

# MedSkippers

## Deliverable 5.2 Marketing Strategy

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## State of the art

### Professional Skippers of small commercial vessel

Although the Mediterranean is sometimes conceived as a single “regional brand, requirements for skippers of small commercial boats across EU Member States are different and classifications obtained in one Member State are often not recognised in another. This fact limits cross-border development and affects the nautical job market. This is particularly important when looking for professional skippers, given non existing harmonisation of such a profession for recreational craft (there is some for those for larger boats). Lack of harmonised regulation is an important issue for charter companies, which need to hire professional skippers, but also for coastal authorities, boat owners, insurance companies and customers. Licensing of professional skippers is thus one of the main obstacles to foster the charter sector in Europe.

### The training sector

Three main gaps are identified in the training sector as per the real requirements of the professional skippers of small commercial vessels.

Firstly, the lack of an harmonized license system and common training schemes creates confusion and incoherence among professional qualifications, creating differences in the level of competence required across titles and countries. There is a clear need to identify a core CV for professional skippers of SCV.

Secondly, key modern issues such as environmental education are not including in any of the professional training programmes. Nautical tourism depends strongly on environmental assets, but also generates a range of pressures. Skippers are at the forefront of the sector and in close contact with the Sea, thus better trained skippers as regards the environment and ocean literacy could easily prevent most of the impacts from boating, and raise awareness among tourists.

Thirdly, charter tourism does not cease out of season as maintenance and other work continue and contribute to local economy. Low seasons in terms of "sailing" are peak seasons in terms of administrative tasks, ship maintenance and repairs, commercial campaigns design, innovation processes aiming to offer an added value, and for entrepreneurial strategy in the nautical industry. Adapting professional skipper's skills to the charter market demand, including environmental sustainability, customer care and b2c marketing, could reduce their seasonal activity as "pure skippers" by forming them as valuable all-year-round workforce for the charter sector.

### The charter sector

The Mediterranean Sea alone attracts 70% of world's charter demand, virtually everything going to EU countries and Turkey. The sector is composed by a very short number of



multinational companies which concentrate an undefined but representative portion of the charter offer, and a very large number of micro-sized business which represent the other portion. There is no official data available, but Dalula Marine's estimation is that large companies (more than 50 boats all around the Mediterranean) could represent between the 25 and 40% of the charter offer, while micro-sized companies would represent the remaining 75 or 60%.

Recreational boating is gaining popularity as a new way of spending vacations and there is a shifting pattern in Europe from owning to renting a boat. The charter industry provides an exceptional opportunity for job creation, and innovation is crucial in this sector to ensure charter tourists can rely on high-quality services across the EU and that this quality is consistently assessed. Apart from the modernization of the charter fleet by providing newer, larger, wider and more comfortable boats, the most important innovations for the charter sector are IT tools, with online visibility and B2C relations underlined. During the last years the charter sector has experienced an IT boom. Beside charter companies we also find the charter agencies (or brokers), which develop marketing activities or campaigns in order to attract potential clients to their online booking platforms. These agencies work on a commission basis for each booking made through their channels. Additionally, different technological companies are complementing the offer by providing charter booking management software to both, charter companies and charter agencies.

New business models following the trend of higher charter demand are stimulating the performance and competitiveness, such as cruise style chartering (cabin charter) or skippered charters, which are seen as the current and future evolution of the industry as they can adapt to demographic changes, provide a more personalized experience in global sector, and develop its offer to attract a growing number of elderly people.

### Market competition

For the purpose of the MedSkippers project the charter sector could be divided in two groups of companies: (i) Charter companies, those companies managing a number of boats available for charter purposes, and (ii) charter agencies, those companies who focus on the promotion of the boats and target the potential clients of the promoted boats.

On the one hand, only the small group of large charter companies have enough resources to implement their own marketing strategy and compete against charter agencies in the online promotion of their boats. The bigger portion of micro-sized business rely on gaining customer loyalty and promotion by means of charter agencies. On the other hand, traditional charter agencies operating at regional scale by bringing together the local or regional charter offer has given way to start-ups operating at international level, who specialize in online marketing and promotion. These international charter agencies are pushing very aggressively to become the primary source of boats rentals in the internet by investing a lot of money in online promotion. This situation renders it almost impossible to find a charter boat directly from a charter company as the boat owner finds it cheaper to pay a commission for sales more than investing in online marketing and trying to compete against these international platforms.



Finally, the last years, different vacation rental sites have stepped in the charter industry. These companies, which are huge technological platforms, have included boats among their vacation rental options. Their commissions are cheaper than the charter agencies, and their capacity to compete against charter agencies in terms of online marketing is higher. Despite not focusing on the charter industry, their impact in the sector is considerable and their share in the market is growing year after year.

### **The charter sector in non-EU Mediterranean countries**

Despite sharing the same climate and the same sea, nautical tourism and the charter sector does not exist as a proper industry in non-EU countries or, if it does, they are less way less important than in the EU countries. Tourism has the potential to contribute towards employment and economic growth, as well as to develop in rural, peripheral or less-developed areas, especially in many maritime and coastal regions. Yachting tourism is an important component of the 2020 tourism vision in Morocco, and several new marina projects have been launched since 2000 to achieve the Moroccan tourism vision goals, orientated towards yachting and nautical tourism. In the Eastern Mediterranean, Lebanon is developing its candidature as a central hub for the luxury boating industry in the Middle East, and Turkey could be the non-EU country in which both, the nautical tourism and the charter sector are more developed.

On the other hand, countries such as Lybia or Argelia does not count on infrastructures to consider the development of the charter sector in a short / medium term in these countries.

## **MedSkippers**

### **Vision, mission and objectives**

#### **Vision**

A Mediterranean charter industry that offers both, a high quality nautical product and a tailor-made experience, while ensuring environmental sustainability.

#### **Mission**

Approach the Mediterranean to international tourists by the hand of highly qualified Mediterranean people.

#### **General objective:**

To foster growth and exploit opportunities in the nautical charter sector.

#### **Specific objectives (SO) include:**

1. To promote public & private cooperation for the international harmonisation of professional skippers training for small commercial vessels (SCV)



2. To promote a cross-sectoral network including charter industry, sailing schools and skipper training centers
3. To improve professional skipper's skills aiming to foster their employability
4. To build capacity in the Mediterranean partner countries (non-EU)
5. To increase competitiveness of small charter tourism agencies by making maximum use of information technologies
6. To ensure the long term sustainability of the cross-sectoral network
7. To raise awareness about charter industry and maritime professions among youth

## Products or services

### a) International platform for dialogue

Up to 8 different focus groups will be organised right from the start of the project in 8 different countries (6 in the EU and 2 non-EU). These focus groups will bring together representatives of the public sector by means of authorities with competences in both, charter industry and skippers training, NGOs, universities and research centers, vocational and educational training (VETs), professional skippers associations, chambers of commerce and the private sector representing the charter industry, insurance companies and private sailing schools or training centers. This national platform for dialogue will have an international continuity in the international event to be organised in Malta in October / November 2020 will be open to all the Mediterranean countries.

The main objective of this international platform of dialogue is (i) to identify the charter sector demands in terms of the training of the professional skippers willing to be engaged in the nautical sector, (ii) to provide insights about the improvement of the connectivity across the eastern and western Mediterranean, (iii) to provide accurate roadmaps about the recognised licenses to work as professional skipper in the different Mediterranean countries, (iv) to provide insights about the harmonisation of such licenses, and (v) to unlock the environmental dimension in regards the training of the professional skippers.

### b) Central information hub for the community of skippers of small commercial vessels

Different micro-sites will be set up for the different training centers uploading their training opportunities at national level in their own language. These micro-sites will feed the main project website which will act as a repository of the different national roadmaps to become a professional skipper of SCV in different Mediterranean countries, and will provide accurate and updated information about the different training opportunities offered in different countries.

The main objective of the project website is to act as a central information hub with useful information for the professional skippers of small commercial vessels. The site aims to offer relevant information for all those stakeholders with interests in the charter industry and the training of professional skippers of small commercial vessels.

### c) New training scheme by modules



In collaboration with the International Sailing School Association (ISSA), the MedSkippers project will offer a new training programme by modules and a new module on environmental awareness. While this new training by modules programme will be emplaced in all the sailing schools under the ISSA, any training centers not belonging to the ISSA will be also invited to join this programme by modules. The intention is to allow skippers to receive part of their training in different schools, as well as to create a new module on environmental awareness.

#### **d) Pilot fellowship programmes**

Two different fellowship programmes are envisaged in the context of the MedSkippers project.

- Pilot mobility fellowship

The pilot mobility fellowship programme aims to encourage skippers to complete their training in another country in the Mediterranean. Such fellowship will cover training fees as well as part of travel and subsistence expenses. This will not only facilitate connectivity training across the Mediterranean, but offer both trainees, trainers and training institutions the opportunity to learn from other people and destinations, enriching their professional experience and scope for evolution.

- Pilot volunteering fellowship programme

The technological platform will provide the necessary mechanisms to create a "volunteers database" as part of the innovative services provided by the sales management tool. Thus, environmental scientists, archaeologists, historians, cooking students, au-pairs, or students of any other relevant disciplines willing to experience a non-remunerated, but free of charge, all-included sailing holidays, will have the opportunity to register in this database. The charterers will benefit of volunteer's knowledge and will receive an added value in their sailing holidays, and in return the volunteer's will enjoy a few relaxing days on board. A fellowship programme will be emplaced in order to promote this section of the sales platform.

#### **e) Capacity building**

As one of the specific objectives of the MedSkippers project different activities are envisaged to raise awareness about the charter industry and maritime professions among youth as well as to raise environmental awareness among the charter sector.

- Webinar on ocean literacy

This webinar will focus on what ocean literacy (OL) is, some current initiatives, contacts, networks and how OL can be used to raise awareness about the ocean and the services the ocean offers to humanity. This webinar will be available in Greek and English.

- Webinar on environmental awareness



This webinar will deal with the environmental impacts of boating and mitigation measures. Will mainly target the charter industry and relevant stakeholders. This webinar will be available in English and Spanish.

- Pilot Experience in Morocco

Youngsters will be invited to visit Marina de Saïdia in Morocco where they will have the chance to know which ones are the activities developed in a marina, the benefits of the nautical tourism for the coastal societies, and professional opportunities arising in the charter sector.

- Pilot Experience in Lebanon

Youngsters will be invited to visit a place to be determined in Lebanon where they will have the chance to know which ones are the activities developed in a marina, the benefits of the nautical tourism for coastal societies, and professional opportunities arising in the charter sector.

#### **f) Sales platform**

It will be a technological platform aiming to commercialize innovative products and services for the charter industry and SCV professional skippers. This sales management tool will help to accomplish the MedSkippers mission while ensuring the long term financial sustainability of the MedSkippers network.

Table 1 summarizes the relation between the different products/services offered by the MedSkippers community and the Specific Objectives of the project.

Product / Service	Specific Objectives
International Platform for dialogue	1, 2, 3
Central information Hub for Skippers	2, 3
New Training Scheme by modules	1, 3
Pilot Fellowship Programmes	2, 3, 4, 5, 7
Capacity Building	3, 4, 7
Sales Platform	5, 6

Table 1. Different products / services and project objectives met by each of them

Note: It is also envisaged the MedSkippers project will organise 10 different roadshows in order to (i) promote the MedSkippers project and (ii) to enhance the cooperation with training centers, sailing schools, skippers community and other relevant stakeholders especially in the charter sector. However, from a marketing plan point of view this roadshows are seen as commercial activity more than as a product/service of the project.



## SWOT analysis

### Strengths

- The MedSkippers project addresses the charter sector from a new perspective engaging relevant stakeholders from the earliest stages of the project in order to create a new and innovative charter product.
- The MedSkippers project is targeting a very specific group of users which is really necessary for the successful development of the charter industry but for which the charter industry has not yet properly paid attention.
- The MedSkippers project focus on the Mediterranean and accounts with an important knowledge about the sector and the sea basin. The Mediterranean attracts more than 70% of the charter industry worldwide and we are Mediterranean experts.

### Weaknesses

- The MedSkippers project aims to cover all the Mediterranean with 6 only project partners located in 4 different countries.
- The MedSkippers project aims to present a brand-new player in a very mature and competitive market, where it is not possible to compete against large and well established companies in terms of promotion or online marketing.
- If compared with other players the project lacks human and economic resources to properly compete against them in the charter sector.

### Opportunities

- Targeting relevant stakeholders in the charter and training sectors in the earliest stages of the project may lead to the creation of new alliances, especially in those countries in which there are no project partners.
- The charter sector is in constant evolution to provide new products or services. New tendencies are pointing out the success of skippered / crewed boats as a new tailored experience and the MedSkippers project is targeting this specific product.
- The Southern Mediterranean remains virgin for the charter sector and one of the main objectives of the MedSkippers project is to build capacity in non-EU Mediterranean countries.

### Threats

- The relation between the skippers community with both, the charter and the training sector, is consolidated at national levels only. It remains to be seen how the skippers community will react to an internationalization of their activity.
- Multinational start-ups which were not initially focused on the nautical tourism are offering an innovative approach to potential clients, as they rely on the boat provider to offer tailored-made experiences to their guests.
- Political problems, untrustworthy authorities or administrative burden may prevent the charter industry from expanding to North African countries.



## Marketing Strategy

The objective of this marketing strategy is to identify the target audiences, set specific targets for each type of audience, present the different tools or activities provided by the MedSkippers project, and to identify the role of each of the project partners in the achievement of these targets.

### Target Audiences

#### a) Skippers of small commercial vessels

Skippers are the core of the MedSkippers project and most of the products and services of the MedSkippers project focus on them. (i) Skipper Associations representatives will be invited in the different focus groups to be organised, (ii) the project website will offer the relevant information to develop their professional career in different Mediterranean countries as well as an updated list of training opportunities, (iii) a new training scheme by modules will be presented and a new module on environmental awareness created, (iv) there will be a pilot fellowship programme to foster their mobility internationally when receiving the training, and (v) a webinar on environmental awareness will be produced for them.

#### b) Training Centers

Training centers will receive insights from the charter industry in order to properly train skippers willing to work in the charter sector. Specific micro-sites will be emplaced for them to upload information about their courses for training professional skippers of SCV in their own language. These micro-sites will feed the general project website for the skippers to identify the most suitable training opportunities for them. Thus, the MedSkippers project will give training centers a new channel to promote their courses. The service will be provided free of charge. In return the MedSkippers project aims to have an updated database of training opportunities.

#### c) Charter industry

The main objective of the MedSkippers project is to foster growth and exploit opportunities in the nautical charter sector. On the one hand, the MedSkippers project aims to provide better skippers addressing the needs required by the charter sector in order to improve the quality of the charter product. On the other hand, the project aims to exploit opportunities in this mature but dynamic market by providing IT tools to professional skippers of SCV and other smaller operators in the charter market.

#### d) Managing Authorities

The solution to the lack of harmonization and license recognition among different EU member States, as well as the lack of regulation of the charter industry or the professional skippers community in other Mediterranean countries such as Morocco, relies on the will to dialogue between competent managing authorities in the different countries. The MedSkippers aims to talk with them in 8 different EU countries during the first year of the project and to invite all the national representatives to an international workshop to be organized in the second year



of the project. The MedSkippers project aims to be a central hub of news and updated information about all the different steps undertaken to solve the issue of the lack of recognition and harmonization of professional licenses for skippers of SCV.

e) Other relevant Stakeholders

Any stakeholder with interest in the sustainable development of nautical tourism in general and the charter sector in particular in the Mediterranean or other EU sea-basins, as well as the problematic of the recognition and harmonization of licenses, is relevant for the project. Thus, apart from the skippers community and the charter sector, nautical sector, tourism sector, professional associations or representatives, insurance companies, chambers of commerce and/or access to finance, universities and research centers, NGOs and specialized press or media is expected to be targeted by the MedSkippers project

f) Youngsters

It is of utmost importance, for a long term sustainable development of the charter industry, to engage young generations and introduce to them the nautical tourism industry, its importance for the development of the coastal regions in the Mediterranean, and the need to take care of the environment which is the cornerstone supporting this important industry. Webinars on ocean literacy and environmental awareness, two pilot experiences to approach this industry to youngsters in Morocco and Lebanon, and the creation of the "volunteer" programme in the sales management tool in which youngsters are going to be invited to add value to the charter industry, are examples of how youngsters are going to be engaged in the MedSkippers project.

g) General Public and Tourists

The mission of the project is to present the Mediterranean to international tourists through the experience of highly qualified Mediterranean people. Any individual willing to visit Europe and discover the Mediterranean, as well as any Mediterranean willing to promote a high-quality experience to the visitors, is invited to discover the MedSkippers project.

## Tools

The MedSkippers project will emplace a number of different tools aiming to facilitate the provision of the different products and services to be offered by the project as indicated in the section 2 (MedSkippers) of the current document. These tools are described in this section.

## Branding / Visual Identity

The project logo depicts the main themes of the project and has been produced in various formats and resolutions, including for use in print/online media as well as black and white versions. All logo versions are assembled to clearly deliver the project's messages and create brand loyalty. The branding package will include the design of the project website, the sales platform, a project factsheet, brochures, standardized powerpoint templates and roll up banners. Table 2 indicates the main content and objectives of each of the different components of the branding package.



Item	Target audience	Objective	Delivery date
<b>Project Logo</b>	All	Provide a visual identity that reflects the project aims, vision and mission	M3
<b>Project Website</b>	All	Design a user-friendly and visually attractive website	M4
<b>Project Factsheet</b>	Relevant Stakeholders	Provide an overview of the project. Create further awareness and stimulate interest among concerned actors to register for project news and subscribe to the project Newsletter.	M4
<b>Presentation template</b>	Relevant Stakeholders	Ensure the project is presented consistently by all participating partners and stakeholders during presentations and/or events	M6
<b>Roll-up banner</b>	Relevant stakeholders	To promote the MedSkippers project in events organised by the project as well as third-party events	M12
<b>Brochure (printed)</b>	Skippers community, training centers, charter sector and other relevant stakeholders	To engage relevant stakeholders to register and use the project website and the sales management tool	M12
<b>Sales Platform</b>	All	Design a user-friendly and visually attractive sales platform	
<b>Brochure (printed)</b>	All	To promote the sales management tool	M24
<b>Leaflet</b>	Relevant Stakeholders	Provide an overview of the main project outcomes	M34

Table 2. Branding package elements, objectives, and expected delivery time

All logo versions and the branding and visual identity package is available in the internal communication platform and in Annex II.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1HDreIkol-sY4dfmdfrD60az9IWcY8dyc?usp=sharing>

### Stakeholder Database

The stakeholder database is a document of utmost importance for a successful development of the MedSkippers project. The database is an internally shared Excel document divided in four different sheets:

- 1) Training centers. Private or public organizations offering relevant training to the skippers of SCV
- 2) Charter companies. From micro-companies to large SMEs owning boats available for charter.



- 3) Other stakeholders. Any other organisation relevant for the purpose of the MedSkippers project.
- 4) Skippers. Individuals working or willing to work as professional skippers of SCV

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1SjUH1w8plqa13R0vqAO2C5iLwm7o-KE?usp=sharing>

### Focus group guidelines

The guidelines to organize the different focus groups envisaged during the first year of the project are available as the project Deliverable 2.1 "Literature Review and Focus Group Guideliness".

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1fhV\\_hyemHbr7S5Ib29pZOCFUmFtwQY3?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1fhV_hyemHbr7S5Ib29pZOCFUmFtwQY3?usp=sharing)

### Project Website

The project website main objectives, main structure, target users and user journeys is presented as Annex III.

The project website is available at:

[www.project.medskippers.com](http://www.project.medskippers.com)

There are five different micro-sites set up in order to feed the training opportunities calendar presented in the general project website.

- [www.project.medskippers.com/spain](http://www.project.medskippers.com/spain)
- [www.project.medskippers.com/italy](http://www.project.medskippers.com/italy)
- [www.project.medskippers.com/france](http://www.project.medskippers.com/france)
- [www.project.medskippers.com/greece](http://www.project.medskippers.com/greece)
- [www.project.medskippers.com/adriatic](http://www.project.medskippers.com/adriatic)

### Sales Platform

The sales platform is available at:

[www.medskippers.com](http://www.medskippers.com)

### Targeted Communication

The stakeholder database will play an important role in terms of the targeted communication of the project as it will provide to project partners the contact details of those stakeholders to be targeted in order to ensure the Medskippers project achieves its objectives.

The MedSkippers project will set up an email account for each partner to use when contacting stakeholders on behalf of the MedSkippers project. Main messages to be disclosed, objectives, and target addressees will be responsible of IM as the communication partner of the project. Different partners will be responsible for the identification of relevant stakeholders (stakeholder mapping) in different Mediterranean countries, as well as to establish direct contact with them when required. In this sense it is very important to get personal contact



details whenever possible, apart from the main institutional email addresses. Table 3 defines the lead partner in each of the different Mediterranean countries considered for targeted communication in the MedSkippers project.

Country	Lead Partner	FG	Roadshow	Skippers Roadmap	Volunteers	SD
<b>Morocco</b>	SMM	1	n/a	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Spain</b>	APEAM (Med regions), DM (non-Med regions)	1	3	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Italy</b>	DM (non-Adriatic regions), ISSA (adriatic regions)	1	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>France</b>	DM (Med regions)	n/a	n/a	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Malta</b>	ISSA	n/a	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Croatia</b>	ISSA	1	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Montenegro</b>	ISSA	n/a	n/a		Yes	Yes
<b>Albania</b>	IM	n/a	n/a		Yes	Yes
<b>Greece</b>	IM	1	3	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Cyprus</b>	ISSA	1	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Turkey</b>	ISSA	n/a	n/a		Yes	Yes
<b>Lebanon</b>	ISSA	1	n/a	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Israel</b>	ISSA	n/a	n/a		Yes	Yes
<b>Egypt</b>	ISSA	n/a	n/a		Yes	Yes
<b>Libya</b>	ISSA	n/a	n/a		n/a	Yes
<b>Tunisia</b>	DM	n/a	n/a		Yes	Yes
<b>Argelia</b>	DM	n/a	n/a		n/a	Yes

Table 3. Different countries targeted for direct communication and lead partner to identify stakeholders in each of them

### *Direct communications*

Table 4 summarizes the different objectives of the direct communications, target users and expected timeline.

Objective	Target Users	Timeline
<b>To distribute the project Newsletter</b>	Relevant stakeholders in general	Every 6 months
<b>To invite to register and promote their courses in the project website</b>	Sailing schools / Training centers	Year 1. Second Quarter. when the project website is up and running.
<b>To invite to the different focus groups envisaged</b>	Authorities / Relevant Stakeholders	Year 1. FG to be organised in agreement to relevant authorities schedules
<b>To invite to complete the online survey</b>	Authorities / Relevant Stakeholders	Year 2. Last quarter.
<b>To invite to the international workshop to be organised in Malta</b>	Authorities / Relevant Stakeholders	Year 2. First quarter and periodically until the organization of the event.

<b>To agree meetings and define an agenda for the different roadshows envisaged</b>	Training centers / Skippers community / relevant stakeholders in the charter sector	Year 2. First quarter.
<b>To invite to find relevant information in the project website</b>	Authorities / Skippers community / relevant stakeholders	Year 2. First quarter.
<b>To invite to discover the new training scheme by modules</b>	Skippers community	Year 2. Last quarter.
<b>To invite to register and promote their services in the sales platform</b>	Skippers community	Year 2. Last quarter.
<b>To invite to join the mobility fellowship programme</b>	Skippers community	Year 3. First quarter.
<b>To invite to join the volunteering programme and benefit of the volunteering fellowship programme</b>	Volunteers programme	Year 2. Last quarter.
<b>To invite to develop a professional career in the nautical tourism industry</b>	Volunteers programme	Year 2. Last quarter.

Table 4. Direct communication objectives, target audience and expected timeline

### *Events organized by the Medskippers project*

Several events are going to be organized in the context of the project, and specific invitations must be sent to the target audiences. Table 5 summarizes a list of the different events to be organized, their general objective and the target audience to be invited to attend the event. It is crucial to communicate with the targeted stakeholders well in advance in order to ensure the success of the different events to be organized.

Type of Event	Objectives	Target audience
<b>Focus Groups</b>	(i) Identification of the charter sector demands in terms of required training for skippers of SCV (ii) Insights on the convenience to promote connectivity across different sub-sea basins (iii) Consolidation of the national roadmaps for skippers of SCV (iv) Assess the inclusion of the environmental dimension to obtain skipper licenses	- Public authorities or policy makers with competences in the nautical sector and/or skippers training. - Charter industry - Scientific community / universities - Insurance or certification companies - Skippers training associations / Schools - Vocational and educational training centers (VETs) - Environmental NGOs - Chambers of commerce or any other "access to finance" body
<b>Roadshows</b>	(i) Population of the skippers database / Skippers engagement (ii) Consolidation of the training	- Skippers community - Training centers - Sailing schools



	centers database and its utilisation	- Relevant stakeholders
<b>International Stakeholder Event</b>	(i) Present the MedSkippers project internationally (ii) Facilitate international cooperation among competent authorities in different Mediterranean (iii) Facilitate dialogue between the charter and training sectors and the competent authorities.	- EC representatives - National authorities in both EU and non-EU Mediterranean countries - Charter sector representatives - Skippers community representatives - Training organisations representatives

Table 5. Different event to be organized by the project, objectives and target audience

### Project website

The project website will serve as a repository of useful information for the stakeholders community with interest in the training of skippers of SCV and the charter sector. Relevant information will be available to download by any interested party.

### General Dissemination

#### Newsletters

Six (6) project e-newsletters will be produced and distributed on a six (6) month basis via MailChimp, thus helping to electronically reach a wide audience which will be prompted sign up to the project's newsletters and updates. These newsletters will also be sent to relevant stakeholders, and will be uploaded to the project website and available for download. Usually, a typical newsletter will include project highlights and progress, important events, conferences and relevant news. Below, table 6 summarizing the topics suggested to be covered in each of the issues.

Issue	Suggested topics to be covered	TARGET sectors <sup>1</sup>	Release
1	MedSkippers general project presentation	All	May 19
2	The MedSkippers project and the training opportunities for skippers of SCV	Skippers / Training centers	November 19
3	Outcomes of the focus groups. International training programme by modules.	Authorities / Training / Charter	May 20
4	Outcomes of the international workshop hold in Malta	Authorities / Training / Charter	November 20
5	The MedSkippers project and new opportunities in the charter sector in the Mediterranean	Skippers / Charter / Volunteers	May 21
6	MedSkippers project main outcomes and long term sustainability	All	November 21

Table 6. Suggested content for the different Newsletters

<sup>1</sup> It is assumed the target audience includes ALL relevant stakeholders. However, the table indicates specific groups to be targeted within the general relevant stakeholders community



### Publications

Apart from the Newsletters, press releases and promotional articles will be developed and distributed in a timely manner for relevant/newsworthy project activities, events and results. Publications will be distributed through a range of dissemination channels, such as news wires (e.g. CORDIS Wire, B2B tourism press channels, etc.), media and relevant stakeholder contact mailing lists, partner websites and newsletters. Partner 5 IM will take the lead on this task, but all the project partners will be responsible to ensure the publications have an impact in the different countries in which they are taking the lead (Table 7).

Press releases will be issued before important events and project development milestones. Table XX summarizes the indicative press releases to be developed and distributed.

Objective	Ner of PRs	Expected timeline
<b>To present the MedSkippers project</b>	1	After the Kick-off meeting (M3-M6)
<b>To advertise the organization of the seven (7) different Focus groups</b>	7	2 - 4 weeks before the organization of each Focus group
<b>To communicate the results / outcomes of the Focus Groups</b>	1	M9 - M12
<b>To attract interested parties to the international event in Malta</b>	1	M21 preliminary agenda
<b>To announce pilot experiences, including webinars</b>	4	M24 - M30
<b>To communicate the commercialization of the charter products</b>	1	M30 - M33
<b>To summarise project outcomes</b>	1	M36

Table 7. Expected press releases throughout the MedSkippers project lifecycle

### Social Media

Virtual social media channels are, nowadays, a necessity for the promotion of a website. Within this framework, the proposed website will develop an ongoing, parallel platform and strategy intended for social networking and web marketing of the project. This strategy will incorporate Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in order to increase awareness and stimulate engagement of experts, stakeholders and the public in project activities and outcomes by employing targeted online campaigns. Table 8. reflects the main milestones of the MedSkippers project and the expected number of communications by means of the social media channels.

Year	Milestone	Twitter	Facebook	Instagram
<b>1</b>	Launch of the project website	4	2	1
<b>1-3</b>	Engagement of training centers / sailing schools to register and promote their courses in the project website	20	10	10
<b>1</b>	Organisation of focus groups	15	7	7
<b>1</b>	Online survey	5	2	1



<b>2</b>	Organisation of roadshows	20	12	20
<b>2</b>	International Stakeholder event in Malta	5	3	3
<b>2</b>	Launch of the sales management tool	10	5	5
<b>2</b>	Launch of the training scheme in modules			
<b>2</b>	Launch of the module on environmental awareness	5	2	2
<b>2</b>	Engagement of training centers / sailing schools to adopt the new training scheme in modules	10	5	3
<b>2,3</b>	Engagement of skippers to register and promote their services by means of the sales platform	15	5	5
<b>2,3</b>	Engagement of volunteers to register in the sales management tool	20	10	5
<b>3</b>	Organization of two (2) webinars	6	4	4
<b>3</b>	Promotion of the international fellowship mobility programme	5	10	10
<b>3</b>	Promotion of the volunteers fellowship programme	5	10	10
<b>3</b>	Promotion of charter experiences available in the sales management tool	5	10	10
<b>1-3</b>	Promotion of the newsletters	7	6	6
<b>1-3</b>	Promotion of the main outcomes of the coordination meetings	6	3	3

Table 8. Project milestones and expected promotion throughout social media

Partner 5 IM is responsible for the set-up and maintenance of the different communication channels. All the partners are encouraged to contribute to the social media channels, by 'liking', 'following', 'sharing' or 'retweeting' posts from social media. Additionally, partners should aim to promote the project through other Social Media channels, such as relevant Twitter, Facebook and YouTube channels where possible, both their own as well their organisation's/company's channels.

### Twitter

Twitter is generally used to briefly and clearly communicate either with peers and individuals who share common interests as well as with the general public, while the free tools offered by the platform itself, such as Twitter Analytics, make it very easy to measure the impact of tweets. In general, Twitter is more popular among scientists, policy-makers, research organisations, NGOs, universities etc., as it is seen as a quick medium through which information is shared among peers with similar interests and demographics. Taking the above into consideration, Twitter can be used to disseminate information to the wider skippers and training centres communities, project partners and relevant decision and policy-makers, such as managing authorities, chambers of commerce, universities etc.

One of the central components of Twitter, which needs to be taken into consideration, is the use of hashtags (#). A hashtag can categorise a tweet's topics, gathering information and making it easier for people to search for other tweets about those topics by using the hashtags themselves to search. It has been estimated that tweets with hashtags receive two times more engagement than those without hashtags and they are more likely to be retweeted. Prior to and during project events, new hashtags may be used to support visibility of the event. These



can be decided *ad hoc* as and when needed, depending on current hashtag trends. Event hashtags are only meant to be used for a short period of time. In addition, campaign hashtags are implemented for a determined period of time, with the main objectives being engagement and awareness. These hashtags can be decided by the WP5 Leader before important events in collaboration with the Project Coordinator. Posting regularly will increase engagement and visibility, thereby increasing also follower count.

During the initial phase of the project (Year 1 – Project Set-up), regular tweets and posts are needed in order to increase visibility and to start engaging in online conversations with the audience/followers. The objective here is to inform and communicate about the project, gain a solid and consistent follower count as well as support and endorsement from the relevant stakeholders. Thus, it is envisaged that with the launch of the twitter account, regular posts will be created in order to ensure a strong online presence and establish the project as a key player in the field.

### Facebook

Facebook is mostly used for personal communication as well as disseminating interesting scientific information to the general public. In this respect, Facebook can be a very useful tool in cases where public awareness is the goal and the general public is the audience, including youth and tourists interested in the project and its products.

Bearing the above in mind regarding Facebook, activities should largely focus on developing an engaging media strategy for Facebook particularly in years 2 & 3 of the project when the creation of the modular training programme, the launch of the sales management tool and the international event in Malta will take place. A professional, up-to-date and engaging Facebook page will help to attract the targeted project audiences, particularly skippers, training centres as well as youth and tourists, to engage in project activities.

In addition, in the last year of the project the Pilot experiences (webinars, pilot experiences in Lebanon and Morocco, mobility fellowships, grants) and the commercialization of the charter products through the sales management tool will be actively promoted on Facebook through targeted campaigns, posts and active engagement of the relevant industries. Paid advertising campaigns will also be employed to enhance specific posts and products.

Facebook also uses hashtags as way of categorizing similar posts together and ensuring that hashtag use is consistent across social media platforms can create a more professional image of the project and its communication tactics.

### Instagram

Instagram has quickly become one of the most popular social media platforms since its launch in 2010. Its growth has been explosive and the platform only requires a smartphone picture with a filter, which is then shared with followers. Business profiles allow businesses / organisations to access insights, create calls to action, and promote products and services through sponsored posts. This component of Instagram could also apply to the MedSkippers



project. If used correctly, Instagram can be a highly targeted, visual advertising channel for almost any “brand”.

One of the easiest and most effective ways to get users to supply content is to encourage them to tag photos with a special hashtag. With a user’s permission, the best ones can be picked and posted on the MedSkippers account. Instagram is a powerful marketing tool, which works even better when paired with other media channels as part of an integrated campaign, therefore creating calls to action on Instagram, asking users to submit content and creating dedicated campaigns can attract followers and establish a sense of community and ownership.

User-generated content (UGC) in Instagram can be used to engage audiences, build community and generate sales. UGC is any type of content (photo, video, tweet, etc) that is created by a customer, fan, or user. That means that anyone taking their own photo, posting it to Instagram, and tagging a brand or using a hashtag is creating user generated content.

Hashtags are also an important component of Instagram and it is suggested to use similar or even the same hashtags as on other social media platforms, to ensure consistency across accounts. Again, depending on the content of the post, hashtags can be chosen accordingly. Instagram can be used throughout the duration of the project, particularly in the third year, when the Pilot experiences (in Lebanon and Morocco), the mobility fellowships and grants, and the sales management tool can provide ample opportunity for interesting content as well as during the commercialization of the charter products and the launch of the sales management tool.

### ***PPC Advertising***

Pay-per click (PPC), is an advertising model in which text-based ads are often displayed to users of search engines, and whenever a user clicks on one of these ads, the advertiser is charged. It is considered the most effective way to grow a business, and the MedSkippers project as allocated budget to promote the sales platform.

Google or Facebook Ads are the main platforms for PPC. A specific strategy for PPC Advertising will be defined by partner 5 IM as the communication partner.

## **Marketing objectives (per year)**

### **2019**

The first year of the project is defined by the organisation of the different focus groups as well as the launch of the project website.

From a marketing point of view the main objective of the focus groups will be to present to both, public and private sectors, the MedSkippers project as an EU funded initiative aiming to unlock potential solutions to the harmonisation and recognition of skipper licenses for SCV. On the other hand, the project website will be clearly oriented to the private sector, being the training centers and sailing schools the target users and main beneficiaries of the website. It is expected to attract the skippers community by providing exhaustive and updated information about training opportunities available all around the Mediterranean.



Training centers and sailing schools will be mapped from an early stage of the project and direct contact will be established when the project website is up and running. Table 9 summarises objectives, tools and partners responsible of the different actions to be carried out in the first year of the project.

Objective	Channels	Responsible
<b>Engage training centers / sailing schools to upload content to the project website.</b>	Project website	DM (structure), OI (programming), IM (content)
	Stakeholder database + direct contact	DM (Spain, Italy, France), APEAM (Spain), ISSA (Italy, Croatia, Montenegro, Malta, Cyprus, Lebanon, Turkey, Israel, IM (Greece), SMM (Morocco)
	Newsletters	IM
	Social Media	IM
<b>Engage other relevant stakeholders in both, public and private sectors</b>	Focus groups	DM (Italy), APEAM (Spain), ISSA (Cyprus, Croatia, Lebanon), IM (Greece), MSM (Morocco)
	Online consultation	DM
	Social Media	IM

Table 9. Marketing objectives in 2019, channels available and partners responsible.

## 2020

The second year of the project is determined by the need to consolidate the cooperation with training centers and sailing schools in order to ensure the project website is a reliable and updated source of information for the skippers community, and also by the need to properly engage the skippers community as well as relevant volunteers to populate the sales management tool.

The new training scheme by modules aims to attract both, skippers community and training centers / skippers community. It is expected the roadshows will facilitate direct contact with training centers, sailing schools, skippers communities representatives, and the charter sector in general in order to invite them to use the facilities the MedSkippers project is providing to them (website and sales management tool). The main sources of volunteers expected to populate the sales management tool will be identified in the project database and direct contact will be established with them. Finally, it is expected both, skippers and volunteers, will find good opportunities in the charter sector by means of the sales management tool.

On the other hand, the international event to be organized in Malta will serve to enhance cooperation among different Mediterranean countries as well as to enhance the visibility of the project at International level. The publication of newsletters and the attendance to relevant events organized by 3rd parties will also contribute to enhance visibility. Table 10 summarises objectives, tools and partners responsible of the different actions to be carried out in the second year of the project.



Objective	Channels	Responsible
<b>Consolidate cooperation with training centers. Engage skippers community. Engage volunteers</b>	New training scheme by modules	ISSA
	Sales Management tool	All (Definition), DM (validation), OI (programming)
	Stakeholder database + direct contact	DM (Spain, Italy, France), APEAM (Spain), ISSA (Italy, Croatia, Montenegro, Malta, Cyprus, Lebanon, Turkey, Israel, IM (Greece), SMM (Morocco)
	Roadshows	APEAM (3 in Spain), ISSA (1 in Italy, 1 in Malta, 1 in Croatia, 1 in Cyprus), IM (3 in Greece)
	Social Media	IM
<b>Consolidate cooperation with other relevant stakeholders in both, public and private sectors</b>	International Event in Malta	All
<b>Enhance project visibility</b>	Third party events attendance	All
	Newsletters	IM
	Social Media	IM

Table 10. Marketing objectives in 2020, channels available and partners responsible.

## 2021

The last year of the project will focus on the engagement of skippers for the mobility fellowship training programme, the engagement of volunteers and skippers to provide products and services in the sales management tool, and the promotion of these services (Table 11).

Objective	Channels	Responsible
<b>Consolidate cooperation with training centers, sailing schools, skippers community and volunteers</b>	Sales Management Tool	DM (Validation), OI (programming)
	Pilot mobility fellowship programme	APEAM, ISSA
	Volunteers fellowship programme	APEAM, ISSA
	Specific marketing campaigns	All
	Social Media	IM
<b>Enhance project visibility</b>	Webinars	DM (environmental impacts) and IM (ocean literacy)
	Young awareness	ISSA (Lebanon), SMM

	pilot experiences	(Morocco)
	Third party events attendance	All
	Newsletters	IM
	Social Media	IM
	PPC Advertising	IM

Table 11. Marketing objectives in 2021, channels available and partners responsible.

## Targets per group of stakeholders

Table 12 presents the target groups of stakeholders, the minimum number of individuals in each target group to be targeted along the project, the different tools available to engage these stakeholders, and the specific target number of stakeholders to be achieved thanks to the different tools provided. The MedSkippers project has a strong component of capacity building in non-EU countries. For this reason, specific targets has been set-up for non-EU stakeholders.

Target Group	Total Target	Tools to achieve the indicator	Target	Non-EU Target
<b>Skippers</b>	<b>500</b>	Skippers engaged in the sales platform	500	n/a
		Number of Skippers granted (mobility programme) <sup>2</sup>	40	30%
		Webinar on environmental impacts	100	25%
		Roadshows <sup>3</sup>	250	0%
<b>Training Centers</b>	<b>n/a</b>	5 microsities targeting training centers and sailing schools in Spain, Italy, France (med regions), Greece & Cyprus and Croatia	100%	0%
		Main website targeting Malta, Montenegro, Albania, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel and Morocco	75%	n/a
		Main website targeting Egypt, Lebanon and Argelia	30%	100%
		Training centers / sailing schools adopting the new training scheme by modules	n/a	n/a
		Roadshows	250	0%
<b>Charter industry</b>	<b>200</b>	Focus Groups	7	30%
		Roadshows	250	0%
		Sales Platform	200	n/a
<b>Authorities and relevant Stakeholders</b>	<b>270</b>	Seven (7) focus groups	63	30%
		Ten (10) Roadshows	250	0%
		One (1) International event	100	10%

<sup>2</sup> Up to 10 different nationalities must be represented by the volunteers

<sup>3</sup> The roadshows are meant to target charter industry, training centers and professional skippers mainly. However, they are open to target other relevant groups of stakeholders.

		One (1) online consultation	100	n/a
		Six (6) Newsletters <sup>4</sup>	20	0%
<b>Youngsters directly engaged</b>	<b>1000</b>	Webinar on ocean literacy	200	25%
		Pilot visit in Morocco	200	100%
		Pilot visit in Lebanon	200	100%
		Volunteering Programme <sup>5</sup>	500	20%
		Number of volunteers granted	10	20%
<b>General Public and Tourists</b>	<b>5000</b>	Visitors to Project Website	4000	n/a
		Downloaded documents from the project website	400	n/a
		Visitors to the sales Management Tool	1000	n/a
		Bookings processed	100	n/a
		Subscribers to the mailing List	100	n/a
		Number of third party events attended	10	n/a
		Social Media	n/a	n/a

Table 12. Target stakeholders

<sup>4</sup> A minimum number of 20 other relevant EU funded projects must be targeted, and at least their coordinators approached by the MedSkippers project. It is assumed the Newsletters could be useful.

<sup>5</sup> Up to 10 different NUTS2 regions must be connected by the mobility fellowship programme

