

COST Action CA22122 “Rethinking the Blue Economy: Socio-Ecological Impacts and Opportunities” (RethinkBlue)

RethinkBlue Mentorship Programme

1. Purpose and objectives

We are pleased to present the Mentorship Programme of the “RethinkBlue” COST Action.

The purpose of the Mentorship Programme is to contribute to the Action’s goal by creating opportunities for knowledge exchange and collaboration, and by building competence and supporting the career development of researchers and experts.

The Mentorship Programme will

- Provide practical guidance and advice on conference participation and presentations;
- Train participants in academic writing, publishing and reviewing;
- Provide information and advice on career development, choices and opportunities in different European countries;
- Match mentees and mentors for 1:1 knowledge exchange and discussion related to specific research topics, methods, professional choices or other relevant topics related to academic life

The expected outcomes of the Mentorship Programme include:

- 1:1 mentoring for researchers;
- Organization of one conference session and paper development workshop per year;
- A series of video interviews with senior scholars about their work and careers;
- Publication of one edited volume or special issue in an international, peer-reviewed journal;
- Organization of webinars on topics related to academic writing, publishing, reviewing, career development, etc.

The “RethinkBlue” Mentorship Programme will consist of several types of activities:

- 1:1 meetings between mentor-mentee pairs
- Joint publication project
- Annual group activities
- Webinars and other events
- RethinkBlue Early Career Researchers’ (ECR) Forum

2. Meetings (1:1) between mentor-mentee pairs

The 1:1 mentoring provides the opportunity for mentor-mentee pairs to discuss questions related to different aspects of research, publishing and academic life. Mentors and mentees who are interested in participating are matched at the start of each academic year and will meet about 4-5 times during the academic year. There will be a new “intake” each year.

2.1. Focus of the 1:1 mentoring

The specific focus of the mentoring relationship will be decided by each mentor-mentee pair. Relevant areas include the following:

- Career development and professional choices
- Discussion of research topics of shared interest
- Advice regarding research (e.g., framing research questions; research design and methods)
- Advice regarding publishing
- Advice regarding funding applications

2.2. Start, end and duration for each cohort

- Duration: about 6 months
- Start: around October
- End: around May

2.3. Start of the programme and mentoring process

- Mentor-mentee pairs are formed each year in October, based on expressions of interest received
- Training sessions for mentors and mentees
- Matched mentors and mentees have their first virtual meeting before the end of November. At their first meeting, the mentor-mentee pair discusses their mutual expectations and complete the Mentoring Agreement.
- Mentors and mentees commit to meeting at least 4-5 times. Meetings will be virtual or face-to-face (e.g., in connection with conferences or other events where both the mentor and the mentee attend).
- The programme ends with a joint virtual meeting in May to share insights, feedback, and evaluate the programme

2.4. Number of participants

The number of pairs that will be formed each year depends on the number of individuals interested in participating as mentors / mentees.

2.5. Eligibility criteria – mentees

- Member of one (or more) of the Action’s Working Groups at the start of the programme.
- At least an MA degree
- Demonstrate an interest in 1:1 mentoring through their letter of motivation
- Please note that the working language for the programme is English; hence a sufficient level of English is required. 1:1 meetings can be in any language chosen by mentor and mentee.

2.6. Eligibility criteria – mentors

- PhD degree in a relevant discipline or extensive applied professional experience related to one or more areas of the Blue Economy

- Demonstrate an interest in 1:1 mentoring through their letter of motivation
- Member of one (or more) of the Action's Working Groups at the start of the programme.
- Please note that the working language for the programme is English; hence a sufficient level of English is required. 1:1 meetings can be in any language chosen by mentor and mentee.

2.7. Selection process

- Expressions of interest are submitted by completing an online form, by the deadline specified in the call for expressions of interest.
- The Mentorship Team will match mentors and mentees based on interests and other relevant information they provide. Matches between individuals from the same university will be avoided.
- Matched mentors and mentees will be notified by email.

Relevant points for the application:

- Motivation for participating
- Mentees: what are you interested in / what kind support are you looking for, and other info that would be relevant for matching with a mentor
- Mentors: what are your main interests / what kind of support would you be able to offer, and other info that would be relevant for matching with a mentee
- Keywords regarding discipline / thematic area of expertise
- Mentors: Keywords regarding expertise in research methods (i.e. which methods would you be able to teach / advise on)
- Preference for being matched with someone in different / same country
- Language skills in English and (if applicable) other languages
- Language preferences for the 1:1 meetings
- Institutional affiliation: current, and (if different) last 5 years
- Any other comments about preferences / wishes

3. Joint publication project

The purpose of this activity is to enhance participants' skills in academic writing, publishing and reviewing. Starting in Year 2, interested mentees and mentors will collaborate on a joint publication project.

3.1. Format

- Online meetings for coordination
- Small group meetings for feedback and discussion of individual articles / chapters
- One writing retreat (Training School) in Year 3 in connection with the mid-term conference (depending on the budget being available)
- Mentors and editors will guide mentees through the process and provide constructive feedback.

3.2. Outcome

The outcome will be an edited book or (if participants' research topics are sufficiently similar) a special issue in an international journal, which will be part of the deliverables of the Action. Each mentee will be (co)-author of an open access chapter in the edited book or an open access journal article that will be submitted to a special issue. Publication is subject to peer review.

Depending on the number of interested participants and their topics, chapters/articles may be single-authored, written by several mentees together, or co-authored with a mentor.

3.3. Eligibility - mentees

- Member of one (or more) of the Action's Working Groups at the start of the activity.
- At least an MA degree
- Abstract or outline of a chapter / article on a topic that is relevant to the Action
- Demonstrate an interest in participating through their letter of motivation
- Please note that the publication will be in English, hence a sufficient level of English is required.

3.4. Eligibility - mentors

- Member of one (or more) of the Action's Working Groups at the start of the activity.
- PhD degree in a relevant discipline
- Demonstrate experience in publishing through CV
- Demonstrate an interest in participating as mentor through their letter of motivation
- Good knowledge of English

3.5. Selection process

- Expressions of interest are submitted by completing an online form, by the deadline specified in the call for expressions of interest.
- The Mentorship Team will select participants based on the expression of interest. Additional mentors may be approached by the Team based on the topics proposed by mentees.

4. Annual group activities

The Mentorship programme includes several online and face-to-face group activities, which will be organized each year.

4.1. "Rethinking the Blue Economy: New voice & perspectives" - Conference session with presentation & paper development workshop (once a year)

This activity involves the organization of a conference session and a paper development workshop.

Purpose:

1. Give mentees guidance for conference participation and enhance their presentation skills
2. Give mentees the opportunity to present at their work at international conferences
3. Give mentees the opportunity to get constructive feedback on their work from senior researchers in the field
4. Provide opportunities for knowledge exchange, capacity building, networking, and career development of Action members

Conference session(s)

- Mentees will present their work at the conference in one or more sessions, depending on the number of presentations. Presentations will be in English.
- Senior researchers will act as discussants.

- The best presentation will receive the “RethinkBlue” Award for “Best Presentation”

Paper development workshop

- Mentees will be divided into small groups of 2-4 persons. Each group will be led by one or two senior researchers.
- Mentees will share their full paper prior to the conference with the other participants in their group. Everyone is expected to read and be ready to comment on each of the other papers. Papers and feedback will be in English.
- At the conference, each group will meet for ca 2-2.5 hours, where each paper will be discussed and where participants will give constructive feedback.

Conference

- Year 2: MARE 2025, or a similar large international conference where many Action members attend
- Year 3: the RethinkBlue mid-term conference
- Year 4: the RethinkBlue final conference

Funding

Participants (mentors and mentees) will receive funding to support their participation.

- Year 2: to be eligible for funding, this will be a one-day “Training School”, which will be at the same time as the conference
- Year 3: this will be funded as part of our Action’s “mid-term conference”
- Year 4: this will be funded as part of our Action’s “final conference”

Participants

- Max 15 mentees / trainees, depending on the number of conference sessions and budget
- 3-5 “conference mentors” or trainers

Eligibility - mentees

- Member of one (or more) of the Action’s Working Groups at the start of the activity.
- At least an MA degree
- Abstract or outline of presentation / article on a topic that is relevant to the Action
- Demonstrate an interest in participating through their letter of motivation
- Please note that the presentation and paper development workshop will be in English, hence a sufficient level of English is required.

Eligibility - mentors

- Member of one (or more) of the Action’s Working Groups at the start of the activity.
- PhD degree in a relevant discipline
- Demonstrate experience in publishing through CV
- Demonstrate an interest in participating as mentor through their letter of motivation
- Good knowledge of English

Application

- Each year, expressions of interest are submitted by completing an online form, by the deadline specified in the call for expressions of interest.
- The Mentorship Team will select participants based on the expression of interest.

4.2. Video interviews with senior scholars

Mentees work in a team to identify senior scholars in areas relevant to the “RethinkBlue” Action who they would like to interview about their work, their career, and any tips they might have for Action participants.

The purpose is to connect Action participants with senior scholars in the field, and to get useful tips and advice for their own research and careers.

With the permission of the interviewees and the support of the Science Communication Team, the interviews will be made into short videos that can be shared on the Action website.

The interviews are planned and conducted by the participants. One member of the Mentorship Team and the Action’s Science Communication team will be able to provide support and advice.

Participants

- Max 10 participants per year

Eligibility

- Member of one (or more) of the Action’s Working Groups at the start of the activity.
- At least an MA degree
- Demonstrate an interest in participating through their letter of motivation
- Please note that the interviews and the working language during activities will be English, hence a sufficient level of English is required.

Application

- Each year, expressions of interest are submitted by completing an online form, by the deadline specified in the call for expressions of interest.
- The Mentorship Team will select participants based on the expression of interest.

5. Webinars and events

In addition to group activities, the Mentorship Programme comprises webinars and other (online) events. The events will be planned and organized by the Mentorship Team.

The following list includes ideas for potential events, as suggestions for the Mentorship Team:

- Webinar on “Publishing in academic journals”
- Webinar on “Journal selection and article submission”
- Webinar on “Responding to reviewers”
- Webinar on “Reviewing”, i.e. best practices and tips when reviewing for a journal
- Webinars on “Careers in Europe”, to share information that will be useful for researchers considering (or curious about) career opportunities in other countries

With the permission of the presenters, the presentation parts of these webinars will be recorded and shared on the Action’s website.

Participants:

- Open to all Action members who are interested
- Invitations will be sent to all Action members through e-COST.

6. RethinkBlue Early Career Researchers' (ECR) Forum

The purpose of this activity is to provide a forum for the RethinkBlue Action's early career researchers to present their work, give constructive feedback to each other, and discuss topics of joint interest in an informal, supportive and inclusive setting.

Note: "Early career researchers" here refers to PhD students, post docs, and other researchers and innovators at the early stages of their career. There is no age limit.

At the start of each academic year, an invitation will be sent to all RethinkBlue Action members, inviting early career researchers to join the Forum if they are interested.

The ECR Forum will involve regular virtual meetings, for instance every 2 months. The meetings will be organized by participants. At the first meeting, participants will elect a ECR Forum coordinator (or a small team of coordinators) to organize activities. Participants will decide on the agenda / topics to be discussed at each meeting, as well as the frequency of meetings.

The coordinator(s) will liaise with the Science Communication team to announce the meetings, and to discuss the content that the group may contribute to the Action's website.

6.1. Participants

The meetings are intended for early career researchers. They will be open to all early career researchers who are members of a WG in the RethinkBlue Action.

- If they wish, participants may decide to invite senior scholars as discussants for the presentation of a participant or as speakers at a particular meeting.
- Meeting invitations should be sent via e-COST as far as possible (with support from the Grant Holder Manager).

Depending on the number of individuals who are interested, participants may decide to split into subgroups (e.g., around 10 persons per group) for all or some of the meetings. In that case, each subgroup would nominate a coordinator who will liaise with the ECR Forum Coordinator(s).

7. Programme evaluation

Participants in the Mentorship Programme (1:1 mentoring, activities and events) will be asked to evaluate and provide feedback on the programme.

The evaluation will take place at the end of the activity / event, and will be organized by those who organize the activity event. The results will be shared with participants, the Mentorship Team, the Core Group and the MC.

The Mentorship Team will ensure that feedback from participant evaluations is taken into consideration when planning future activities and events for the Mentorship Programme.

8. Organization

Mentorship Team

- The Mentorship Team leads the implementation of the Mentorship Programme. Some of the work on particular activities may be delegated to subgroups and involve additional

Action members. The Mentorship Team will support the work of these subgroups to ensure a successful implementation of the Mentorship Programme.

- Ideally, the Mentorship Team should consist of about 5-6 members. It should include at least one Core Group Member and at least one member from the Science Communication team.

Organization of activities and events

- Each year, the Mentorship Team will invite all Action members to express their interest in participating in the organization of activities and events. The Mentorship Team will review expressions of interest, and form teams for the organization of particular events.
- The Mentorship Team will ensure that feedback from participant evaluations and the experiences of the organizers are used to review activities and events and make changes if/as required.
- The Mentorship Team can decide to cancel an activity if the level of interest is too low (e.g., if only few applications are received).
- The Mentorship Team can propose additional activities. Where activities involve funding, permission from the MC or (where this power is delegated) from the Core Group is required and should be obtained prior to the start of the budget year where the activity will take place.

The Mentorship Team will regularly report about the planning and implementation of activities and events to the Core Group and the Action's MC.

Annex

Mentorship Agreement

COST Action CA22122 “Rethinking the Blue Economy: Socio-Ecological Impacts and Opportunities” (RethinkBlue)

RethinkBlue Mentorship Agreement

[Please fill in the form together and save a copy for yourselves for reference.]

As mentor and mentee, we understand that we are voluntarily entering into a mentoring relationship from which we expect mutual respect and benefit. We both wish that this relationship is a rewarding and enriching experience, with our time together focused on the professional/academic development of the mentee. With this in mind, we agree upon the terms and conditions of our relationship as outlined in this agreement.

Goals

The mentor and mentee agree on goals that they want to achieve as parts of their mentoring relationship.

Examples of such goals could be: to exchange experience and knowledge about a particular topic or method; to support the mentee in the submission of a paper to a journal, or in the preparation of a funding application; etc.

We wish to...	To accomplish this, we will...

Privacy

Mentors and mentees will keep information shared through the mentoring relationship private.

Frequency of Meetings

As part of the mentoring programme, over the next six months we will attempt to meet time(s) for hour(s). If we cannot attend a scheduled meeting, we agree to notify one another in advance.

Our next meeting will be on (date / time).

No-Fault Termination

We are committed to frequent, open, and honest communication over the course of our mentoring relationship. We will discuss and attempt to resolve any potential conflicts if/when they arise. However, if one of us needs to terminate the relationship for any reason, we agree to abide by one another's decision.

Signatures

Mentee name:

Mentee signature:

Date:

Mentor name:

Mentor signature:

Date: