

HEI-Blue Accelerator Bootcamp: Empowering university students from the SWIO countries to drive blue economy development

Réduit, Mauritius – Monday 20th April, 2026. The HEI-Blue Accelerator Bootcamp was officially launched this morning, bringing together around thirty university students from Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles for an intensive, hands-on training programme dedicated to science, technology and innovation in the Blue Economy. Implemented by Cap Business Océan Indien, this initiative forms part of the HEI-Blue (Higher Education Institutions for the Blue Economy) project, co-financed by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education Programme.

The launching ceremony took place at the University of Mauritius, in the presence of Dr the Hon. Arvin Boolell, Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries, and Mr Moustapha Magumu, First Counsellor and Head of the Regional Trade Section of the EU delegation to Mauritius. This one-week bootcamp aims to support the next generation of ocean entrepreneurs in transforming their ideas into viable and impactful business models that address key regional challenges.

“It is essential that we bring young entrepreneurs closer to both the academic and business worlds. This bootcamp creates bridges that enable knowledge transfer, which is primordial to turning innovative ideas into sustainable business ventures. We are delighted to see these students taking a keen interest in the Blue Economy, a highly promising sector for entrepreneurs and startups in our region. This bootcamp is not just a learning experience; it is a launchpad,” said Virginie Lauret, Executive Director of Cap Business Océan Indien, in her opening remarks.

Over the course of the week, participants will benefit from a tailor-made programme designed to equip them with practical skills and tools to develop their business plans and entrepreneurial projects. Mentors and business coaches from regional and European universities will guide and assist students to refine their business ideas into community-based projects and create new business opportunities in areas such as marine biotechnology, renewable energy, IUU fishing through innovative solutions, including Artificial Intelligence.

“The launch of the HEI-Blue Bootcamp at the University of Mauritius marks a transformative moment for blue economy innovation across the South-West Indian Ocean. The strong support from Minister Dr. Arvin Boolell and EU First Counsellor Mr. Moustapha Magumu highlights the critical importance of government and international cooperation for sustainable ocean initiatives. This powerful endorsement inspires confidence in youth-led innovation” said Elen García, HEI-Blue Coordinator, University of Alicante.

The bootcamp will also include site visits to local private companies engaged in innovative Blue Economy solutions. Towards the end of the programme, the students will have a platform to pitch their projects to a jury panel, thereby strengthening participants’ ability to translate ideas into concrete ventures.

This bootcamp builds on a series of Training of Trainers sessions conducted in 2025, which focused on identifying emerging opportunities and developing innovative approaches within the Blue Economy sector. The HEI-Blue project aims to promote blue entrepreneurship in selected South-West Indian Ocean countries by transferring best practice approaches and facilitating innovative learning methodologies in entrepreneurship education. It also seeks to strengthen local innovation ecosystems by creating physical and virtual environments that foster collaboration among higher education institutions, public administrations, civil society and private sector actors working across the Blue Economy.

The HEI-Blue project is led by a consortium that brings together a network of partners comprising seven universities from the South-West Indian Ocean (SWIO) region, three European universities, and two macro-regional organisations, including Cap Business Océan Indien.

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About the HEI-Blue project

HEI-Blue aims to promote entrepreneurial education and strengthen University-Business cooperation for the sustainable development of the South-West Indian Ocean Region through blue entrepreneurship.

The wider objective has been broken down into two Specific Objectives:

- To promote blue entrepreneurship in selected South-West Indian Ocean countries by transferring best practice approaches and facilitating innovative learning methodologies in entrepreneurship education.
- To strengthen local innovation ecosystems by creating physical and virtual environments oriented to boost collaboration among Higher Education Institutions, public administration, civil society and business actors working across the Blue Economy.

HEI Blue has been developed on the basis of 4 fundamental pillars to support European knowledge transfer and capacity building to the South West Indian Ocean: It has been conceived using State-of-the-art methodologies and techniques; Addressing key regional priorities for the South West Indian Ocean ensures a significant impact on the partner institutions during the lifetime of the project and at a wider regional scale beyond the project duration; Ensures a significant impact on the institutions of the South West Indian Ocean; HEI Blue is strongly oriented to building capacity in and fostering the dialogue about the relevance of a sustainable Blue Economy in the South West Indian Ocean with the support of innovation and entrepreneurship from the younger generations.

For more information: www.hei-blue.eu

About Cap Business Océan Indien

Founded in 2005, Cap Business Océan Indien is a regional economic cooperation organisation between the six islands of the southwest Indian Ocean. As a platform, it brings together chambers of commerce and industry, as well as professional organisations from the Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mayotte, Réunion Island, and the Seychelles. Through its 2021-2026 Roadmap, the association works towards fairer, more resilient and sustainable economic development by facilitating cooperation among regional stakeholders, helping define shared priorities, and supporting private sector initiatives to address common challenges across the region.

For more information: www.capbusiness.io