



## Science Diver in the Blue Economy Era - International Conference

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### Building a new scientific diving framework from scratch. The Greek case.

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### ABSTRACT

Greece is a country with a long tradition in underwater scientific projects. Since the first extensive underwater archaeological research at Antikythera in 1900, there has been important activity in various fields of underwater scientific work that spans from biology, ecology and other natural science disciplines to engineering and of course humanities. For more than a century, scientists from Greece, Europe and other parts of the world gather almost every year to dive in the clear waters of the Mediterranean and collect samples, excavate archaeological sites, test new scientific equipment, supervise underwater technical works etc. Nonetheless, Greece does not have a solid scientific diving framework neither in legal terms nor in training and practice terms. This gap is partially covered by recreational and commercial diving frameworks that, albeit better than naught, cannot address the specific needs of scientific diving. In the past, there have been efforts to regulate scientific diving by either individuals or organizations that have been focusing on their special needs. Alas, these attempts have not produced a unifying framework or at least some stepping stones in order to promote this effort closer to fruition. There is, however, nowadays an ongoing process that brings together scientists from various backgrounds, who work in Greece, aiming at the design of a common national framework – bottom-up – that will provide a stable training and occupational environment for the promotion of scientific diving in the country. This presentation will provide a timeline of the developments on scientific diving in Greece focusing on legal, occupational, and training matters and the implications that have been tantalizing this procedure so far. Moreover, it will present the major stakeholders, the areas of potential development, as well as the threats that lurk in the shadows of political and financial interests.