

Decision on the Evaluation Result

Study programme:

“Joint Bachelor’s Degree in Sustainable Blue Economy” (SeaBluE)

offered by **University of Cádiz** (UCA, Spain, coordinator) in cooperation with **University of Gdańsk** (UG, Poland), **University of Split** (UNIST, Croatia), **University of Naples Parthenope** (UPN, Italy), **University of Algarve** (UALg, Portugal), **University of Nord** (NORD, Norway), and **University of Malta** (UM, Malta).


Based on the report of the expert panel on the 18 March 2025, the Direction¹ of the Agency for Scientific and University Quality of Andalusia decides:

1. The bachelor degree programme “**Joint Bachelor’s Degree in Sustainable Blue Economy**” offered by University of Cádiz (Spain, coordinator) in cooperation with University of Gdańsk (Poland), University of Split (Croatia), University of Naples Parthenope (Italy), University of Algarve (Portugal), University of Nord (Norway), and University of Malta (Malta) is accredited according to the criteria and procedures defined in the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.

The study programme complies with the requirements defined by the European Approach for Quality assurance of Joint Programmes and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in its current version.

2. The accreditation is given for a period of **six years**, valid until 18/3/2031.
3. A follow-up report shall be submitted to ACCUA by the end of the third year of implementation of the joint programme. The consortium shall provide ACCUA with a report detailing how each recommendation for improvement from the panel (section 11.1 of the review report) has been addressed, including supporting evidence. The follow-up report may also include any other relevant changes to the programme in relation to the quality assurance standards defined in the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.

¹Consultation of the European Approach Reporting Commission has not been necessary as it is a single evaluation report.

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The following recommendations are given for further improvement of the programme:

STANDARD 1: ELIGIBILITY

1.1. Status

- Harmonize the content presented by each partner university and offer a translation to English of the official documents that make the reading and evaluation feasible.

1.2. Joint Design and Delivery

N/A

1.3. Cooperation Agreement

N/A

STANDARD 2: LEARNING OUTCOMES

2.1. Level

- Ensure a more balanced definition of the intended learning outcomes in order to properly reflect all the disciplinary fields covered in the program. The review panel agreed that there is a bias towards economic related skills and competences with less emphasis in ecological and socio-cultural aspects. Despite this not being something worrying per se, the panel recommends to have a closer look at the programme’s evolution during the first cohorts to explore whether this bias is also perceived or not.

2.2. Disciplinary field

- The review panel recommends providing a clearer picture of the foreseen actions to keep the disciplinary balance once the programme is started. Concerns about an excessively broad approach to interdisciplinarity were raised during the online visit, but the position of all the participants in the hearings was convincing enough to support the programme’s current proposal.

2.3. Achievement

- Although there are stipulated procedures and spaces for dialogue, the panel recommends keeping track of how the six pathways evolve and to which extent the teaching and the learning processes are homogeneous between the universities involved in the programme.
- Similarly, the teaching of the first year in different locations will require an effort to monitor the evolution in each scenario.

2.4. Regulated Professions

N/A.

STANDARD 3: STUDY PROGRAMME

3.1. Curriculum


N/A.

3.2. Credits

N/A.

3.3. Workload

N/A.

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STANDARD 4: ADMISSION AND RECOGNITION

4.1. Admission

- Develop some guidelines to prepare the interview about students' motivation to access the joint degree programme.
- Provide a detailed guide to implementing the access and participation of people with disabilities, not only at the admission process but also at the several periods of the enrolment and completion of the programme.
- Keep attention to the suitability of B1 as a certificate of English language skills to follow the programme.

4.2. Recognition

N/A.

STANDARD 5: LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

5.1. Learning and teaching

- The concentration model for teaching must be carefully observed, given the diversity of subjects and learning contents in the courses, mainly during the first cohorts of the degree. It will be necessary to accumulate evidence to compare this time organisation with others based on a longer time spent together by lecturers and students.

5.2. Assessment of students

- A monitoring system should be completed to guarantee a similar approach of the assessment criteria in the common years 1 and 2.

STANDARD 6: STUDENT SUPPORT

- Concerns about the economic inequalities between the participating universities/countries were expressed, recommending to pay special attention to the needs to those students that will arrive as mobility in order to obtain their degree. Housing services are especially important in this chapter.
- A detailed review of the existing links in the several websites of the alliance and of all the partner institutions would be very helpful to provide an updated image of the academic offer of students' services.

STANDARD 7: RESOURCES

7.1. Academic, administration and services staff


- A balanced distribution of the teaching workload between universities and within them is necessary. Table 10 is presenting a long list of involved faculties and departments, but it might be useful to identify their degree of involvement, once the programme is up and running, as it seems unlikely that so many departments can share a significant teaching quota in the joint programme.

7.2. Facilities and material resources

N/A.

STANDARD 8: TRANSPARENCY AND DOCUMENTATION

- Provide some evidence coming from the SEA-EU alliance communication strategy as an indicator of what and how can be done with the joint degree.
- Track the diffusion strategies to meet the objective of 90 students per academic year.

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STANDARD 9: QUALITY ASSURANCE
N/A.

With regard to the rationale behind this decision the Direction refers to the attached evaluation report.

In Córdoba, on the date of the electronic signature.

THE DIRECTOR

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Evaluation Report by the Review Panel

Name of the Programme:

Joint Bachelor's Degree in Sustainable Blue Economy, Sea BluE

Name of the Coordinating Institution:

University of Cadiz



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This review has been conducted by a panel of international experts coordinated by the Agency for Scientific and University Quality of Andalusia (ACCUA) within the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (EA).

The review corresponds to an ex-ante accreditation of a proposal for a Joint Bachelor's Degree in Sustainable Blue Economy (Sea BluE) to be delivered by six universities, herein after referred as the Consortium: Universidad de Cádiz (UCA) as coordinator, University of Parthenope – Naples (Italy), University of Gdansk (Poland), University of Algarve (Portugal), University of Nord (Norway), University of Split (Croatia). Additionally, the University of Malta is presented as a partner university of the consortium and is involved in some of the activities related to the joint degree.

The programme is a 1st cycle degree within the Qualifications Framework in the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA), EQF level 6, with 180 ECTS credits. The programme will be taught in English following an innovative co-teaching system that is expected to strengthen the collaboration between the teaching staff of the universities, involving also international mobility of students. The programme aims to train experts in the interdisciplinary field of Blue Economy with the purpose of responding to the needs of the sea industry.

The main programme strengths are the efficient integration within the Sea EU Alliance (European University of the Seas), the highly detailed information provided about the design of the syllabus, the hosting infrastructure for both onsite and online teaching, the widely spread enthusiasm perceived in the several actors involved in designing and implementing this programme in the members of the consortium, the dedicated tools developed to monitor the quality of the teaching offered to potential students, and the close connection with a deeply engaged private sector that clearly expressed their interest in the professionals completing this programme.

INTRODUCTION

A) The procedure conducted for the review process.

As coordinator of the joint master, UCA requested ACCUA the ex-ante evaluation of the joint Bachelor's Degree according to the European Approach, providing the SER according to the proposed format and 18 annexes as additional evidence. ACCUA proposed the expert panel. The panel composition and CVs were sent to UCA. No objections were made and ACCUA nominated the expert panel. Moreover, ACCUA provided an online training session for the panel. Each member of the panel analysed the self-evaluation report (SER BACHELOR SEA-EU with links to annexes.pdf) and provided an individual assessment. The individual review reports were discussed during the pre-visit meeting of the panel on January 16th, 2025, and it was agreed to request additional evidence from the Consortium, with the advice that those issues



would be addressed during the visit. Minutes for this pre-visit meeting were issued. The external visit was held online and took place on February 3rd and 4th, 2025. With all the information provided by the Consortium and the external visit, the panel issues this preliminary report.

B) Information on the review panel and its activity:

- Composition of the review panel.
 - President: Alberto Oleaga Páramo
 - Academic Member of the Panel: Maria Paula Baptista da Costa Antunes
 - Student member of the panel: Kiara Hervella Seoane
 - Professional member of the panel: Jakub Brdulak
 - Secretary: Miguel Vicente Mariño

- Coordination of the review process.

The review process and the internal procedures to nominate the expert panel have been coordinated by ACCUA and developed according to the European Approach. Communication between UCA, the expert panel and ACCUA has been fluent.

- Description of the panel visit.

The visit took place online, on February 3rd and 4th, 2025. The agenda was agreed with the coordinating university and the expert panel. The coordinating university provided a list of participants who attended the different sessions via the Cisco Webex platform provided by ACCUA. The agency organised the online visit and provided technical assistance. The visit took place without any notable incident. All planned meetings were held and most of the planned participants attended. Minutes for all planned meetings were issued.

- Coordination for the review report writing.

A first version of the provisional report has been elaborated by the Secretary of the panel taking into consideration the individual reports of all members of the panel and the findings and conclusions agreed during and after the visit. The final version of the provisional report has been agreed by all members of the panel.

INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAMME

Name of the programme: Joint Bachelor's Degree in Sustainable Blue Economy, (SeaBluE)

EQF level: 6

QF-EHEA level: 1st cycle

Degree awarded: Joint Bachelor's Degree in Sustainable Blue Economy



Number of ECTS points: 180

ISCED field(s) of study: Interdisciplinary (9999)¹

The Consortium responsible for the degree is formed by the following institutions:

1. UCA: Universidad de Cádiz (coordinator) (Spain)
2. University of Parthenope – Naples (Italy)
3. University of Gdansk (Poland)
4. University of Algarve (Portugal)
5. University of Nord (Norway)
6. University of Split (Croatia)
7. University of Malta: partner university

¹ See page 24 of SER to identify the wide range of ISCED fields included in the programme.



ASSESSMENT OF EACH STANDARD

STANDARD 1: ELIGIBILITY

1.1. Status

Assessment:

All institutions participating in the Joint Programme are officially recognised as higher education institutions by the competent authorities of their countries and have a national legal framework allowing their participation. The Annex 1 shows that all partners fulfil the required standards.

The Cooperation Agreement - CA (SER Annex 2) is signed by all full partners: Universidad de Cádiz / Spain, University of Gdańsk / Poland, University of Split / Croatia, University of Naples Parthenope / Italy, University of Algarve / Portugal, NORD University / Norway and additionally includes the Bilateral Agreement between the University of Malta and the Consortium.

Nine universities compose the European University of Seas (SEA-EU Alliance). Six of them -University of Cadiz (UCA, Spain), University of Western Brittany (UBO, Brest, France), University of Kiel (CAU, Germany), University of Gdańsk (UG, Poland), University of Split (UNIST, Croatia) and University of Malta (UM, Malta)- were part of the founding application in 2019, increasing its size in January 2022, when Parthenope University of Naples (UPN, Italy), the University of Algarve (UALg, Portugal) and Nord University (NORD, Norway) joined the alliance.

After the successful pilot experience of the SEA-EU 1.0 project, three specific objectives are key on the SEA-EU alliance in this second phase, which are:

Specific Objective #1: Develop and implement **an integrated long-term joint strategy** that is responsive to the digital and green transition and key socio-economic challenges, while remaining committed to excellence.

Specific Objective #2: Establish **a European higher education inter-university ‘campus’** . This objective aims to create a collaborative educational and research environment between partner universities, with the objective of fostering student mobility, academic collaboration and networking across Europe.

Specific Objective #3: Build European knowledge-creating teams (**“challenge-based approach”**). This objective involves fostering the formation of multidisciplinary teams that address specific challenges through innovative and collaborative approaches, in order to promote the generation of knowledge and effective solutions to complex problems in Europe.

Table 1 included in the 11th page of the Self-evaluation Report is composed of data emerging from seven universities, but no information about UBO (Norway) and/or CAU (Germany) is provided, as they will not be involved in the joint bachelor degree.

Spain, Portugal, Poland, Croatia and Norway can implement the use of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (EA). Italy is under review for EQAR registration and Malta is a self-accrediting institution. However, Table 3 presented in page 25 of the Self-Evaluation Report identifies also Norway and Poland as self-accrediting institutions.



Annex 1 is including the information about University of Algarve twice (236-294 and 409-467).

NORD University is not providing its Statutes (295-298), as the other participating universities do.

The legal status of the Split University is presented in Croatian (299-327), not allowing the members of the panel to understand its content.

The online visit was useful to clearly understand the operational structure of the alliance and the way these universities are building up their cooperation across several joint teaching programmes and other similar efforts. The concerns raised by the panel members about the risk of overlapping or conflictive decision-making processes between partners were satisfactorily solved.

Documentary evidence:

- Self-evaluation Report.
- SER Annex 2. SeaBluE Cooperation Agreement
- SER Annex 3. Documents supporting each partner’s legal basis for participating a joint programme.

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations:

Harmonize the content presented by each partner university and offer a translation to English of the official documents that make the reading and evaluation feasible.

1.2. Joint Design and Delivery

Assessment:

The procedures for designing the integrated curriculum and the management (governing) bodies are described in the Consortium Agreement in Article 8 (Programme governance). SEA-EU Joint Programmes Coordination Office (JPC) is responsible, inter alia, for the development of joint regulations, procedures and guidelines related to student admission, performance monitoring, assessment, and other common aspects of the programmes. Academic Steering Committee (ASC) is responsible for overseeing academic matters and providing strategic direction for the programme.

All seven universities have participated in the design of the programme, assisted by the advice and consultation from stakeholders and students. The Handbook of Guidelines gives a precise account on the procedures followed to accomplish it. The course contents have been developed by the national and international Co-Creation Teams, finally validated by the International Academic Committee. A Co-Teaching structure has been developed which ensures the co-delivery of the programme.

A well-designed Governance structure, with tasks and responsibilities clearly defined, is in place to ensure the joint design and delivery.

The Cooperation Agreement contains a dedicated Article 10 to the quality assurance where the Internal



Quality Assurance System Handbook stands as the main reference. This document covers all requested points for the Joint Programme.

The establishment of joint regulations for examinations are presented in the document Student Assessment Regulations (SER Annex 9 and CA Annex 6). Grading system is presented in the SER Annex 9 (p. 13) and in SER (p. 76).

The cooperation agreement contains general rules on the financing of the programme (Article 14. Financial management and Article 11.8. Tuition fees). The CA Annex 1 presents the funding and budget strategy for the Joint Bachelor in Sustainable Blue Economy (SeaBluE)

A detailed description of the joint strategy to both develop the common and integrated curriculum and to set it into motion is provided in the self-evaluation report and in Annex 17. Table 4 in page 25 of the self-evaluation report is detailing the roles to be played by the seven partner universities. These roles are the same for the six full partners and the associated partner at the co-creation phase, raising the question about their different status. This difference is easily perceived during the implementation phase, as the University of Malta is not taking part in several actions covered by the full partners, such as Admission, Selection, Enrolment, Recognition, Mobility, Assessment, Internships, Student's Support, Resources or Internal Quality Assurance

SeaBluE will involve partnerships with industry leaders, government agencies, and non-profit organisations, providing students with valuable networking opportunities and real-world experiences through internships, fieldwork, and research projects. In the third year, the students will specialise in one of the six pathways offered by the full partner institutions.

The program has been jointly designed by the seven partner universities, with advice and consultation from stakeholders and students, under the coordination of the University of Cadiz. The implementation of the programme is guaranteed by the cooperation agreement, which has been developed taking into account the specific role of each of the participating universities. The online visit witnessed the deep integration of all the university stakeholders in this common strategic alliance.

Documentary evidence:

- Self-Evaluation Report
- SER Annex 1. Documents supporting the legal status of the partner institutions.
- SER Annex 2. SeaBluE Cooperation Agreement
- SER Annex 3. Documents supporting each partner's legal basis for participating a joint programme.
- SER Annex 8. Procedure for Prior Qualifications Recognition
- SER Annex 9. Student Assessment Regulations
- SER Annex 12. SeaBluE Joint Diploma and Diploma Supplement
- SER Annex 17. Handbook for Co-creation and Co-delivery of the Joint Bachelor's Degree SeaBluE
- SER Annex 18. SeaBluE Student's Handbook
- CA Annex 1. Financial Agreement
- CA Annex 6. Student Assessment Regulations



- CA Annex 9. Student Handbook
- CA Annex 10.

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations:

N/A.

1.3. Cooperation Agreement

Assessment:

SER Annex 2. SeaBluE Cooperation Agreement is presenting the cooperation agreement signed in 2019 between Universidad de Cádiz, University Gdański, Sveuciliste U Splitu, University of Parthenope – Naples, Universidade do Algarve and Nord Universitet. UCA is acting as the coordinating institution, whereas the remaining five are presented in the agreement as full partners. This annex is also including a bilateral agreement with Università ta Malta, acting as Associated Partner, and a clear commitment to the signature of the official documents, as follows:

“There is an explicit commitment that the agreement will be signed by the rectors of each participating university prior to the final decision of the accreditation process. In the meantime, the letters of commitment and responsibility to participate and implement the joint degree under the conditions in which it has been designed are also attached in Annex 2.”

National legal frameworks for Spain, Portugal, Poland (with a self-accrediting agency), Croatia, and Norway enable joint programmes and allow application of the European Approach for Quality Assurance (Annex 3). However, Italy cannot give the Joint degree yet because it is under review for EQAR registration and Malta is a self-accrediting institution.

Prior to the online visit of the panel the signed cooperation agreement was delivered, meeting one of the initial recommendations of the reviewers.

At the time of the application for this ex-ante evaluation, the Student Handbook only contained its main table of contents, but there was nothing developed and online available. Before the hearings, the coordinators of the joint degree sent the updated version of the handbook, which meets all the needs for this programme.

During the online visit, a valuable information about the internal work of the alliance and the consortium was provided by several of the participants based on almost all the participating universities. The outreach of the alliance is wider than the current joint programme and the nine universities are free to opt-in or opt-out to any of the specific projects. In this current case, the universities from France (Bretagne Occidentale) and Germany (Kiel) decided not to be part of, but they are involved in several other joint programmes within the alliance. This information was consistent with all the comments gathered during the hearings composing the online visit.



Documentary evidence:

- Self-Evaluation Report
- SER Annex 2. SeaBluE Cooperation Agreement
- CA Annex 1. Financial Agreement
- CA Annex 2. Data Protection and Sharing Regulations
- CA Annex 3. Programme Description
- CA Annex 4. Joint Degree and Diploma Supplement Template
- CA Annex 5. Application, Selection and Admission Regulations
- CA Annex 6. Student Assessment Regulations
- CA Annex 7. Mobility Plan
- CA Annex 8. Internship Monitoring and Assessment
- CA Annex 9. Student Handbook
- CA Annex 10. Internal Quality Assurance System Handbook

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations:

N/A.

STANDARD 2: LEARNING OUTCOMES

2.1. Level

Assessment

Annex 4 is presenting the eleven programme learning outcomes in a clear manner, setting out their correspondence to the five Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (Appendix III to the Ministerial Declarations from Paris: Overarching Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (revised 2018)). Several tables are provided to make visible the connections between the learning objectives of each course included in the syllabus and the programme learning outcomes and the QF-EHEA, detailing all the academic years, and specifying each of the six pathways offered.

The 11 PLOs are not divided into 3 groups (knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility); however the Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) are presented in these 3 groups. Annexes 4, 5 & 6 show the correspondence of PLOs with the Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) in detail, with the matrixes for each



year and path. These annexes show that the learning outcomes are in line with the European framework. These matrixes are developed in the annexes 5 and 6, where one can find the detailed course syllabi and the structure of the joint programme.

Documentary evidence:

- Self-evaluation Report.
- SER Annex 4. Learning Outcomes
- SER Annex 5 & 6. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations:

Ensure a more balanced definition of the intended learning outcomes in order to properly reflect all the disciplinary fields covered in the program. The review panel agreed that there is a bias towards economic related skills and competences with less emphasis in ecological and socio-cultural aspects. Despite this not being something worrying per se, the panel recommends to have a closer look at the programme’s evolution during the first cohorts to explore whether this bias is also perceived or not.

2.2. Disciplinary field

Assessment

The disciplinary field of the SeaBluE is characterised by a multidisciplinary study of the interactions between human activities and the marine environment, with a focus on promoting sustainability. It integrates a wide range of disciplines including marine biology, oceanography, environmental sciences, maritime law and policy, economics and sustainable development. Central to the field is the study of sustainable management practices for marine resources and ecosystems, encompassing issues such as the conservation of marine biodiversity, responsible fisheries management, coastal zone management, and marine pollution mitigation strategies, among others. Recognising the complexity of global processes such as climate change, students will explore the socio-economic dynamics of blue economy initiatives, taking into account the need for international cooperation and governance frameworks. As a summary, the disciplinary framework of this joint bachelor's degree aims at equipping students with a holistic understanding of marine systems, enabling them to make a substantial contribution to the conservation and equitable use of marine resource.

SeaBluE is presenting a strongly multidisciplinary approach, as the figure included in page 24 of the self-evaluation report proves, where one can identify up to seven different ISCED fields of study sharing the available space for a 180 ECTS program. The joint programme is provided in the disciplinary field: ‘interdisciplinary (code: 9999)’. It includes the fields:

- 02 Arts and humanities



- 08 Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary
- 10 Services
- 04 Business, administration and law
- 07 Engineering, manufacturing and construction
- 03 Social sciences, journalism and information
- 05 Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics

The structure of the syllabus covers this feature mainly due to the offer of up to six different pathways of 60 ECTS in hands of the studentship:

“The disciplinary field of the SeaBluE is characterised by a rigorous multidisciplinary study of the interactions between human activities and the marine environment, with a focus on promoting sustainability. Rooted in scientific inquiry, it integrates a wide range of disciplines including marine biology, oceanography, environmental sciences, maritime law and policy, economics and sustainable development. Central to the field is the study of sustainable management practices for marine resources and ecosystems, encompassing issues such as the conservation of marine biodiversity, responsible fisheries management, coastal zone management, and marine pollution mitigation strategies, among others. Recognising the complexity of global processes such as climate change, students will explore the socio-economic dynamics of blue economy initiatives, taking into account the need for international cooperation and governance frameworks.”

One of the main challenges faced by this proposal is to find a good balance between all those disciplines, given that the time is scarce and limited and the goal to keep all the fields of research and professional practice well represented in the syllabus is exigent. A question arising from this proposal is how this balance will be achieved, and which are the measures taken to make sure that this is occurring. Will all these areas be represented in such a way that their voice is listened, and which actions can be taken to guarantee the planned distribution? The online visit was partially satisfactory on this regard, as there is a clear and common intention to deep into this interdisciplinary approach. However, the panel keeps a more cautious view on this topic, and recommends to pay close attention to how the programme evolves during its launching.

Documentary evidence

The panel should verify that the intended learning outcomes are in line with the disciplinary area/field within which the joint programme is provided. Assessment should be justified and include recommendations, if applicable.

- Self-evaluation Report, pages 24 and 38.
- SER Annex 4. Learning Outcomes
- SER Annex 5 & 6. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		



Recommendations:

The review panel recommends providing a clearer picture of the foreseen actions to keep the disciplinary balance once the programme is started. Concerns about an excessively broad approach to interdisciplinarity were raised during the online visit, but the position of all the participants in the hearings was convincing enough to support the programme's current proposal.

2.3. Achievement

Assessment

The study programme has been developed and agreed among all partners, after having conducted an extensive research and analysis of the challenges and opportunities in the field, together with the identification of needs and demands from industry and society, followed by consultations with various stakeholders, including academics, industry professionals and the community.

The degree of detail provided in the course guides included in the annexes 5 and 6 are an asset and a good support about the viability of the programme, proving a thoughtful approach lies behind the proposal. An overview of the content and the assessment methods returns a diversity of options within the Challenge-Based Learning system. One overarching question emerging from the panel pointed on how these diverse methods will be applied in a similar way in the partnering universities. During the online visit, the panel received satisfactory feedback and evidences about the degree of interconnection between the partnering institutions, being optimistic about their chances of achieving the ambitious goals set for the programme.

“Graduates will acquire a broad knowledge of the fundamental principles of marine sciences and the sustainable blue economy, including the interdependency of marine ecosystems, ocean industries, and societies. They will be able to identify and interpret challenges associated with the economic value of the oceans, describe alternative economic approaches, use marine environmental and socio-economic analysis tools, manage multidisciplinary data, provide frameworks for reconciling conflicting uses of ocean resources, analyse policies for sustainable ocean use, and develop awareness of environmental and socio-economic problems related to the blue economy with a focus on sustainability and ethical commitment. The philosophy of the programme revolves around integrating a comprehensive understanding of marine sciences with sustainable economic practices to promote the long-term health and viability of ocean ecosystems and the communities that depend on them.”

The fact that the first year can be taken at three locations with the same contents is very interesting, though special care must be taken with the assessments to ensure the homogeneity of the groups studying at each university; the same applies to year 2.

The third academic year is opening to six pathways for specialization, something valuable and useful for students. A potential question points to the viability of the six pathways in terms of student's registration and about the existence of potential measures to correct any imbalance between the six of them.

- Pathway 1. Blue Sustainability Accounting, Management and Planning (UPN/UG)
- Pathway 2. Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Resources (UG)



- Pathway 3. Human Impact in the Arctic (NORD)
- Pathway 4. Sustainable Port-Tourism Cities (UNIST)
- Pathway 5. Blue Management: Accounting, Conservation and Restoration (UCA)
- Pathway 6. Blue Industries: Tourism and Seafood (UAlg/UCA)

In each pathway students choose between research and professional orientation.

“The selection process will be carried out on academic performance, relevant experience and motivation of students to choose specific pathways during the first academic year, and may include interviews to ensure a match between students' objectives and the content of the pathways.”

The programme has two options: research oriented based on the research bachelor project (15 ECTS) and professionally oriented based on the internship (10 ECTS) and bachelor project (5 ECTS). The difference between them was defined during the hearings as pointing to more academic/scholarly profiles and to professional orientation. Internships are assured thanks to a network of collaborators that is already established, some of whom are providing support letters for the programme (Annex 15) and taking part in the hearings conducted in February 2025. Also, according to the information gathered during the online visit, the diploma resulting from successfully completing the programme will not be different between the students following each of the two options, apart from the fact that all the completed courses will be detailed in the supplementary information of the title generated by the leading institution.

Documentary evidence

- Self-evaluation Report, pages 39-42.
- SER Annex 2. SeaBluE Cooperation Agreement
- SER Annex 3. Documents supporting each partner’s legal basis for participating a joint programme.
- SER Annex 4. Learning Outcomes
- SER Annex 5 & 6. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum
- SER Annex 15. Letters of Support
- SER Annex 18. SeaBluE Student’s Handbook
- CA Annex 3. Programme Description

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations:

Although there are stipulated procedures and spaces for dialogue, the panel recommends keeping track of how the six pathways evolve and to which extent the teaching and the learning processes are homogeneous between the universities involved in the programme.



Similarly, the teaching of the first year in different locations will require an effort to monitor the evolution in each scenario.

2.4. Regulated Professions

Assessment

This program is not leading to any regulated profession, so this is not applicable. One can perceive and value the effort in the self-evaluation report to underline the relevance of the blue economy sector, but this evidence is not currently linked to any professional regulation yet.

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	Not applicable
			X

Recommendations:

N/A.

STANDARD 3: STUDY PROGRAMME

3.1. Curriculum

Assessment

The curriculum is divided into 3 years, with each year comprising 2 semesters. The first year contains the core module (referred to by the consortium in sailing jargon as ‘learning ropes’), the second year the toolbox module (in sailing jargon ‘running a tight ship’), and the third year the expertise module with pathways (in jargon ‘charting the course’):

- Year 1. Core Module – Learning the Ropes (60 ECTS) – All 12 courses are compulsory
- Year 2. Toolbox Module – Running a Tight Ship (60 ECTS) – All 12 courses are compulsory
- Year 3. Expertise Module – Charting the Course (60 ECTS) – Students are expected to choose one pathway with 9 compulsory courses per pathway plus 15 ECTS that can be oriented towards research with a Research bachelor project of 15 ECTS or towards a professional approach, including an internship of 10 ECTS and a Research bachelor project of 5 ECTS.

Each of the six pathways are offered by different full partner universities:

- Pathway 1. Blue Sustainability Accounting, Management and Planning (UPN/UG)
- Pathway 2. Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Resources (UG)
- Pathway 3. Human Impact in the Arctic (NORD)
- Pathway 4. Sustainable Port-Tourism Cities (UNIST)
- Pathway 5. Blue Management: Accounting, Conservation and Restoration (UCA)



- Pathway 6. Blue Industries: Tourism and Seafood (UAlg/UCA)

There is a conscious effort to keep the joint coordination of the programme when it comes to the explanation of the Research bachelor project, as supervision is compulsorily shared by two universities and the assessment board is also getting scholars from two universities involved in.

Students have a 12-month compulsory mobility period. The final 2 semesters are recommended for this mobility. In the second year, mobility is only possible from UCA to UAlg:

“SeaBluE includes a mandatory 12-month mobility period, usually spanning two semesters in the third year as the recommended standard option.”

According to page 58 of the self-evaluation report, alternative options are to be considered, subject to approval by the Academic Steering Committee.

In addition, mobility of academics and administrative staff is foreseen based on the general mobilities which have been conducted during the last two years and valued very positively by the participants in the hearings, making it obvious that the alliance has been active and promoting integration between the different groups of institutional actors involved in their activities. Additionally, most of the teaching staff taking part in the online meetings were enthusiastic about the opportunities already enjoyed and the ones expected to be completed in the future. The enthusiastic high expectations of several lecturers and coordinators were evident for all the panel and this received a general applause by their members.

Documentary evidence

- Self-evaluation Report, pages 47-62.
- SER Annex 2. SeaBluE Cooperation Agreement
- SER Annex 3. Documents supporting each partner’s legal basis for participating a joint programme.
- CA Annex 3. Programme Description
- CA Annex 7. Mobility plan
- -SER Annex 4 (Learning Outcomes)
- SER Annex 5 & 6. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum
- SER Annex 7. Application, Selection and Admission Regulations

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations:

N/A.

3.2. Credits

Assessment



The Joint Bachelor’s degree comprises 180 ECTS divided in 6 semesters. All courses are designed under a 5-ECTS model, leading to semesters with six courses (30 ECTS), save for the last semester, with 3 courses and a Final project worth 15 ECTS. Each ECTS is composed of 8 hours of teaching contact hours and 17 hours of self-study time. Preference was given to harmonize the structure of the programme, but the review panel expects that there might be some differences between scientific areas and delivering institutions that may foster discussion about a more case-to-case approach for each subject. The ECTS allocation is not aligned with the individual subjects. According to the ECTS User Guide, ECTS should “express the volume of learning based on the defined learning outcomes and their associated workload” (p. 10). During the hearings, several participants detailed their intention to find a good balance between the different disciplines involved aiming for a harmonized distribution.

Documentary evidence

- Self-evaluation Report, pages 63-65.
- SER Annex 2. SeaBluE Cooperation Agreement
- SER Annex 3. Documents supporting each partner’s legal basis for participating a joint programme.
- CA Annex 3. Programme Description
- SER Annex 5 & 6. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations:

N/A.

3.3. Workload

Assessment

The programme requires 180 ECTS –about 4500 hours of study per 3 academic years. This workload includes lectures, seminars, field trips, independent study, research projects, internships, and assessments. The workload of 1 ECTS is divided into teaching contact hours (8 hours) and self-study time (17 hours). Table 6 in page 64 describes the internal distribution of hours for each ECTS. The workload will be monitored by the Quality Assurance Committee:

“One of the main functions of the Internal Quality Assurance Committee will be to gather regular feedback from students through surveys and course evaluations to gauge their perceptions of workload and to identify any discrepancies.”

The workload is, therefore, well divided, as no one must take more than 30 ECTS per semester. Within each course, the workload (in contents and assessments) seems to be well weighted for 5 ECTS, as far as the information in the Course description is concerned. The Consortium has made a great effort in developing the guidebooks with such detail.



Several actions are foreseen to make sure that the workload fits the expectations and the time availability of the students. These measures are important to be tracked in the future, mainly due to the potential differences between the partner universities and the need to offer a balanced distribution in all the involved actors in the programme.

Documentary evidence

- Self-evaluation Report, pages 64-65.
- SER Annex 2. SeaBluE Cooperation Agreement
- SER Annex 3. Documents supporting each partner’s legal basis for participating a joint programme.
- CA Annex 3. Programme Description
- SER Annex 4. Learning Outcomes
- SER Annex 5 & 6. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations:

N/A.

STANDARD 4: ADMISSION AND RECOGNITION

4.1. Admission

Assessment

The procedure of the admission is described in the SER Annex 7 and CA Annex 5. According to these documents *the common admissions system has been established for all partner universities. The common platform will be accessible through the SEA-EU Joint Programme website.* The platform (system) is designed and will be administered by the Joint Programme Working Group. The Academic Steering Committee will be responsible for the admission.

The admission process includes appeals procedures and General Data Protection Regulation.

The requirements for candidates are appropriate, although the English language skills based on a B1 level has raised concerns among the panel members. This question was redundantly approached during the online visits. The coordinators consider that B1 is enough to follow the programme without difficulties.

Figure 11 in page 67 synthetizes the admission process. This process is detailed deeper in Annex 7.

A common platform for all joint programs involved in the SEA-EU alliance will be created, covering all the admission process. This is a valuable resource as a central point of entrance would be offered to all potential students. Annex 7 presents several examples that work as evidence of the conducted work, but



during the online visit more information about how the platform is designed and how it will work was presented by some of the participants.

The selection process combines the university entrance exam scores (80%) with a motivation video or an interview reaching the remaining 20%. The second part of the selection process needs more information about how the marks will be granted.

“The Equal Opportunities Policy applied in the admissions process for this joint bachelor’s degree encompasses a broad framework of principles and practices designed to promote fairness, inclusion and accessibility for all applicants. This policy will ensure that candidates are assessed solely on merit, irrespective of factors such as ethnicity, gender, religion, disability or socio-economic background. This involves establishing transparent selection criteria, providing reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities and facilitating support mechanisms to enable the equal participation of all prospective students. In upholding these principles, the Equal Opportunities Policy strives to create an environment where diversity is embraced and where all candidates have an equal opportunity to succeed and contribute to the academic community.”

Regarding selection, the GPA (including university entrance exam scores where mandatory) is worth 80% while the Motivation (on the basis of the video or an interview) is worth 20%. There is no information about the criteria used to evaluate the motivation, special care should be taken here not to assign these points lightly, an internal guide for evaluators should be developed to ensure homogeneity and objectivity in the valuation of this motivation.

As a consequence, the top 90 candidates will be selected for further consideration. Additionally, a reserve list of candidates will be compiled to address potential non-acceptances among the selected candidates.

The available information about how access and participation for people with disabilities will be implemented is scarce and it is recommended to be subject of further work prior to launching the programme. The online visit brought evidence of the already established action programmes in the partnering universities: their well-established tradition guarantees a good attention to these students, but more specific information about the joint degree programme would be useful.

Documentary evidence

- Self-evaluation Report, pages 66-67.
- SER Annex 2. SeaBluE Cooperation Agreement
- SER Annex 7. Application, Selection and Admission Regulations
- CA Annex 5. Application, Selection and Admission Regulations

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations:

Develop some guidelines to prepare the interview about students’ motivation to access the joint degree



programme.

Provide a detailed guide to implementing the access and participation of people with disabilities, not only at the admission process but also at the several periods of the enrolment and completion of the programme.

Keep attention to the suitability of B1 as a certificate of English language skills to follow the programme.

4.2. Recognition

Assessment

Annex 8 presents a detailed assessment of the prior recognition of studies, and about the reciprocal recognition between the partner universities.

“The mutual recognition of achievements obtained at partner universities is guaranteed, as this is a joint bachelor’s degree with an integrated curriculum. Both the academic and administrative management of students’ results within the consortium universities will be conducted automatically.”

All universities in the consortium have internal regulations and procedures for the recognition of qualifications (included prior learning).

The mutual recognition of achievements obtained at partner universities is guaranteed, as this is a joint bachelor’s degree with an integrated curriculum. Both the academic and administrative management of students’ results within the consortium universities will be conducted automatically.

The umbrella of the SEA-EU Alliance is covering these procedures, as joint teaching programmes will be managed in an integrated manner.

The hearing conducted with the administrative support staff of the participating universities shed some light regarding some of these processes, being most of them part of the daily operations of this sector.

Documentary evidence

- Self-evaluation Report, page 68.
- SER Annex 8. Procedure for qualifications recognition
- SER Annex 2. SeaBluE Cooperation Agreement

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations:

N/A.



STANDARD 5: LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

5.1. Learning and teaching

Assessment

The learning and teaching methodology and pedagogical approach are appropriate. They ensure appropriate diversity and the needs of individual students. There are also visible innovations in the traditional process of learning and teaching through the implementation of the collaborative educational framework by the consortium. A co-teaching model will be developed:

“A new and collaborative educational framework has been agreed by the Academic Steering Committee, where a minimum of two teachers from different universities from the seven participating institutions of SEA-EU Alliance will jointly deliver and assess each course.” Each course might be accompanied by a second teacher and should be co-taught by at least two teachers from different partner universities to ensure jointness (SER, p. 69).

The curriculum emphasises active learning strategies, integrating case studies, problem-based learning, field trips, simulations and group projects.

Annex 17 is detailing the long process behind the course design and sets the pathway to course implementation, being all those stages conceived as joint processes between actors based on different partner universities.

Co-teaching is guaranteed at each course level:

“Each course must have a designated local coordinator, who is compulsory for overseeing the course at each host university. Exceptionally, this coordination role may be assigned to a lecturer from another partner university. Additionally, every course should be co-taught by at least two teachers from different partner universities to ensure jointness. To maintain high quality, it is important not to have too many teachers per course. Typically, each course involves 40 hours of co-delivery with a maximum of three professors.”

This is an ambitious approach that deserves recognition, given that the linkages between lecturers and universities will be tightened up, walking towards a visible integration that should also be perceived by the students following the degree. The online visit returned valuable information about how this co-teaching will be conducted, satisfying the questions presented by the panel members.

Several support actions for involved teachers are also planned.

Contact teaching hours in each course (5 ECTS * 8 hours) will be concentrated in two weeks, leading to in-depth approaches to several topics.

Each semester consists of 6 courses of 5 ECTS each (40 contact teaching hours), with each course lasting 2 weeks. After every two courses, there is a week dedicated to assessments and/or exams. At the end of each semester, an additional week is allocated for resits. This structure will help students focus on each course, as they take them in an “intensive” way. The pedagogical approach is based on Active Learning



by the student, using a good range of teaching modalities, an important one being Challenged Based Learning.

This is an original time planning which raised concerns in some of the panel members. However, the online visit helped to understand that there is already an ongoing attempt to tighten the links between faculty members from the different institutions, so that they can run their courses adequately in the concentrated period that they will be allocated.

Documentary evidence

- Self-evaluation Report, pages 69-73.
- SER Annex 4. Learning Outcomes
- SER Annex 5 & 6. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum
- SER Annex 17. Handbook for Co-creation and Co-delivery of the Joint Bachelor’s Degree SeaBluE

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations:

The concentration model for teaching must be carefully observed, given the diversity of subjects and learning contents in the courses, mainly during the first cohorts of the degree. It will be necessary to accumulate evidence to compare this time organisation with others based on a longer time spent together by lecturers and students.

5.2. Assessment of students

Assessment

Annex 9 presents the student assessment regulations, which is a very detailed document that provides a valuable resource to understand the common framework between the partner universities. This document is written taken into consideration the nine universities involved in the alliance, although only seven of them are also involved in this joint degree. Pages 13 and 14 of this file offer a table where direct comparisons between the nine systems can be easily conducted in terms of measuring students’ performance.

Table 8 presented in page 76 of the self-evaluation report reproduces the content and identifies the SEA-EU proposal harmonizing all the national systems.

Given that years 1 and 2 are to be taught in different universities, it is recommended that a monitoring system is completed to guarantee a similar approach of the assessment criteria.

Page 77 of the self-evaluation report is presenting some of the actions conceived to handle the diversity of students.



Some of the course syllabi contain many learning outcomes (CLOs), so there is a risk that the assessment will not cover all of them (for example: Soft and Academic Skills (SER Annex 5&6, p. 33), statistics (SER Annex 5&6, p. 63))

Documentary evidence

- Self-evaluation Report, pages74-79.
- SER Annex 4. Learning Outcomes
- SER Annex 5 & 6. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum
- SER Annex 9. Student Assessment Regulations

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations:

A monitoring system should be completed to guarantee a similar approach of the assessment criteria in the common years 1 and 2.

STANDARD 6: STUDENT SUPPORT

Assessment

Each university offers a full range of support services, from psychological support to sports facilities on each campus, from diversity and inclusion policies to accommodation and visa support, from a jointly developed buddy system to a common exam resit policy, etc. In addition, students receive support at the central (coordination office for joint programmes) and local level (administrative and pedagogical contacts). Support for the programme is offered through the structure developed for SEA-EU.

All seven participating universities are offering their own support services and, “in addition, a Joint Programmes Coordination Office has been established, as well as local administrative and pedagogical contacts on each campus, so that students have a point of contact both locally and centrally.”

The main source of information for students about the programme is the Student Handbook, which contains all the necessary information. Though the consortium had only included the table of contents of the handbook for the evaluation, the document was fully developed before the online visit and at the panel disposal.

However, on the possible improvements side, there is almost no information about the involvement of student organisations in supporting students, something that can be useful, mainly for those enjoying their mobility period.

The links provided in SER for students services cover well, in general, what the students will need at each place though they must be carefully maintained. For instance, at the time of the evaluation, the section “Disability Support Services” at University of Gdansk, was empty. At Naples site, though the Menu contained items such as “Residence hall for students”, “Medical care”, “Sports” when you clicked on



them they did not work. At Split site, if you clicked on “Centre for psychological help”, “Office for students with disabilities” it lead you nowhere and it was not possible to find any information regarding Accommodation, for instance.

Hearings conducted by the panel during the online visit returned detailed information about the services offered by each participating university. Although the depth of information was not evenly distributed, and some representatives of certain universities offered a more detailed picture of their efforts in this chapter, there was evidence enough to perceive that the institutional support to students is provided in a satisfactory manner. The review panel took the time to suggest to all participating universities that an integral revision of the website links is necessary, at least, under a yearly basis.

Documentary evidence

- Self-evaluation Report, page 80.
- SER Annex 18. SeaBluE Student’s Handbook
- CA Annex 9. Student Handbook
- CA Annex 10. Internal Quality Assurance System Handbook

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations:

Concerns about the economic inequalities between the participating universities/countries were expressed, recommending to pay special attention to the needs to those students that will arrive as mobility in order to obtain their degree. Housing services are especially important in this chapter.

A detailed review of the existing links in the several websites of the alliance and of all the partner institutions would be very helpful to provide an updated image of the academic offer of students’ services.

STANDARD 7: RESOURCES

7.1. Academic, administration and services staff

Assessment

The seven universities involved in this joint programme are offering their human resources to design and implement this degree. Their long tradition in offering higher education services guarantees the requirements needed to run the programme.

One of the main assets of the programme is its wide and solid teaching staff. This strength can also become a threat, given that the internal distribution of teaching assignments between so many schools and departments can lead to challenges in internal management.

The consortium is represented by the leading European universities, and these have a broad



representation of teaching staff. The teaching staff is sufficient in number, profile, category and experience to deliver the programme. They have appropriate qualifications, including professional and international experience.

A technical coordination office is not established at this stage. It will be set at the University of Cadiz. The governance and management structure presents the Annex 17 to SER.

Information about the SEA-EU associated partners, together with a clearer description of their implication and degree of involvement in the joint programme would be beneficial.

After the first review of the documentation, the review panel asked for the expected distribution of courses between the Faculty members. Although this information cannot be fully ready, the consortium presented an initial proposal prior to the online visit, making it possible to positively evaluate the distribution. During the online meetings, coordinators exposed that this distribution is still a work in progress, given the expectations are placed on launching the programme during the next academic year.

Documentary evidence

- Self-evaluation Report, pages 85-94.
- SER Annex 2. SeaBluE Cooperation Agreement
- SER Annex 5 & 6. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum
- SER Annex 10. CV academic staff
- SER Annex 13. List of related bachelor's programmes offered by the SEA-EU partner universities
- SER Annex 17. Handbook for Co-creation and Co-delivery of the Joint Bachelor's Degree SeaBluE

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations:

A balanced distribution of the teaching workload between universities and within them is necessary. Table 10 is presenting a long list of involved faculties and departments, but it might be useful to identify their degree of involvement, once the programme is up and running, as it seems unlikely that so many departments can share a significant teaching quota in the joint programme.

7.2. Facilities and material resources

Assessment

Regarding Facilities and Materials resources, Annex 16 contains the information about the particular facilities and materials resources which will be at the disposal of this programme. The Consortium undertakes to make available to the students of the SEA-EU joint programmes all available facilities and resources, both those jointly created within the framework of the SEA-EU European University and those



of the individual partner universities. Although there is no specific assignment of facilities to courses in the programme, the amount and quality of the facilities seems to be very appropriate for the development of the programme.

Infrastructure is guaranteed by the seven universities involved in the programme and an online campus is expected to be launched as an additional support tool.

“The Consortium undertakes to make available to the students of the SEA-EU joint programmes all available facilities and resources, both those jointly created within the framework of the SEA-EU European University and those of the individual partner universities. In addition to the traditional classroom, the programme goes beyond conventional boundaries by offering dynamic and immersive on-site learning experiences that provide students with hands-on opportunities to develop skills and apply knowledge in the real world.”

All facilities and material resources are made available to students participating in the programme at both the consortium and the local level. The physical infrastructure of the partners meets all requirements and expectations.

A dedicated IT platform for SeaBluE students will be developed, named the SEA *EdUcation Joint Digital Platform). SER describes in detail the architecture and functionality of this platform. However, this platform is still under development, according to page 90 of the self-evaluation report. The online visit was a good occasion to check how the platform has been designed and is beginning to be developed between the date when the SER was registered in July 2024 and when the hearings took place in February 2025.

Documentary evidence

- Self-evaluation Report, pages 85-94.
- SER Annex 5 & 6. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum
- SER Annex 16. Facilities provided by every SEA-EU partner university

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations:

N/A.

STANDARD 8: TRANSPARENCY AND DOCUMENTATION

Assessment

The proposal defines very well how the relevant information about the programme will be made public through SEA-EU website (admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures etc.), abounding in its transparency. The SER gives true importance to transparency and claims that all information regarding all procedures will be public and available.



Additionally, the “SEA-EU Joint Programmes will be supported by the SEA-EU Communication Office and the communication departments of the partner universities”, contributing to a joint dissemination strategy, which will include the following actions:

- SEA-EU website. Publication of all information related to the SeaBluE Bachelor’s Programme.
- Inclusion of SeaBluE in the academic catalogue of the SEA-EU partner universities
- Social media
- Student Handbook and sustainably printed leaflets.
- Info sessions

The Student Handbook plays a pivotal role in this purpose, so the version provided to the panel before the online visit is a significant contribution to satisfactorily achieve this standard.

Communication and diffusion will be extremely important in order to reach the ambitious target of 90 students registered per cohort, a number that was considered as hard to meet by several panel members. During the online visit, the coordinators and some of the representatives of the partner universities emphasized that this objective is reachable due to the existing demand of these profiles in the blue economy sector.

Documentary evidence

- Self-evaluation Report, pages95-96.
- SER Annex 8. Procedure for Prior Qualifications Recognition
- SER Annex 18. SeaBluE Student’s Handbook
- CA Annex 9. Student Handbook

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations:

Provide some evidence coming from the SEA-EU alliance communication strategy as an indicator of what and how can be done with the joint degree.

Track the diffusion strategies to meet the objective of 90 students per academic year.

STANDARD 9: QUALITY ASSURANCE

Assessment

The SEA-EU Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) aligns with ESG standards and ensures continuous improvement across joint programmes (Annex 11), through regular audits and evaluations.

“A key component of the SEA-EU ecosystem is the Quality and Ethics Committee (QEC), which



oversees the overall quality operations of the Alliance. Within the QEC, three working groups exist, with two being particularly relevant for the SEA-EU joint programmes:

- The Working Group on Quality of Learning Programmes: This group focuses on establishing common standards to ensure the highest quality in joint programmes and learning activities.
- The Working Group on Personal Data Protection: This group addresses data protection and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliance issues.”

The IQAS is developed in detail, presenting several processes and a common framework to screen its valid implementation.

Internal quality assurance is integrated element of the Alliance – Quality and Ethics Committee (QEC). At the joint programme level, the Internal Quality Assurance Committee was established to serve as a central entity dedicated to ensuring the excellence and coherence of educational efforts (Annex 10 to the Cooperation Agreement).

The members of the panel are:

- One representative from each of the universities (and relevant partners)
- Two students from two of the participating universities
- External experts (where appropriate)

Nine well-defined processes (P01–P09) provide a structured approach to quality assurance, covering from programme design to monitoring, including student management, teaching, and even external evaluations:

- P01. Design and Approval of Joint Programmes.
- P02. Monitoring and Improvement of Joint Programmes.
- P03. Student Lifecycle Management.
- P04. Teaching, Learning and Assessment.
- P05. Academic Staff Development.
- P06. Learning Resources and Student Support.
- P07. Information Management.
- P08. Public Information Management.
- P09. External Quality and Internal Quality Assurance System Improvement.

The Annex 11 to SER: Joint Programmes Internal Quality Assurance System contains only the notice; however, the Annex 10 to CA is very complex and covers all needed subjects.

During the online visit, some panel members expressed their concerns about adding a new layer of complexity to the already-existing systems to assure quality in higher education institutions. The experts coming from the partner universities did not share this concern, as they consider that their systems interact correctly between them and the constant dialogue between institutions during the last two years is leading to a better integration of the system.

Documentary evidence



- Self-evaluation Report, pages97-102.
- Annex 11, which refers to “a comprehensive framework for the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of joint programmes offered by the SEA-EU alliance, has been fully described in Annex 10 of the Cooperation Agreement (see Annex 2 of SER).

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations:

N/A.



CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION PROPOSAL

11.1. Recommendations Summary

STANDARD 1: ELIGIBILITY

1.1. Status

- Harmonize the content presented by each partner university and offer a translation to English of the official documents that make the reading and evaluation feasible.

1.2. Joint Design and Delivery

N/A

1.3. Cooperation Agreement

N/A

STANDARD 2: LEARNING OUTCOMES

2.1. Level

- Ensure a more balanced definition of the intended learning outcomes in order to properly reflect all the disciplinary fields covered in the program. The review panel agreed that there is a bias towards economic related skills and competences with less emphasis in ecological and socio-cultural aspects. Despite this not being something worrying per se, the panel recommends to have a closer look at the programme's evolution during the first cohorts to explore whether this bias is also perceived or not.

2.2. Disciplinary field

- The review panel recommends providing a clearer picture of the foreseen actions to keep the disciplinary balance once the programme is started. Concerns about an excessively broad approach to interdisciplinarity were raised during the online visit, but the position of all the participants in the hearings was convincing enough to support the programme's current proposal.

2.3. Achievement

- Although there are stipulated procedures and spaces for dialogue, the panel recommends keeping track of how the six pathways evolve and to which extent the teaching and the learning processes are homogeneous between the universities involved in the programme.
- Similarly, the teaching of the first year in different locations will require an effort to monitor the evolution in each scenario.

2.4. Regulated Professions

N/A.

STANDARD 3: STUDY PROGRAMME



3.1. Curriculum

N/A.

3.2. Credits

N/A.

3.3. Workload

N/A.

STANDARD 4: ADMISSION AND RECOGNITION

4.1. Admission

- Develop some guidelines to prepare the interview about students' motivation to access the joint degree programme.
- Provide a detailed guide to implementing the access and participation of people with disabilities, not only at the admission process but also at the several periods of the enrolment and completion of the programme.
- Keep attention to the suitability of B1 as a certificate of English language skills to follow the programme.

4.2. Recognition

N/A.

STANDARD 5: LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

5.1. Learning and teaching

- The concentration model for teaching must be carefully observed, given the diversity of subjects and learning contents in the courses, mainly during the first cohorts of the degree. It will be necessary to accumulate evidence to compare this time organisation with others based on a longer time spent together by lecturers and students.

5.2. Assessment of students

- A monitoring system should be completed to guarantee a similar approach of the assessment criteria in the common years 1 and 2.

STANDARD 6: STUDENT SUPPORT

- Concerns about the economic inequalities between the participating universities/countries were expressed, recommending to pay special attention to the needs to those students that will arrive as mobility in order to obtain their degree. Housing services are especially important in this chapter.
- A detailed review of the existing links in the several websites of the alliance and of all the partner institutions would be very helpful to provide an updated image of the academic offer of students' services.

STANDARD 7: RESOURCES

7.1. Academic, administration and services staff



- A balanced distribution of the teaching workload between universities and within them is necessary. Table 10 is presenting a long list of involved faculties and departments, but it might be useful to identify their degree of involvement, once the programme is up and running, as it seems unlikely that so many departments can share a significant teaching quota in the joint programme.

7.2. Facilities and material resources

N/A.

STANDARD 8: TRANSPARENCY AND DOCUMENTATION

- Provide some evidence coming from the SEA-EU alliance communication strategy as an indicator of what and how can be done with the joint degree.
- Track the diffusion strategies to meet the objective of 90 students per academic year.

STANDARD 9: QUALITY ASSURANCE

N/A.

11.2. The Review Panel Assessment per Standard

In this section, a summary table including assessment per standard is provided and, just in final reports, an evaluation proposal in terms of favourable or unfavourable.

STANDARD		ACHIEVED	PARTIALLY ACHIEVED	NOT ACHIEVED
STANDARD 1. ELIGIBILITY	Status	X		
	Joint Design and Delivery	X		
	Cooperation Agreement	X		
STANDARD 2. LEARNING OUTCOMES	Level	X		
	Disciplinary field	X		
	Achievement	X		
	Regulated Professions (if applicable)	N/A		
STANDARD 3. STUDY PROGRAMME	Curriculum	X		
	Credits	X		
	Workload	X		
STANDARD 4. ADMISSION AND RECOGNITION	Admission	X		
	Recognition	X		



STANDARD 5. LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT	Learning and Teaching	X		
	Assessment of Students	X		
STANDARD 6. STUDENT SUPPORT		X		
STANDARD 7. RESOURCES	Academic, Administration and Services Staff	X		
	Facilities and material resources	X		
STANDARD 8. TRANSPARENCY AND DOCUMENTATION		X		
STANDARD 9. QUALITY ASSURANCE		X		

Final evaluation proposal: **FAVOURABLE.**

The panel proposes that the recommendations included in this report be followed up either from the beginning of the joint degree or after the first cohort of students completes the programme (three academic years).



ANNEXES

REVIEW PANEL

Alberto Oleaga is Full Professor of Applied Physics at the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU, Bilbao, Spain) as well as Vicedean for Relations with Companies at Bilbao School of Engineering (UPV/EHU). His research interests fall on Applied Physics and Condensed Matter, dealing with thermal, magnetic and magnetocaloric properties of materials of technological interest, mainly for energy applications. He has published about 100 papers in peer reviewed international journals, most of them in collaboration with research groups from all over the world. He has trained many young scientists and engineers, regularly supervising Master and PhD thesis, being the Head of the doctoral programme “Physics” at UPV/EHU. He has experience in university management as former Vicedean for International Relations, coordinator of 4 Erasmus Mundus programmes and Head of the Applied Physics Department, as well as in Quality and Accreditation programmes, both as proposer of Degrees and evaluator in different agencies.

Paula Antunes is Full Professor at the Faculty of Sciences and Technology, Nova University of Lisboa (NOVA FCT). Her interests focus on interdisciplinary research in ecological economics, in particular in sustainability assessment, ecosystem services, and system dynamics. She teaches several courses in undergraduate and graduate degrees and has supervised a considerable number of MSc and PhD students. She has served as Head of the Department of Environmental Sciences and Engineering of FCT NOVA, as Director of CENSE – Center for Environmental and Sustainability Research and as coordinator of the PhD in Environment and Sustainability of NOVA University. Authored a significant number of publications in peer-reviewed journals and collaborated in several national and international expert panels. Former Associate Editor of Ecological Economics, Vice-President of the European Society for Ecological Economics (ESEE) (2006-2009) and member of the board of the International Society for Ecological Economics (ISEE) (2002-2004).

Kiara Hervella Seoane is currently student of 1st cycle Doctoral Study Programme at Computational Astrophysics at the Universitat de València (Spain); with an MSc in Astrophysics from the Universidad de la Laguna (Spain), and a BSc on Physics from the Universidade de Santiago de Compostela (Spain). She has experience as member of the Student Council of the Faculty of Physics, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela.

Jakub Brdulak is Member and Secretary General of the Polish Accreditation Committee (Polish National Agency for Quality Assurance). Professor at the Institute of Management at SGH Warsaw School of Economics, visiting researcher at CHEPS (Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies) - University of Twente, Rector’s Representative for the Quality of Learning and Teaching at SGH Warsaw School of Economics. Expert for many programmes approved by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education, e.g.: ‘Master of Didactics’, ‘International Accreditations’. Polish delegate in the Bologna



Follow-up Group on Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (TPG C). He has worked with companies such as Deloitte, DB Schenker, Akzo Nobel, Unilever and others.

Miguel Vicente Mariño is an Associate Professor and Secretary of the Department of Sociology and Social Work at the University of Valladolid, having directed it for eight years (2015-2023). He is a Faculty Member of the School of Social, Legal and Communication Sciences, at the María Zambrano Campus in Segovia. He holds a PhD in Audiovisual Communication from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (2009), a BA in Sociology from the same university (2006) and a BA in Journalism from Universidade de Santiago de Compostela (2002). He has held the position of Academic Secretary of his school between 2012 and 2015, after previously assuming the Vice-Dean position for a year and a half. Between 2012 and 2021 he was an Executive Board member of the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA), and in July 2013 he was elected vice-chair of the Audience Section of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), assuming its directorship in 2021, as well as a seat in the International Council of the association.



VISIT PROGRAMME

The visit programme should be included in this section, and, if applicable, any incidental event/s that might have occurred.

1st Day online site visit. 3rd February. 2025

Time	Activity
15:00-15:30	Internal meeting of the panel.
15:30-16:15	Meeting with programme coordinators
16:15-16:30	Internal meeting of the panel
16:30-17:15	Meeting with teaching staff
17:15-17:30	Internal meeting of the panel.
17:30-18:15	Meeting with students
18:15-18:30	Internal meeting of the panel.
18:30-19:00	Meeting with employers/external stakeholders
19:00-19:15	Internal meeting of the panel.
19:15-19:45	Meeting with consortium coordinators
19:45-20:00	Internal meeting of the panel. End of day 1

2nd Day online site visit. 4th February, 2025

Time	Activity
15:00-15:30	Internal meeting of the panel.
15:30-16:15	Meeting with students support services
16:15-16:30	Internal meeting of the panel
16:30-17:00	Meeting with quality assurance representatives
17:00-18:30	Internal meeting of the panel.
18:30-19:00	Final meeting visit conclusions. End of the visit

LIST OF EVALUATED DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE AND OTHER ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

SELF-EVALUATION REPORT (version 12/07/2024).

Annexes to SER:

SER Annex 1. Documents supporting the legal status of the partner institutions.

SER Annex 2. SeaBluE Cooperation Agreement

SER Annex 3. Documents supporting each partner's legal basis for participating a joint programme.

SER Annex 4. Learning Outcomes

SER Annex 5 & 6. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum

SER Annex 7. Application, Selection and Admission Regulations



- SER Annex 8. Procedure for Prior Qualifications Recognition
- SER Annex 9. Student Assessment Regulations
- SER Annex 10. CV academic staff
- SER Annex 11. Joint Programmes Internal Quality Assurance System
- SER Annex 12. SeaBluE Joint Diploma and Diploma Supplement
- SER Annex 13. List of related bachelor's programmes offered by the SEA-EU partner universities
- SER Annex 14. SeaBluE Glossary
- SER Annex 15. Letters of Support
- SER Annex 16. Facilities provided by every SEA-EU partner university
- SER Annex 17. Handbook for Co-creation and Co-delivery of the Joint Bachelor's Degree SeaBluE
- SER Annex 18. SeaBluE Student's Handbook

Annexes to CA (to the Cooperation Agreement – SER Annex 2):

- CA Annex 1. Financial Agreement
- CA Annex 2. Data Protection and Sharing Regulations
- CA Annex 3. Programme Description
- CA Annex 4. Joint Degree and Diploma Supplement Template
- CA Annex 5. Application, Selection and Admission Regulations
- CA Annex 6. Student Assessment Regulations
- CA Annex 7. Mobility Plan
- CA Annex 8. Internship Monitoring and Assessment
- CA Annex 9. Student Handbook
- CA Annex 10. Internal Quality Assurance System Handbook

- Additional information provided by the Consortium ahead of the site visit.
- Additional evidence gathered by the panel members through the participant institutions websites.

ALBERTO OLEAGA PARAMO - 14591577D
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THE SECRETARY'S SIGNATURE

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