



Cross-sectoral skills for the blue economy market

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



Science Diver in the Blue Economy Era - International Conference

20-21 April 2023 – Valletta, Malta

More than 20 years of training in Occupational Scientific Diving at work in Europe, The European Scientific Diving Panel (ESDP) model (talk)

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Starting in the 1970s, from an administrative point of view, it became increasingly complicated to use scuba diving for scientific research. This affected the mobility of European scientists and scientific collaborations, even for those funded by the European Union, like the MARine Science and Technology (MAST) program. To reduce this growing handicap, initiatives were taken, in the early 1980s, at the European level to manage the occupational scientific diving sector and to move towards an equivalence system based on a common minimum training standard. After years of discussions, in 2000, the first training standard agreed upon by 15 European countries was endorsed. It included two levels, namely the European Scientific Diver and the Advanced European Scientific Diver (ESD & AESD). Following the European Commission recommendation, training has been organised at the national level and within the existing national legal framework (occupational training); however, occupational scientific diving was recognised by law (currently in only eight member states). Scientists and other employees of scientific institutions, mainly from oceanography, biology, ecology and archaeology, and students, were trained. Nowadays, Germany, Sweden and Finland co-organise a common framework for occupational scientific diving (OSD) training, including common training sessions that end with examinations conducted by the national authority of the applicant country. The details of a Nationally organised training will be illustrated by the training session organised by the Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Sciences (RBINS) for the Belgian Science Policy Federal Public Service (Belspo). From the recruitment criteria for the scientific diver candidates to the issuance of the certificate of competence and its validity period, we will illustrate the process followed in Belgium. Today's minimum common training includes the theoretical session for 3 ETCS and 21 h framed by a University 2nd cycle course given at the Free University of Brussels (VUB) Brussels before the practical sessions are organised from a marine research station in the Mediterranean Sea. Practical training is made of three sessions per day for 14 days. It includes twenty scientific dives organised from boat and shore according to the weather.

