Atlantic Blue Ports
An INTERREG Atlantic Area Programme

Introduction

DEAR READER,

The Atlantic Plue Ports Programme Partners are proud to share this newsletter with you. All partners together ('the Consortium') are working hard towards greener, more sustainable Port Reception Facilities for both oil and ballast water. Here is a report of selected activities thus far. This Programme is made possible by the European Regional Development Fund's INTERREG Atlantic Area programme, which aims to promote transnational cooperation among 36 Atlantic regions of five European countries.

Kick-Off Meeting of the Project in Lisbon: A Consortium and a Task Force to Design Attractive "Blue Port Services"

The project "Atlantic Blue Port Services" is a cooperation platform designed to allow all parties engaged in the delivery of port services for the management of ships' effluents to come up with future services and best practices. Topics include the protection of national sea waters; the development of advanced techniques and processes for the treatment of effluents; as well as control of treated water and monitoring of sea water in port areas.

To reach a consensus on the "best services" ports could provide, the project is structured in five main working groups: Technologies, Environment/Risk Assessment, Economy and Regulations.

Of course, such work can't be carried out in closed groups. Studying and acting on these topics requires considering studies and taking actions at national, European and even international levels. Therefore, the Consortium is supported by a Task Force: a think tank involving concerned and interested parties in the partner countries and at European and international levels.

The kick-off meeting and workshop were organised in the port of Lisbon in September 2017. It was the occasion to mobilise the Portuguese community. The sessions welcomed the national DGRM[1] and DGPM[2], most ports (Lisbon, Setubal, Sines, Acores, and Madeira), Eco-Oil (an operator of a large treatment plant for oily effluents), the universities of both Lisbon and Coimbra and the non-profit cluster of companies Fórum Oceano. This first event was organised by Bentley Systems, coordinator for Portugal, with the Port of Lisbon hosting the event and in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Brest, Lead Partner of the project. The various presentations and views of the participants present proved to be a fantastic catalyst to get the project started.

Following this, Tasks Forces were born in Spain, France, Netherlands and Ireland with similar composition and organised in thematic groups, modelled on the Portuguese version. The project partners are very happy with the progress made and are very confident that it will lead to innovative but realistic and practical solutions!

[1] Direção-Geral de Recursos Naturais
[2] Direção-Geral de Política do Mar

2018: Blue Port Services in the Spotlight During the European Maritime Days and the European Transport Days

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) of Brest, as coordinator of the Atlantic Blue Ports Project, introduced the Project to the European Commission (specifically, to the DG MARE[3] and the DG MOVE[4]) during bilateral meetings in Brussels.

Soon, invitations to present the project at the "European Maritime Day", organised by the DG MOVE and at the European Transport Days (the so-called "TEN-T days"), organised by the DG MOVE, followed. These two events have been very successful in the sense that a lot of information was exchanged with the two Directorates-General regarding the interests of the Atlantic Blue Ports Project, with respect to the DGs respective missions and work plans.

The DG MARE, concerned with marine environmental protection, is keen to link the Project to other ongoing activities designed to assess the risk of invasive species in Europe, and to develop water monitoring capacities in ports. The DG MOVE, in the context of the revision of the Port Reception Facilities convention, is more specifically concerned with the development of advanced port services for the treatment of ships effluents.

In both cases, these contacts were starting points to link the Project to ongoing actions in Europe to reduce pollution caused by shipping activities and to help ports and member states improve their ship's waste reception/treatment facilities. The Project's partners are very happy with this positive exposure to policymakers and are confident it will help realise the Project's ultimate goal of developing new and improved port services for a greener future!

Picture right - the Atlantic Blue Ports stand during TEN-T days 2018 in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

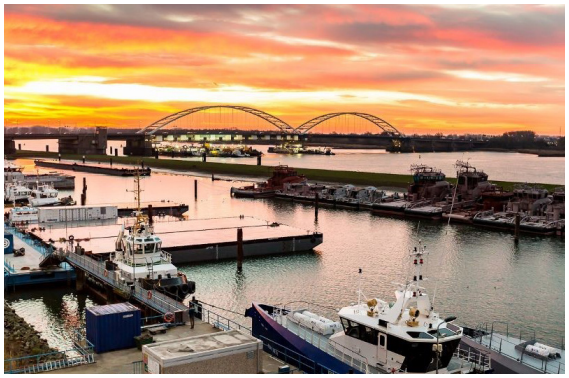
First Partner Meeting and Workshop Organised on Damen Premises in Gorinchem

Every six months, the Consortium organises a workshop and a progress meeting at one of its partners' locations. The first such meeting, including the first workshop, was organised in Gorinchem, the Netherlands, at Damen Shipyard's premises, on 17 and 18 May 2018.

The workshop gathered almost 30 organisations, from the Netherlands, from the Atlantic Area and from European programs and associations. It was an interesting moment for all participants: experiences were exchanged with Dutch organisations involved, such as Port State Control, regarding the practical application of the Ballast Water Management Convention, as well as with companies and universities having worked with Damen during the development and certification phases of the "InvaSave" system. The InvaSave system is the world's first fully certified, port-based, solution for the discharge and treatment of Ballast Water according to the D2 standard, and as such, is very relevant to the Project's interests.

The Consortium presented an overview of the studies engaged in the five topics covered by the Project (i.e., Technologies, Environment/Risk Assessment, Economy and Regulations) and exchanged views and positions on the next steps. Blue Port Services addresses many questions raised on a European level concerning the improvement of port services and facilities for ships' effluents. The European Commission is finalising a review of its port reception facilities, defining the obligations of the parties involved (the ports, the member states, the shipping companies). Reaching consensus is not simple: such questions as "what does 'adequate services' mean"; and "what is the economic model sustaining these" are both crucially important and very hard to answer definitively.

[3] Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
[4] Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport



Managing ballast water is now a requirement, set forth by the Ballast Water Management Convention (BWMC), and understood by all parties involved. However, shipping companies' and signatory States' feedback shows that the implementation of the BWMC raises unforeseen problems. On-board management technologies (e.g., UV- or Chloride-based treatment systems) are nowhere near as reliable as expected (or perhaps hoped…) and their maintenance is more complex and expensive than foreseen. For signatory States, the practical application of the Convention through Port State Control and agencies responsible for the Water Framework Directive is still a question mark.

Blue Port Services is designed as a cooperation platform. The Consortium, and the national/European Tasks Forces gathered, will contribute to answering these and other series of questions.

Picture above- View from Damen offices overlooking the river Merwede in Gorinchem, the Netherlands.

Eco-Oil – a Port Reception Facilities' Contribution

Eco-Oil is a Portuguese Company that provides facilities for the reception and treatment of oily slops and sludge, as well as tank cleaning services for tankers. In the management of hazardous wastes, treatment, recovery, and its oil refinery, Eco-Oil applies the best available techniques, always looking for ways to reduce the environmental impact.

With the Atlantic Blue Ports Services Project, the initiative was taken to demonstrate technologies and build a business case for ballast water and slop oil treatments for Port Reception Facilities (PRF). As such, Eco-Oil wholeheartedly supports the Project.

Eco-Oil, as Euroshore Member, a private maritime terminal and Port Reception Facility (PRF) for oily wastes located in Setúbal, Portugal, will play an important role in this Project by hosting the InvaSave, by developing and performing the pilot tests in the ports of Setúbal and Lisbon. In Portuguese ports, there is no effective treatment for ballast water that complies with the D-2 standard for ballast water treatment as defined in the IMO Ballast Water Management Convention. Eco-Oil will also cooperate with the tests and specifications of the oil treatment process technology.

To prepare for the arrival of the InvaSave and for performing the planned pilot tests, Celia Pedro, Eco-Oil employee, visited Damen's premises in April 2018, where she received training about the InvaSave's operations in order to be prepared to carry out all demonstration. Besides this, the licenses to do the Demo, at Eco-oil's Port are all set, for the pilot test to be performed successfully in May of 2019.

The Importance of Ballast Water Management

Up until just a few years ago, almost nobody worried much about ballast water, used by vessels to stabilise themselves in the water. It's water after all; what difference does it make where it came from and where it went? This opinion has changed dramatically in recent years though. It has become apparent, through diligent research, that ballast water is a most effective vector for the global spread of aquatic species. Fish eggs, tiny larvae, algae, spores, etc. all make their way around the globe in ballast water. That still doesn't sound so bad. Until you learn that these stowaways sometimes multiply at astonishing rates and can take over an ecosystem, even destroying the old surrounding altogether, that is.

This is not purely academic debate: there are many examples of species having been introduced somewhere on the planet where they do not belong. A potential lack of natural predators, coupled with the Darwinian approach to species survival (adaptability to new surroundings) then do the rest. Examples include the Northern Pacific Seastar, the Asian Carp and the Lionfish. The latter, for example, can eat up to 30 times their own stomach volume in fish, destroying biodiversity and food (income) for humans in the process. Entire fishing industries have collapsed in the past because of this; people have even died from Cholera contracted from bacteria shown to have been imported by ballast water.

Picture right – Zebra Mussels are a notorious invasive species, having spread from its native habitat of the Caspian Sea and Black Sea to North America and large parts of Europe including Great Britain. They damage ecosystems by forcing out native species and damage ships, harbours and water treatment and power plants by multiplying on and inside pipes and blocking the flow of (cooling) water.

So, the countries of the world have decided to act. This act is summarized in the extensive Ballast Water Management Convention of 2004. And while putting cleaning systems on board of vessels (as the Convention calls for), there is an important step that has been left out. Because what do you do if you arrive in port, have to get rid of your ballast water but can't. This scenario is not unlikely: say your system has broken down mechanically or is clogged? Real-life experience has already shown this to happen all the time. One important pillar of the @BluePorts project then, is an extensive pilot programme to show the feasibility of such ballast water reception facilities. From the experience gathered, a list of recommendations will be compiled for the benefit of future reception facilities.