



OSES

OCEAN SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH
EDUCATION AND SPORT

GOOD PRACTICES HANDBOOK

1 | Connecting schools, water sports, and ocean literacy

A benchmark of educational tools
and environmental activities already
implemented in Europe and beyond.

Ocean Sustainability through Education and Sport (OSES)

Water sports offer humans a unique connection to the marine environment. As opposed to “leisure tourists” water sports enthusiasts take advantage of this unparalleled ecosystem all year round, and many times regardless of air and water temperature. This makes water sports enthusiasts highly susceptible to environmental degradation, be it from pollution hindering water access or shifting hydrological conditions disrupting their activities.

These enthusiasts often evolve into professional athletes, ocean advocates, or water sports business owners contributing significantly to local economies. Consequently, education and awareness among water sports practitioners at all levels of engagement are essential for protecting and improving our marine environment. Sports can be a powerful tool for fostering eco-responsible actions and environmental awareness. Activities like waste collection, biodiversity awareness, coastal preservation, and oceanic issue discussions can be seamlessly integrated into sports, and help create an ocean-literate community dedicated to safeguarding our waters.

The OSES project aligns with the broader goal of supporting education through sport. We believe that sports can play a pivotal role in educating youth about environmental protection. Addressing ocean preservation serves as a pilot initiative that can be expanded to other sports in the future.

Nautical sports, including surfing, sailing, scuba diving, and kayaking, have specific environmental concerns tied to marine area preservation. One unifying value across these sports is the imperative to protect their playground.

Sport, with its educational and exemplary values, has the power to raise awareness and drive behavioral change in environmental protection. The «green sport» dimension in the European Union's Work Plan for Sport emphasizes the sector's potential to combat climate change and become more sustainable.

OSES seeks to strengthen the role of sports actors in addressing ocean conservation through three dimensions:



Education for sustainable sport: Developing tools and methodologies to instill eco-responsible actions and environmental awareness in youth through sports.



Environmentally friendly sports practice, facilities, and events: Gathering expertise to integrate environmental aspects into all sporting activities, including events, competitions, and organizational management.



Evolution of sport and its practice in the context of climate change: Focusing on ocean health and preservation by addressing activities significantly impacted by ocean challenges such as pollution, coastal development, and water quality issues.

The OSES Good Practices Handbook seeks to compile impactful actions and projects across Europe and beyond, serving as a benchmark for environmental awareness and ocean protection education.

CONNECTING SCHOOLS WATER SPORTS, AND OCEAN LITERACY

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The primary objective of the OSES project is to create tools for sports federations and local sports organizations to educate young people about eco-responsible actions and foster environmental awareness from an early age, using sports as a vehicle. Consequently, it is crucial to involve school-age children and schools in initiatives that offer students opportunities to learn about the marine environment, instill a sense of responsibility for its protection, engage in hands-on ocean conservation activities, and teach them how to interact with the environment sustainably.

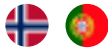
An evident advantage of integrating water sports, ocean protection, and schools is the ability to reach large groups of young people regularly and consistently. It also ensures relatively equal access to such programs for all students attending schools, regardless of their financial or social background. Collaborating with schools also adds value to local communities through the involvement of water sports enthusiasts. Furthermore, working with children often encourages the participation of other family and community members, allowing these initiatives to extend their reach and amplify their impact.

In this section, we showcase projects that enable school students to learn about the marine environment and contribute to its protection through water sports. Some of these initiatives were initiated by water sports practitioners who partnered with schools, while others were developed by schools themselves. Regardless of their origin, these projects share a common objective: engaging school-aged youth in marine conservation efforts.

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KIDS DIVE

SCUBA DIVING



TARGET AUDIENCE



Children 8-17 years old

Led by MARE-Marine and Environmental Sciences Centre / Ispa - University Institute

Diving Education Inspires Ocean Conservation in Youth

Kids Dive is a practical and educational program that introduces scuba diving to young individuals, fostering their commitment to ocean conservation. Since 2018, it has engaged over 2500 students aged 8-17, aligning with 5 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 14 – Life Below Water, SDG 4 - Quality Education, SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 13 - Climate Action, and SDG 17 - Partnerships for the goals.

Groups of 60 school students engage in a 5-day Kids Dive program that immerses them in ocean education and scuba diving. The experience begins with a school presentation, followed by a scuba diving introduction. They participate in underwater educational activities and later delve into themed workshops covering plastic pollution, marine biodiversity, and climate change.

To illustrate the issue of plastic pollution, students swim through hula-hoops, one of which is covered with transparent plastic, which they usually can't see underwater and therefore are surprised when hitting



the « invisible wall ». This demonstrates how marine life can be impacted by underwater plastics. In the «Deplastify the Ocean» workshop, they learn about how marine creatures can mistake plastics for food, the varying properties of different plastics, and the growing problem of microplastics.

Marine biodiversity is explored through a simulated «kelp forest» in a pool, treated as a Marine Protected Area (MPA). Students release model fish into this environment and further delve into the topic during a workshop. They discover the ocean's role in mitigating climate change through algal communities and the importance of MPAs in marine ecosystem conservation.

The program continues with a field trip to explore local coastal marine life, a visit to the Lisbon Oceanarium (public aquarium), and a meeting with scientists.

Presently, this innovative program goes beyond scuba diving, featuring a digital learning tool and a citizen science project. Digital learning through virtual scuba diving using VR360 headsets emerged from a National Geographic project during the pandemic. It enables an immersive experience of «diving» into diverse underwater habitats that were filmed by the program creators with VR360 came-

ras. These include marine forests and reefs or shipwrecks teeming with life. A citizen science project is customized for local schools by our research team. This project includes small monitoring projects (based on our knowledge of the local fauna and flora) that enable teachers and students to follow local intertidal protected species, non-indigenous species (NIS), and/or commercially important species. They also follow species that are in their northern or southern limit of distribution while installing temperature data loggers (that we provide) in the intertidal to better understand the effects of climate change.

The intention is to expand this pioneering practical program nationally (Portugal) and internationally (already running in Norway). National and international projects have been pivotal for Kids Dive, while ongoing projects have gained traction from an increasing number of participant municipalities. Individual feedback helps measure program effectiveness, considering the different levels of ocean literacy.

This program aims to deeply engage and inspire young individuals, promoting sustainable and ocean-friendly lifestyles within their schools and families. We want to nurture the desire to safeguard marine ecosystems contributing to a proactive blue generation. Our motto is: #savetheocean.

<https://www.kidsdive.org/>



OCEAN DISCOVERABILITY

SAILING



TARGET AUDIENCE



disabled students

Led by *The Island Trust*

Sailing Program Empowers Disabled Youth

Ocean Discoverability provides disabled children from Devon and Cornwall with the opportunity to experience day sailing aboard one of The Island Trust's traditional sailing vessels. The program is designed to create a memorable marine learning experience. The day starts with observing and interacting with marine life in the marina, followed by examining specimens under microscopes and via an underwater camera on the seabed. Safety instructions and boat familiarization are provided before the voyage commences.

The sailing journey begins by motoring down the River Plym to Plymouth Sound, during which ropes and fenders are stowed to help the young crew adjust to the boat's motion. Once in the Sound, participants who are willing help raise sails and steer the vessel.





This experience offers an understanding of geography, marine life, and other maritime activities. The crew engages in various tasks such as spotting and recording ships and boats, finding mystery objects on deck, word searches, sail area calculations, and knot tying. Some participants simply enjoy the sensory experience.

The return journey involves collecting plankton samples for microscopic examination upon returning to the marina. The program also includes motoring through Plymouth Sound to observe maritime activities and their impact on the landscape.

The group size varies based on the level of disability and the number of required helpers, with a maximum of 9 participants. Qualified and experienced personnel, including the skipper, mate, and onboard ocean educator, ensure a safe and enriching experience for young individuals with diverse disabilities. The hands-on activities of the day enhance motor skills, coordination, teamwork, and confidence.

The experience broadens horizons, elevates aspirations, and provides a tangible connection to the maritime heritage of the counties. Through assessment questions like “How much do you know about marine life and maritime activities?” at the beginning and end of the day, and “What did you gain from this experience?” the program evaluates the increase in knowledge and the intangible benefits such as improved independence, self-esteem, and abilities.



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SME NA JEDNEJ LODI

«We Are on The Same Boat»

KAYAKING/CANOEING, SAILING 

TARGET AUDIENCE  Children 8-15 years old

Led by *No.1 Senica Junior Secondary School*

Engaging School Students in Water Conservation Initiatives

The project's aim is to engage students in environmental protection and conservation through outdoor activities, including water sports like kayaking and sailing.

At No.1 Senica Junior Secondary School in Záhorie region, Western Slovakia, we are dedicated to preserving water ecosystems. Belonging to the Black Sea and Baltic Sea basins, we run various initiatives and long-term environmental projects throughout the school year. These projects align with four annual calls, each with specific objectives:



- studying and conserving biodiversity in water ecosystems (Call of the Wild),
- cleaning up rubbish from water-bound areas (Cleaning the Banks),
- addressing climate change impacts (Red Alert),
- adopting nature-friendly habits (Green Watch).



Our activities include water bird watching while canoeing, crafting paddles from driftwood, boatbuilding and sailing on lakes and the sea, operating a mealworm farm, showcasing water treatment plants (biological cycles), studying water streams, providing toad transport (toad taxi), implementing water retention measures, downstream canoeing with riverbank cleanups, sea biology lessons at the shore, environmental theater, creating handmade bird glass stickers from waste materials, and more.

Student teams drive these initiatives and they culminate in a one-day campaign

called «We Are At The Same Boat.» The event, occurring during Earth Day celebrations, involves students, teachers, and volunteers from all five Senica Primary and Junior Secondary schools. Teams share their initiatives using peer-to-peer learning. The campaign highlights productive student research teams, rewarding them with an honor prize – a boat barrel. All teams collect badges for their Climatic Certificate. Additionally, every two to three years, the school's Enviro-Team organizes a seashore expedition, establishing new partnerships with local schools and NGOs.



👉 www.zs1senica.edupage.org/a/we-are-at-the-same-boat

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PURE MARE

«Behoría Garbia»

KAYAKING, STAND UP PADDLEBOARD (SUP) 

TARGET AUDIENCE  primary and secondary schools

Led by *Begi Bistan in collaboration with Federación Vasca de Piragüismo and local entities in the town of Orío*

Sustainable Education Initiatives through Gamified Challenges and Cleanups

Raising awareness has always been at the core of our mission, rooted in the background of our team members with degrees in various earth sciences disciplines like geology, biology, environmental sciences, marine sciences, and more. We always strive to make incremental contributions, emphasizing the principle of «leave no trace.» This journey began back in 2015 when the idea was conceived to integrate our gamification concepts into standard educational visits for a graduating student's final-year project. Building upon this foundation, the following year witnessed a transition from standardized visits to a more engaging format with tests, scores, and prizes. In 2018, we ventured into school initiatives, seeking innovative approaches to extracurricular activities and simplifying teachers' tasks. Simultaneously, we aimed to instill awareness-raising topics and foster alternative ways of engaging with future generations, our «clients.»



By 2019, we had a workable draft and a motivated team eager to test it. However, the pandemic led us to postpone it until 2021-2022, aligning with the school year. In September 2021, preparations resumed, and testing commenced in the spring of 2022.

The primary target audience of this competition-driven project comprises primary and secondary school students. The central aim of the competition was to help students gain a comprehensive understanding of the three Rs: reduce, recycle, and reuse.



To assemble a group of participants, we contacted schools and teachers via emails including both schools that had previously collaborated with us and others unfamiliar with our work. Over three months, 277 participants undertook a series of activities to foster loyalty and build camaraderie while adhering to specific challenge deadlines. These activities included:

Berrikasi! (The Repurpose Challenge):

Students crafted daily-use school materials from recycled items, such as pencil cases and folders, encouraging a sustainable approach to everyday items.

Berrabiliz birziklatu! (The Recycling Challenge):

This challenge tasked students with crafting waste containers for recycling using reused and recycled materials. These containers were strategically placed in accessible locations like schools, parks, and nursing homes. Additionally, students produced explanatory videos showcasing their school's unique strategies for reducing, reusing, and recycling.

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Artelandu! (The Art Challenge):

The most artistic of the challenges, students were tasked with creating art pieces using recycled materials. The artwork was accompanied by explanations of its significance, purpose, and the materials employed.

Throughout this process, each challenge was gamified, with each activity assigned a score. The school that accrued the most points across the 3Rs was crowned the victor and awarded a Flysch route boat trip to witness the captivating cliffs and Flysch geological formations in Zumaia, a location known for its geological significance and as a Game of Thrones filming location. While

all participants enjoyed a kayaking cleanup expedition along the Oria River, the highest-scoring school claimed an additional prize.

In these cleanups, we prioritized environmental responsibility by employing jute bags instead of plastic ones for waste collection. Our collaborative efforts spanned the cleaning of water bodies and accessible shorelines reachable via kayaks and stand-up paddleboards (SUPs). Following the cleanup, the collected waste underwent meticulous sorting, with an emphasis on maximizing recycling opportunities. Notably, a creative twist was added to the initiative, as some of the retrieved trash was



transformed into classroom art projects. Our collective efforts have yielded substantial results, with 398 kg of waste collected during these initiatives.

The project's frequency varies based on school participation and schedules, with a typical two-year cycle. However, our endeavors extend beyond schools. In 2023, we organized a public cleanup event on October 21, welcoming participants from the general public. Furthermore, we aim to introduce MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) company incentives centered around the same theme.

What drives us forward is our commitment to differentiation, unwavering belief in our mission, and the determination to make a meaningful contribution. Leveraging the expertise and experience of our team, we have successfully navigated this path. Moreover, this initiative has allowed us to depersonalize our operations, providing year-round work opportunities, retaining talent, and shifting our employment structure from one characterized by discontinuity to nearly all permanent positions.

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POSIDONIA LAB

SCUBA DIVING, SNORKELING 

TARGET AUDIENCE  children 8-17 years old

Led by *Asociación Vellmarí*

Marine biodiversity education through snorkeling, diving, workshops, and projects

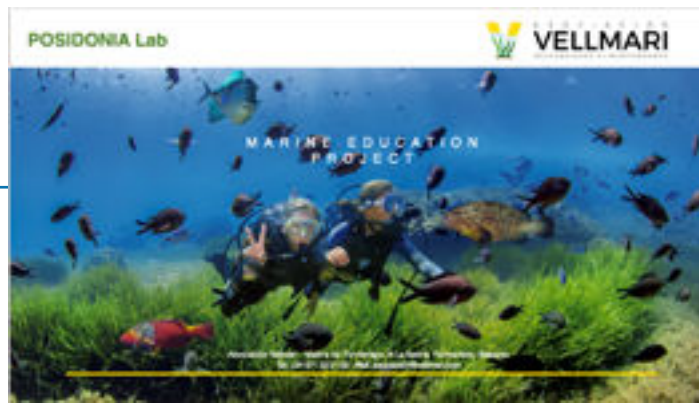
Our marine education initiative is tailored to young individuals aged 8 to 17, with a clear mission: the preservation of marine habitats, species, and ecosystems. We achieve this through a fusion of aquatic activities and marine workshops, delivered across schools, online platforms, and on-campus settings.

During the winter months, we maintain close contact with our young participants through online workshops, offering two distinct options:

- **Monthly sessions**, typically held on Saturday mornings or holidays, facilitate engagement through newsletters and Instagram updates.
- **Scheduled** session that allows us to collaborate with schools to conduct workshops aligned with their curricular content, adding a structured educational dimension to the program.

Our monthly workshops commence in September and conclude in June, aiming to coordinate at least three annual workshops with schools to enrich curriculum topics.

In addition to these workshops, we organize summer camps designed to equip participants with essential diving and snorkeling skills. These activities empower them to actively engage in marine research, supporting scientific investigations. Our dive camps span three months, perfectly aligning with the summer season. Before venturing into the water, we arrange mini-workshops, ensuring that participants are well-prepared. Groups are organized based on their water experience, age, and proficiency level. We firmly believe that the practice of scuba diving and snorkeling is integral to marine conservation. Comprehensive understanding and proficient execution of these activities are essential prerequisites for learning about and respecting the marine environment. In the afternoons, we conduct additional workshops with in-



depth content, supplemented by activities like data downloading and photo analysis for further work throughout the week.

The primary and fundamental tools for enjoying our camp are a snorkel and a diving license. We meticulously structure the diving courses, and interleaving marine conservation workshops that encompass fish identification, biodiversity, sustainable fishing practices, marine zones, coral ecosystems, underwater photography, marine mammal studies, and more. Our weekly schedule offers diverse activities in the mornings and afternoons. The culmination of each camp involves a final dive and snorkeling session, during which participants present their Eco-projects. These projects are evaluated by both our staff and fellow participants. The learning experience extends to creative tasks such as drawings and arts & crafts endeavors.

Additionally, Vellmari leads two marine science projects: «Restoration of Posidonia» and «Study of Coral Reefs in Our Islands.» Both projects incorporate workshops that are deeply integrated with our conservation endeavors. In the Posidonia project, young individuals collect vital data concerning the condition of seagrass meadows, actively participating in seed sowing and collection efforts. Data collection predominantly relies on photographic observations.

Moreover, we actively collaborate with various citizen science projects, including:

- **Observadores del Mar:** Participants upload photos of fish or algae species collected during their marine activities.
- **iNaturalist:** We maintain a project where participants share photos of captivating underwater discoveries.
- **National Geographic Debris Tracker:** We contribute photos of the trash we encounter during our activities.
- **Ecomar:** Our data on marine debris is uploaded into their data application.

Our mission extends beyond students, reaching their families, educational institutions, and research centers. This holistic approach ensures that we foster the right knowledge and generate a positive impact across various segments of society. We keep families informed about our activities through social media campaigns, newsletters, and events like MasterClasses, which feature expert scientists providing insights into species conservation and scientific studies. Families are consistently encouraged to participate in these enriching experiences. Through these channels, we aspire to inspire a profound and lasting commitment to marine conservation.

PADI/DAN OCEAN LITERACY

SCUBA DIVING, SNORKELING 

TARGET AUDIENCE  schools

Led by *Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI), Divers Alert Network (DAN)*

Combining online learning with snorkeling experience for ocean literacy

Ocean Literacy is an environmental education initiative geared towards schools, and created by the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) in partnership with Divers Alert Network (DAN). Originating in Italy in 2018, this project, endorsed by the Italian Ministry of Education, aimed to raise awareness in schools across Italy. In recent years the initiative has evolved into an international open-source learning platform.

The primary objective of Ocean Literacy is to sensitize the young generations to a new type of relationship with the sea, fostering values related to biodiversity conservation and marine issues, particularly concerning the Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. This is achieved by introducing ocean-connected sports like diving, freediving, or snorkeling, allowing children to directly engage with the wonders of underwater life. Through this experience, the participants have an opportunity to witness environmental degradation, and thus become passionate advocates for preserving and safeguarding biodiversity.

13 CLIMATE ACTION



14 LIFE BELOW WATER





The Knowledge Development aspect of the course relies on independent learning using the Ocean Literacy manual, accessible through an e-learning platform. It equips students with the knowledge to:

- **Gain insights** into the Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Understand** the concept of Citizen Science.
- **Learn** how to interact with the marine world and communicate underwater.

Each student selects one of four educational routes, prepared by professionals:

Route 1: EDUCATION – CLIMATE CHANGE - Developed by Dr. Ernesto Azzurro, a researcher at the National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA).

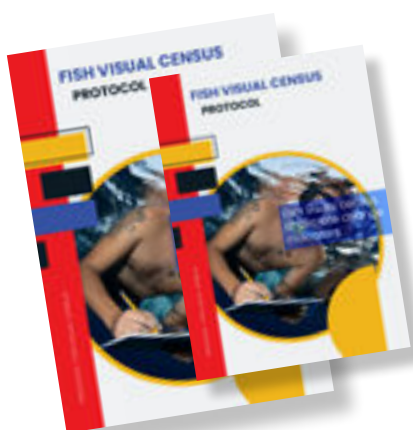
Route 2: EXPLORATION - UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGY - Developed by Fabio Portella, an Underwater Archaeology Trainer and Explorer.

Route 3: COMMUNITY – CITIZEN SCIENCE - Developed by Dr. Franco Andaloro, Research Director at Fondazione Anton Dohrn.

Route 4: CONSERVATION - PLASTICS IN OUR SEA - Developed by Dr. Stefano Goffredo, from the Department of Biological, Geological, and Environmental Sciences at the University of Bologna.

During the course, after the dry workshop held by a PADI professional, students in groups complete the snorkeling excursion by collecting data under the direct supervision of an instructor.

Upon the successful completion of one of these routes, participants are awarded the PADI/DAN Ocean Literacy Certificate. This program empowers future generations with knowledge and passion, fostering a deeper connection to the marine environment and the importance of its conservation.



www.oceanliteracy.edu.daneurope.org/

Contact us to get more information about our work :
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SCHOOL SPORTS

«Desporto Escolar»

SURFING AND PADDLEBOARDING 

TARGET AUDIENCE  customers certain ages, mostly kids

Led by *Centro de Formação Profissional de Canoagem e Surf AEFFL*

Locally nurturing ocean stewardship through kayaking and paddleboarding

The **Centro de Formação Desportiva de Canoagem e Surf AEFFL** is located in the charming fishing village of **Fuseta**, nestled in the **Algarve region**. This region has witnessed a surge in tourism, making Fuseta a sought-after destination for vacationers. However, Fuseta boasts a unique feature - its proximity to **Ria Formosa**, a protected natural park that is home to essential flora and fauna crucial for the marine ecosystem.

While the primary objective of our Center is to teach canoeing and surfing to young generations, our town's geographical location profoundly influences our approach. We recognize the interconnectedness of our town with ocean sustainability. This recognition drives our project to extend its scope beyond sports, with the aim of fostering community awareness about the complexity, beauty, and fragility of our natural park.





We actively participate in campaigns to clean up Ria Formosa. During each sea excursion, our dedicated group of 50 regular volunteers conducts symbolic cleanups. For them, one trip to the sea equals one piece of plastic waste brought to the shore. They perform such cleanups roughly once a week. Most of these volunteers are students from our local cluster school and nearby areas. We equip them with kayaks and stand-up paddleboards (SUPs) during these cleanups. They are responsible for retrieving the waste they find in the water, bringing it ashore, and disposing of it properly in recycling bins.



Additionally, we organize larger cleanup initiatives. We collaborate with other ecological projects, such as Escola Azul, for more specific cleaning actions that typically span one day. We arrange cleanup events that are open to the general public. These larger-scale actions are occasionally supported by the city council or the parish, which provides equipment beyond water gear, including trash bags and trucks.

In addition to these field activities, we actively foster collaborative initiatives and connect students with the water environment. Our goal is to educate local students and inspire them to protect the marine environment. To achieve this, we organize talks and lectures featuring renowned speakers. Notable athletes like Joana Schenker, a professional bodyboarder and the 2017



APB Bodyboard World Champion, have shared impactful messages about sports, perseverance, and ecology. We have also had the privilege of hosting environmental advocate Andreas Noe, known as «The Trash Traveler,» and assisting him in his mission to clean beaches and raise awareness about environmental conservation.

8

ERASMUS MARIS

SAILING, LING



TARGET AUDIENCE



Led by Ayam Sailing Europe, European Commission's Joint Research Centre - European Citizen Science Association, Technical University Thomas More, Generalitat Valenciana, Secretariat General of the European Schools, University of Ghent.

An alliance between scientific research, formal and non-formal education

Erasmus Maris objective is to create a strategic alliance in Europe between formal education, non-formal education, and scientific research sectors. The main goal is to engage upper secondary schools in co-creating new knowledge related to preserving the marine environment and inland waters while ensuring inclusivity and equitable participation. The initiative is funded by the Erasmus+ program.

Erasmus Maris offers a holistic approach and a collaborative platform to:



Integrate citizen science in secondary schools incorporating the key competencies for Lifelong Learning.

Facilitate the exchange of ideas and knowledge and share resources between schools from vocational and general education systems to improve environmental education and knowledge.

Increase science teachers' competencies in scientific procedures and keep them up to date with the latest developments in the science of measurements to facilitate collaboration with scientific research institutions and ensure that the next generation of scientists and researchers have a strong foundation in essential components of the modern scientific process.



Central to the implementation of Erasmus Maris is the sailboat. During a week-long event in a nautical school (Erasmus Maris week), students and teachers acquire both scientific and transversal competencies (such as teamwork and leadership). These competencies are achieved through a combination of workshops with scientists and sailing activities. Additionally, the sailboat's components (such as its engine, navigation systems, electronics, and electrical circuits) create a real-world STEM learning environment for schools of vocational and general education.

Although the focus is on microplastic pollution, the initiative's concept is applicable to any environmental research theme that can be adapted to a school setting. The idea is to use education to create awareness and drive action towards environmental conservation and sustainability while involving students and teachers in the research process.



www.erasmusmaris.eu

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GOOD PRACTICES HANDBOOK

The OSES Good Practices Handbook serves as a reference point for assessing our progress as a society in terms of connecting water sports with OL, environmental awareness, and marine education.

It is aimed at people and organizations at different stages of their journey towards a cleaner, more sustainable ocean, and covers a number of themes :

1. **Connecting schools, water sports, and ocean literacy**
2. **Environmental cleanups**
3. **Citizen science, environmental data collection, and monitoring**
4. **Sustainable practices in water sport tourism**
5. **Engaging with local communities**
6. **Good Practices in Professional Sports**

**Discover the other sections of
the handbook on :
www.oses-project.org**

Reference:

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European Marine Science Educators Association (EMSEA)

GPDESIGN Unipessoal Lda

Ligue de Voile de Normandie

Professional Association of Diving Instructors EMEA (PADI EMEA)

Surfrider Foundation Spain

University of Barcelona



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**Sport and
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Le Sport au service de la société

