and organisation
21%	Marketing
17%	Staff (training, etc)

For SMEs operating in Blue sector, whether they are willing to connect with culture/creative industry, 100% SMEs answered positively.

About the way of planned improvements or developments, they answered on average as follows:

33%	use knowledge provider / voucher scheme for product development
28%	developed own system for product development
6%	look at competitors
11%	think it out with employees
22%	work with customers
0%	other

Whereas if their business strategy / model includes the following, the average answers are as below:

15%	improvement of existing outputs
18%	development of new products and/or services
9%	developing new ways of making money
18%	looking for new clients
21%	looking for new markets
6%	improvement of existing processes and organisation
9%	meeting quality standards
3%	training of staff and/or management

86% of participating SMEs answered that they plan to enter new markets in the next two years.

### 5.1.5 Ancona

When asked about the increase in investment level planned during the next year, the rate the importance of the following innovation areas on average is as follows:

20%	Technology improvement
18%	Production capacity increase
20%	Process and organisation
25%	Marketing
17%	Staff (training, etc)

For SMEs operating in Blue sector, whether they are willing to connect with culture/creative industry, 89% SMEs answered positively.

About the way of planned improvements or developments, they answered on average as follows:

29%	use knowledge provider / voucher scheme for product development
26%	developed own system for product development
10%	look at competitors
16%	think it out with employees
19%	work with customers
0%	other

Whereas if their business strategy / model includes the following, the average answers are as below:

18%	improvement of existing outputs
20%	development of new products and/or services
7%	developing new ways of making money
20%	looking for new clients
20%	looking for new markets

4%	improvement of existing processes and organisation
7%	meeting quality standards
4%	training of staff and/or management

89% of participating SMEs answered that they plan to enter new markets in the next two years.

### 5.1.6 Zadar

When asked about the increase in investment level planned during the next year, the rate the importance of the following innovation areas on average is as follows:

25%	Technology improvement
17%	Production capacity increase
19%	Process and organisation
27%	Marketing
12%	Staff (training, etc)

For SMEs operating in Blue sector, whether they are willing to connect with culture/creative industry, 75% SMEs answered positively.

About the way of planned improvements or developments, they answered on average as follows:

38%	use knowledge provider / voucher scheme for product development
16%	developed own system for product development
12%	look at competitors
15%	think it out with employees
19%	work with customers
0%	Other

Whereas if their business strategy / model includes the following, the average answers are as below:

11%	improvement of existing outputs
18%	development of new products and/or services
11%	developing new ways of making money
13%	looking for new clients
11%	looking for new markets
16%	improvement of existing processes and organisation
12%	meeting quality standards
8%	training of staff and/or management

100% of participating SMEs answered that they plan to enter new markets in the next two years.

## 6. Feedback input from impact survey done through survey monkey to beneficiary SMEs

The total number of questionnaires collected by beneficiary SMEs is 40. The survey was distributed and submitted by SMEs in the period July-September.

This survey's aim was to evaluate the impact of the overall project intervention for the innovation of blue economy sector SMEs and their cooperation with Knowledge Providers (KP) as a pilot action, as well to receive feedback on their satisfaction and the effect of KP creative industry innovation implemented by them through the awarded innovation vouchers. As a summary of all the inputs provided, most of the companies have evaluated the collaboration with KP and the overall experience from the 4helix+ project as very beneficial. Although the timing of the project and the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted a lot their business and they could not rip the benefits during 2020 season, they remain optimistic that the impact will show during 2021 onwards. As a result, they also expressed positive that the vouchers scheme should be implemented more widely to encourage collaboration and information sharing, even during bootcamp activities. They also suggested for a wider range of KP services, to address requests and challenges of SMEs in regard to innovation in other areas as well.

**Finally, they all would suggest this project to other businesses.**

Based on the survey questions, the input analysis follows as below.

### Section 1. General Information

#### 1.1 Name of Blue Economy company

Altagamma  
Barcelona Yacht Club  
BestRide  
Blu marine service  
Bojo Resort  
Cap a mar  
Daevi  
Delta Sail  
Ebiketruck  
Foka doo  
Golden Star City Resort (Anastasios Papias A.E.)  
Hacker Hostel  
Impresa Lavori Marittimi Ancona ILMA Srl  
Kostas Koukaras  
Lega Navale Italiana San Benedetto del Tronto  
Life on Boat

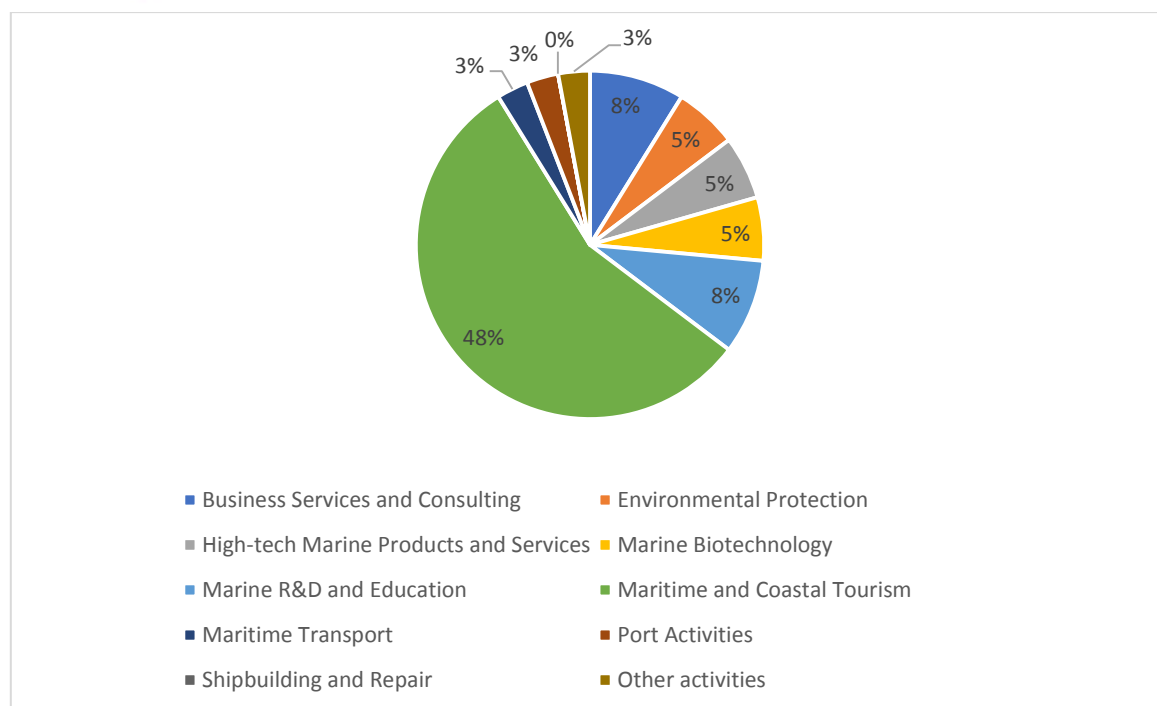
Lusalgae  
 Magic Croatia d.o.o.  
 Marigo Souvenir and Gifts Shop  
 Obrt Lanč'in  
 Qstar Serveis Costers  
 Raffaella Polenta (Rustico del Conero)  
 Rapsodia  
 Ribarski obrt Milivoj Blaslov  
 Salys  
 Scoring XXI  
 Seastainable Ventures  
 Seazen  
 Shuttle Tours  
 Skopelos Dive Center  
 Skura  
 Symeon Nalmpantoglou  
 Team Sardine  
 TSTS GROUP  
 Watch The Sea  
 Whimsitech  
 WineTours  
 Yachting Venture  
 Zara Agent d.o.o.  
 Yako Sailing Maritime

## 1.2 Sector

	Answers	Percentage
<b>Business Services and Consulting</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8%</b>
Environmental Protection	2	5%
High-tech Marine Products and Services	2	5%
Marine Biotechnology	2	5%
<b>Marine R&amp;D and Education</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Maritime and Coastal Tourism</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>48%</b>
Maritime Transport	1	3%
Port Activities	1	3%
Shipbuilding and Repair	0	0%
Other Activity	<b>7</b>	<b>18%</b>

### Other Activity

<b>Diving Center</b>	1	3%
<b>R&amp;D</b>	1	3%
<b>Travel agency</b>	1	3%
<b>Hotel</b>	1	3%
<b>Agriculture</b>	1	3%
<b>Marine refit materials</b>	1	3%
<b>fishing activities</b>	1	3%

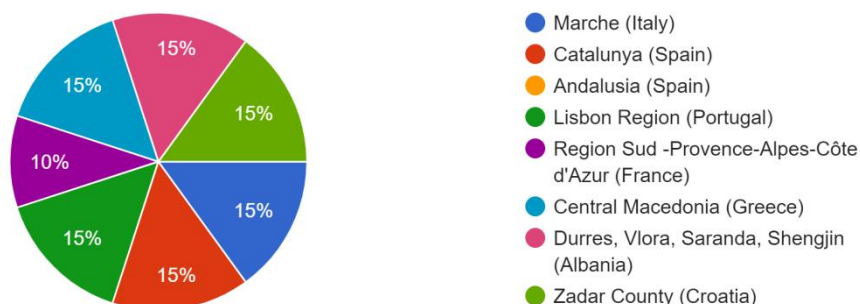


From the answers received from beneficiary SMEs regarding the blue economy sector where they were operating, mostly companies were coming from Maritime and Coastal Tourism (48%), Marine R&D and Education (8%); and Business Services and Consulting (8%).

### 1.3 Region

	Answers	Percentage
Zadar County (Croatia)	6	15%
Region Sud-Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (France)	4	10%
Central Macedonia (Greece)	6	15%
Marche (Italy)	6	15%
Catalunya (Spain)	6	15%
Durres, Vlora, Saranda, Shengjin (Albania)	6	15%
Lisbon Region (Portugal)	6	15%

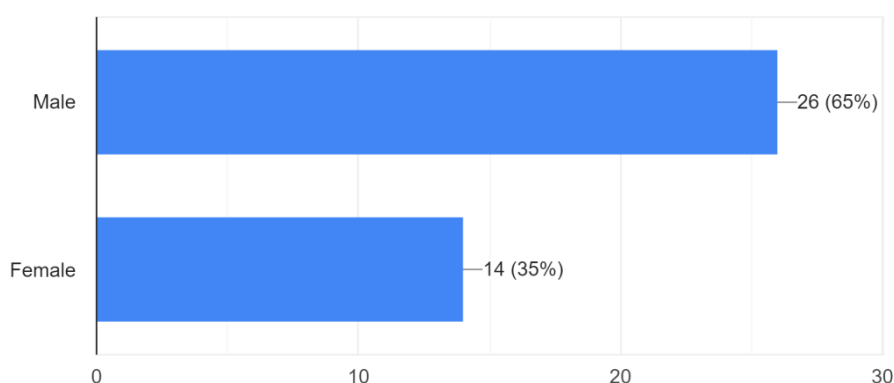
Region  
40 responses



From the answers received from beneficiary SMEs, we see an overall similar distribution among regions where they were operating.

## 1.4 Gender of entrepreneur

Gender of entrepreneur  
40 responses



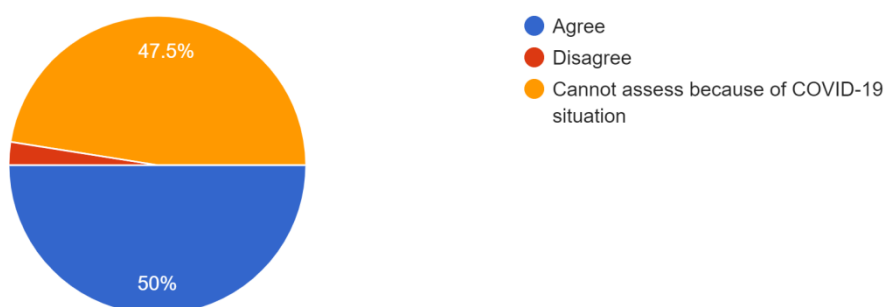
Although participation of female entrepreneurs was satisfactory, 35% female figures are quite good in the blue economy, representing both each region, and also each sector.

## Section 2. Support from 4helix+ Project

### 2.1 Since joining the project, there are positive changes regarding the number of customers of the business.

Since joining the project, there are positive changes regarding the number of customers of the business.

40 responses

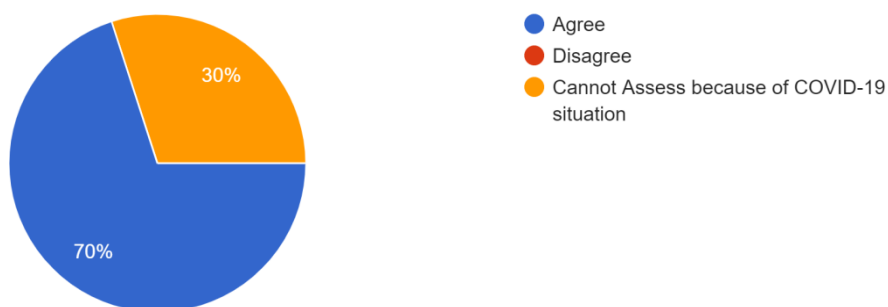


The input of companies shows 47.5% positive changes on number of customers, 50% answered on difficulty to measure because of Covid-19 impact, and only 1 (2.5%) did not have positive changes for number of customers (same or maybe less).

### 2.2 Since joining the project, the quality of my/our products/services has improved.

Since joining the project, the quality of my/our products/services has improved.

40 responses

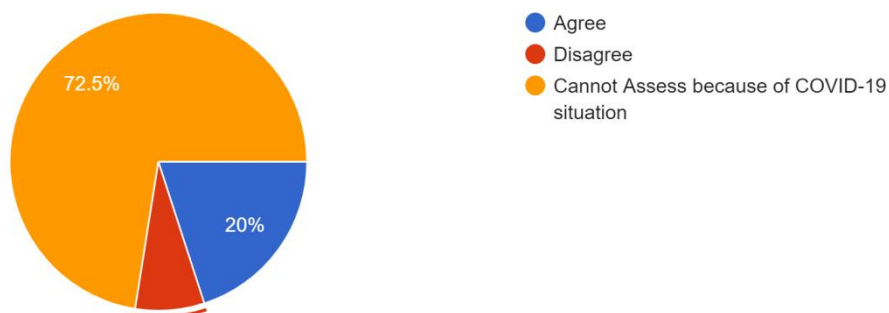


While quality of products/services has improved for 70% of beneficiary SMEs that have provided input, and 30% cannot assess because of Covid-19 situation, none have disagreed on this.

### 2.3 Since joining the project, the turnover of the company has improved.

Since joining the project, the turnover of the company has improved.

40 responses



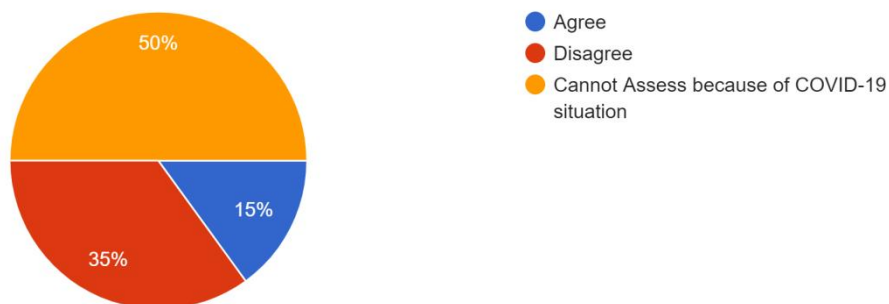
Turnover of beneficiary blue economy SMEs have improved for 20% of the cases, 72.5% cannot assess because of Covid-19 situation, while 3 (7.5%) did not report improved turnover (same or maybe decrease).

Although the number of customers (in question 2.1) is improved, the financial impact does not reflect the same impact, due to the effect of Covid-19.

### 2.4 Since joining the project, the number of employees in the company has increased.

Since joining the project, the number of employees in the company has increased.

40 responses



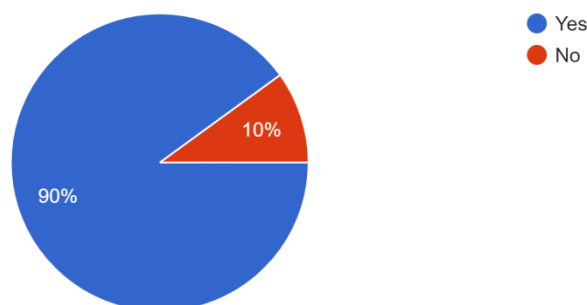
Regarding the number of employees, it has increased for 15% of answers received, 50% cannot assess because of Covid-19 situation; while 35% declare no increase (same or maybe less and that could count as effect of Covid-19 situation, not because of innovation voucher in creative industry).

### Section 3. The Innovation Voucher

#### 3.1 Did your company have a particular benefit from the collaboration with the regional/national/foreign Knowledge Provider?

Did your company have a particular benefit from the collaboration with the regional/national/foreign Knowledge Provider?

40 responses



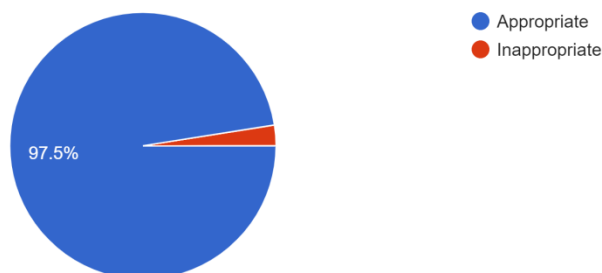
For 90% of innovation voucher cases there has been a benefit from the collaboration with the regional/national/foreign Knowledge Provider, which are mentioned shortly as below:

- direct new contacts with new clients; increased brand awareness; improved image; increased number of clients compared to same period of previous year;
- marketing assistance; improved the ability to intercept new customers; communication and promotion on social media - more efficient digital marketing; stronger value proposition and differentiated product in the market;
- improved company presence (brand, uniforms, communication elements)
- delivery as expected;
- benefit from foreign KP;
- design a better product optimizing our efforts; technical knowledge; use new technologies; created 2nd prototype or new product.

#### 3.2 Based on your experience, how do you assess “The Innovation Voucher scheme” and working approach?

Based on your experience, how do you assess “The Innovation Voucher scheme” and working approach?

40 responses

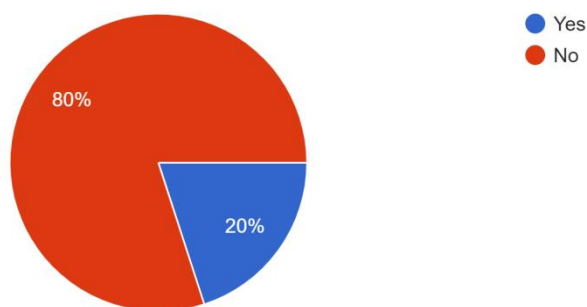


97.5% of answers is positive on the working approach on the Innovations Voucher scheme offered to them.

### 3.3 Has your company already used another voucher instrument in the past?

Has your company already used another voucher instrument in the past?

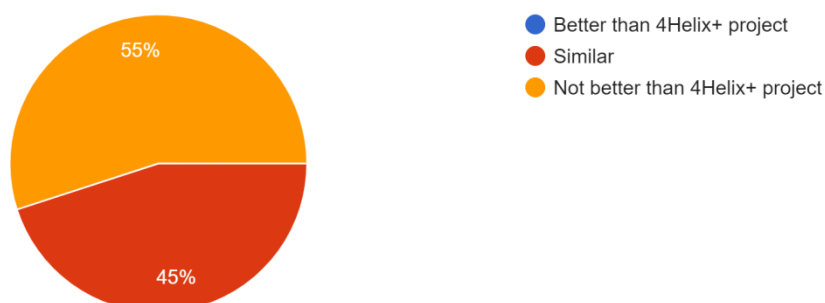
40 responses



### 3.4 If yes, how would you compare it to 4Helix+?

If your company has already used another voucher instrument in the past, how would you compare it to 4Helix+?

40 responses



Of 80% of SMEs which have already used another voucher instrument in the past, none has answered that it was better than 4helix+ project.

While 20% of SMEs have not previously used another voucher instrument in the past.

### 3.5 Would you recommend “The Innovation Voucher scheme” to a friend or business you are working with?

Referred to answers of question 3.2, where 97.5% expressed the positive experiences on the Innovations Voucher scheme offered to them, the associated comments from all beneficiary SMEs have been on recommending “The Innovation Voucher scheme” to other businesses or friends.

Among the positive effects and impact, they mention:

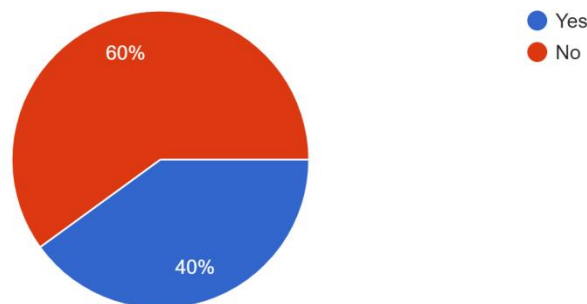
- many different work activities of the company can be improved;
- opportunity for developing business in the blue growth; services upgrade;
- application process flow and collaboration is practical, easy, and efficient especially to work with KPs engaged on innovation;
- new contacts and experiences;

- quite an opportunity from this grant support; it has given an impulse to further communicate services and offers; chance to experiment and to test an idea or a collaboration that could be a real benefit for the enterprise.

### 3.6 Did you face any difficulties **after** the project ended?

Did you face any difficulties after the project ended?

40 responses



Of 40% of SMEs which have faced difficulties after the end of the project, some of the issues are:

- high impact of Covid-19 lockdown and limitations, mostly because the blue economy sector operates mainly during summer season. For the most part marketing was the tool to rip the benefits or get the full potential, difficult to reach more clients, product launch and sales have been suspended for 2020, slowed down the efforts to get the product to the market,
- short time period,
- timing of the project (Shuttle Tours is a travel agency and the period June / December is part of the year when we provide most of our services. The first part of the project is the peak of the tourist season as well.)
- the partner chosen to develop the prototype according to the KP guidelines has not been involved as expected.
- more money was needed to keep developing the product.

### 3.7 From your experience with the 4Helix+ Project, what would you suggest to be improved?

- “more vouchers :)”
- the amount of the voucher could be increased to carry out more complex projects (for example some marine operations are expensive and with a small amount of the voucher is very difficult to cover the costs of boats and marine services);
- roadshow mandatory participation (to share the experience) should be specified from the beginning
- more often and intensive meetings prior to choosing the partner; more interaction between ideas and projects;
- shorten the duration of the project, from participating in the preparations to reporting,
- given polls is too long period – monitoring
- longer deadlines for applying and writing the project, to focus the work to direct the development,

- project could be longer
- less paper work
- the foreign language used for the whole project's documents
- create a community with the people involved in the projects around Europe so we could see how all evolve.
- “other national and international projects in the future shall use the same approach of the 4Helix+ project: quickly, simple and efficient. Thank you!”

## Annexes

### Annex 1 – Questionnaire for KPs

1. Your involvement in research, development and innovation.
2. Successful cases regarding innovation in your region.
3. What makes you unique?
4. What innovative ideas and instruments could be useful for the blue partners (that you or others can offer)?
5. How many projects have you had with companies/SMEs in blue economy during last three years? What is your opinion/experience?
6. In which innovation aspects have MSMEs benefited from your support?
7. Have you been involved in national or regional policies in your country/region? Are you directly involved in their implementation?
8. Are you engaged in transfer between regions / transboundary? What is your opinion on that?
9. In which departments do your organization/experts have expertise in regarding an innovation development (tick):
  - ☐ technology and IPR protection,
  - ☐ production and processes,
  - ☐ resources and organization,
  - ☐ market(ing),
  - ☐ project application/business plan/business development.

## Annex 2 – Questionnaire for SMEs

		male	female
A	Gender		

B	What is your business industry/sector? (specify) <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statistical_Classification_of_Economic_Activities_in_the_European_Community">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statistical_Classification_of_Economic_Activities_in_the_European_Community</a>

C	Region		
D	Country		

1	What are your main product(s) or service(s)? (specify max 3)

2	How do you assess your overall business performance during the last year?	Improved	Unchanged	Deteriorated

3	How do you evaluate the advantages of your product(s) or service(s) over your competitors?	lower	same	higher
	no direct competitors (unique product or service)			
	price			
	reliability			
	efficiency			
	style			
	environmental/healthy			
	Other (please specify)			

4	During the last year, the investment level of the business has:	Increased	Unchanged	Decreased

5	In case the investment level has increased during the last year, it concerned:	Tick all that apply
	Technology improvement	
	Production capacity increase	
	Process and organisation	
	Marketing	
	Staff (training, etc)	
	Other (please specify) _____	

6	For the next year, the investment level of the business will probably:	Increase	Not change	Decrease

7	If the investment level is planned to increase during the next year, rate the importance of the following innovation areas:	Important	Neutral	Less important
	Technology improvement			
	Production capacity increase			
	Process and organisation			
	Marketing			
	Staff (training, etc)			
	Other (please specify) _____			

8	For those operating in Blue sector, are you willing to connect with culture/creative industry?	yes	no

9	How do you plan improvements or developments?	Tick all that apply
	use knowledge provider / voucher scheme for product development	
	developed own system for product development	
	look at competitors	
	think it out with employees	
	work with customers	
	other (please specify) _____	

10	Does your business strategy / model include:	Tick all that apply
	improvement of existing outputs	
	development of new products and/or services	
	developing new ways of making money	
	looking for new clients	
	looking for new markets	
	improvement of existing processes and organisation	
	meeting quality standards	
	training of staff and/or management	

- |    |  |           |           |           |
|----|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 11 | How do you assess employment in your business? | Increased | Unchanged | Decreased |
|    |  |           |           |           |
- 
- |    |  |          |              |
|----|--|----------|--------------|
| 12 | What are staff attitudes to new things at work (products, services, processes, organisation) |          |              |
|    | neutral  | positive | enthusiastic |
|    |  |          |              |
- 
- |    |  |     |    |
|----|--|-----|----|
| 13 |  | yes | no |
|    | Do you stimulate staff to make suggestions?            |     |    |
|    | Do you reward staff on their suggestions?              |     |    |
|    | Do you discuss how to improve the business with staff? |     |    |
- 
- |    |  |                     |
|----|--|---------------------|
| 14 | Have you arranged training programmes to enable: | Tick all that apply |
|    | process improvement                              |                     |
|    | new processes                                    |                     |
|    | product and service improvement                  |                     |
|    | organisation change                              |                     |
|    | management                                       |                     |
- 
- |    |                                     |                     |
|----|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 15 | Does your marketing plan include:   | Tick all that apply |
|    | Product and/or service improvements |                     |
|    | Market research                     |                     |
|    | Promotional activities              |                     |
|    | Pricing Strategies & Sales Plan     |                     |
|    | Technology and Innovation promotion |                     |
- 
- |    |  |                     |
|----|--|---------------------|
| 16 | How is market information gained?                      | Tick all that apply |
|    | Own market research                                    |                     |
|    | by special activities (focus groups, hall tests)       |                     |
|    | customer satisfaction surveys                          |                     |
|    | suggestions from customers                             |                     |
|    | By keeping records of customers sales and any feedback |                     |
|    | use of external sources (market reports, outsourcing)  |                     |
- 
- |    |   |     |    |
|----|---|-----|----|
| 17 | Do you plan to enter new markets in the next two years? | yes | no |
|    |   |     |    |

18	If so, how?	Tick all that apply
	with existing products and/or services	
	with improved products and/or services	
	by increasing product/service portfolio	

## Annex 3 – Questionnaire for beneficiary SMEs at project end

### SURVEY

#### Performance And Impact Monitoring

**Disclaimer:** This questionnaire is proposed to assess performance and impact for Blue Economy SMEs for the services provided by KPs in the framework of 4helix+ Innovation Voucher scheme. The information received will be used only for the abovementioned purpose and will not be transmitted and/or disclosed to third parties, but will be prepared as a cumulative analytic report. Privacy and confidentiality will be respected and guaranteed.

#### Section 1. General Information

##### 1.5 Name of Blue Economy company

---

##### 1.6 Sector

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| a) Business Services and Consulting       | f) Maritime and Coastal Tourism |
| b) Environmental Protection               | g) Maritime Transport           |
| c) High-tech Marine Products and Services | h) Port Activities              |
| d) Marine Biotechnology                   | i) Shipbuilding and Repairs     |
| e) Marine R&D and Education               | j) Other Activity               |

##### 1.7 Region

- a) Marche (Italy)
- b) Catalunya (Spain)
- c) Andalusia (Spain)
- d) Lisbon Region (Portugal)
- e) Region Sud-Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur(France)
- f) Central Macedonia (Greece)
- g) Durrës, Vlorë, Saranda, Shengjin (Albania)
- h) Zadar County(Croatia)

## 1.8 Gender of entrepreneur

☐ Male

☐ Female

## Section 2. Support from 4helix+ Project

2.5 Since joining the project, there are positive changes regarding the number of customers of the business.

- a) Agree
- b) Disagree
- c) Cannot assess <sup>3</sup>

2.6 Since joining the project, the quality of my/our products/services has improved.

- a) Agree
- b) Disagree
- c) Cannot assess<sup>1</sup>

2.7 Since joining the project, the turnover of the company has improved.

- a) Agree
- b) Disagree
- c) Cannot assess<sup>1</sup>

2.8 Since joining the project, the number of employees in the company has increased.

- a) Agree
- b) Disagree
- c) Cannot assess <sup>1</sup>

## Section 3. The Innovation Voucher

3.8 Did your company have a particular benefit from the collaboration with the regional/national/foreign Knowledge Provider?

- a) Yes (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) No

3.9 Based on your experience, how do you assess "The Innovation Voucher scheme" and working approach?

- a) Appropriate
- b) Inappropriate

3.10 Has your company already used another voucher instrument in the past?

- a) Yes
- b) No

3.11 If yes, how would you compare it to 4Helix+?

Not better

Similar

Better

---

<sup>3</sup>Because of COVID-19 situation

3.12 Would you recommend “The Innovation Voucher scheme” to a friend or business you are working with?

a) Yes (please specify reason) \_\_\_\_\_

b) No (please specify reason) \_\_\_\_\_

3.13 Did you face any difficulties **after** the project ended?

a) Yes (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

b) No

**Comments:**

What do you suggest to be improved?

**THANK YOU!**

# Interreg Mediterranean



4helix+

## Project Partners



SVIM - Sviluppo Marche S.r.l. (IT)  
**Lead Partner**



University of Camerino (IT)



Central European Initiative (IT)



Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce  
and Industry (GR)



Croatian Chamber of Economy  
Zadar County Chamber (HR)



Official Chamber of Commerce,  
Industry and Shipping of Seville (ES)



XXI Dinamic Network (PT)



Albanian Development Fund (AL)



Barcelona Official Chamber of  
Commerce, Industry,  
Services and Navigation (ES)



Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
Marseille Provence (FR)

Albanian Development Fund  
Tirana, Albania

<https://4helix-plus.interreg-med.eu>