01 SEALabHaus: An Atlantic Laboratory

Maritime heritage, architecture, ecological systems and community life converge across Atlantic regions, shaping coastal territories that face shared challenges and opportunities. This exploration is guided by five complementary perspectives: architecture of the sea, sustainability, blue tourism, art and culture, and professionalisation and training. Inspired by the principles of beauty, sustainability, and togetherness of the New European Bauhaus, the Laboratory fosters collaboration, cross-regional learning, participatory exchange, and territorial experimentation, creating pathways towards more inclusive, resilient, and culturally rooted coastal futures.

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SEALabHaus

An Atlantic Laboratory

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5 Preface
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11 The New Bauhaus Laboratory of the Atlantic Area
UDC

19 I. Architectures of the Sea
UDC

39 II. Sea and Sustainability
UP

61 III. Blue Tourism and Culture
UBS

79 IV. Art and Culture
ULPGC

101 V. Professionalisation and Training
SETU

123 SEALab: A Digital Gateway to the Laboratory
Xunta de Galicia

129 Final Considerations: A Compass Towards Shared Futures
UDC

Óscar Fuertes Dopico
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Preface

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The New Bauhaus Laboratory of the Atlantic Area is a structured and methodologically robust research platform that brings together five Atlantic regions to examine their coastal territories through an integrated architectural, territorial, and heritage-based lens. Rather than limiting itself to analytical or quantitative assessments, this initiative promotes a comprehensive understanding of maritime landscapes by addressing their cultural, spatial, and constructive dimensions. Beyond its nature as a European cooperation project, it works as an advanced framework for studying coastal heritage, enabling a critical analysis of how traditional maritime practices, infrastructural systems, and long-standing seaborne economies have shaped and continue to influence the architectural configuration and spatial identity of Atlantic coastal environments.

From the beginning, I felt that this Laboratory had the potential to bring people together in a way that few academic structures can. Through our transnational dialogue, I have witnessed diverse Atlantic contexts, with their different rhythms, cultures, and geographies, meeting on equal terms and learning from one another. Coordinating these exchanges has strengthened my belief in the value of comparative research and in the transformative potential of shared knowledge.

In addition, leading this project as principal investigator at SEALabHaus has represented a significant step forward in my academic career, reinforcing my commitment to architecture-oriented research grounded in maritime heritage and affirming the coastal domain as the context in which my scholarly work and professional identity acquire their greatest depth and relevance.

Throughout this process, what has moved me most is seeing how academic research can coexist so naturally with the knowledge of maritime artisans, community memories, and artistic expression. In this project, I have come to experience research not as a distant analytical exercise, but as a living process—one enriched by listening to the sea, engaging with the people who have shaped coastal territories for generations, and allowing artistic and cultural narratives to expand our understanding of place.

The five perspectives of the Laboratory—architecture, sustainability, blue tourism, art and culture, and professionalization and training—have not only provided the project with structure; they have also reshaped the way I think about the Atlantic territory. Each of them has taught

me something new: how architecture can honor coastal identity; how sustainability must be grounded in ecological responsibility; how tourism can become regenerative; how cultural memory can illuminate our futures; and how traditional knowledge must be preserved through meaningful training pathways. Perhaps what I value most about this Laboratory is that it focuses not only on outcomes but also on processes: the forums, the shared tools, and the careful work of testing and adapting ideas across regions. As principal investigator, I have experienced first-hand how knowledge travels and transforms along the way, gaining relevance when it returns to the communities that inspired it.

This publication is structured as a series of independent thematic units developed within the framework of the project *SEALabHaus: The New Bauhaus Laboratory of the Atlantic Area*. While all contributions are aligned with the Laboratory's conceptual orientation and its five research perspectives mentioned above, each chapter is autonomous, with its own authorship and specific content, including analyses, case studies, and reflections.

The book can therefore be approached in two complementary ways: as a coherent transnational whole guided by the Laboratory's perspectives, or as a set of self-contained chapters that can be read independently. Each chapter documents a specific forum experience, highlighting good practices, participatory insights, and shared lessons across the Atlantic regions.

The opening chapter establishes the methodological and editorial framework, presenting the Laboratory as an interregional platform and defining the role of the forums as spaces for experimentation, exchange, and knowledge transfer. The subsequent chapters offer distinct yet complementary outcomes. Overall, the publication seeks to balance diversity and coherence, reflecting the transnational nature of the research while clearly defining the scope and authorship of each contribution.

This project has reaffirmed my belief that maritime heritage is not simply a memory of the past, but a living compass for the future. Furthermore, it marks a decisive milestone in my career, reinforcing my commitment to collaborative, territorially grounded research that remains closely connected—both intellectually and emotionally—to the people and landscapes it seeks to serve.

Finally, none of this work would have been possible without the extraordinary team at the University of A Coruña and the unwavering commitment of all project partners across the Atlantic area. Their expertise, generosity, and collaborative spirit have shaped every stage of the Laboratory, transforming a shared vision into a living collective achievement. This publication thus stands not only as a research output, but also as a testament to what can be achieved through collaboration, shared knowledge, and a sustained commitment to coastal territories and their communities.

UDC
University of A Coruña

The New Bauhaus Laboratory of the Atlantic Area

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The New Bauhaus Laboratory of the Atlantic Area, led by the University of A Coruña, is a transnational initiative that studies coastal territories through the interrelation of maritime heritage, community life, and tourism. Bringing together five Atlantic regions, the Laboratory establishes a common framework for understanding the unique features of each area and the factors that influence the Atlantic coastline as a whole.

Structured around five complementary perspectives—architecture, sustainability, blue tourism, art and culture, and professional development and training—the Laboratory highlights the interconnection between these fields in creating resilient, culturally rich coastal environments, rather than treating them as separate disciplines. By integrating these perspectives, the Laboratory adopts a multidimensional approach to coastal development. This approach goes beyond sector-specific interventions and aims to promote common strategies embedded in the territory that address to the complexities of Atlantic coastal environments.

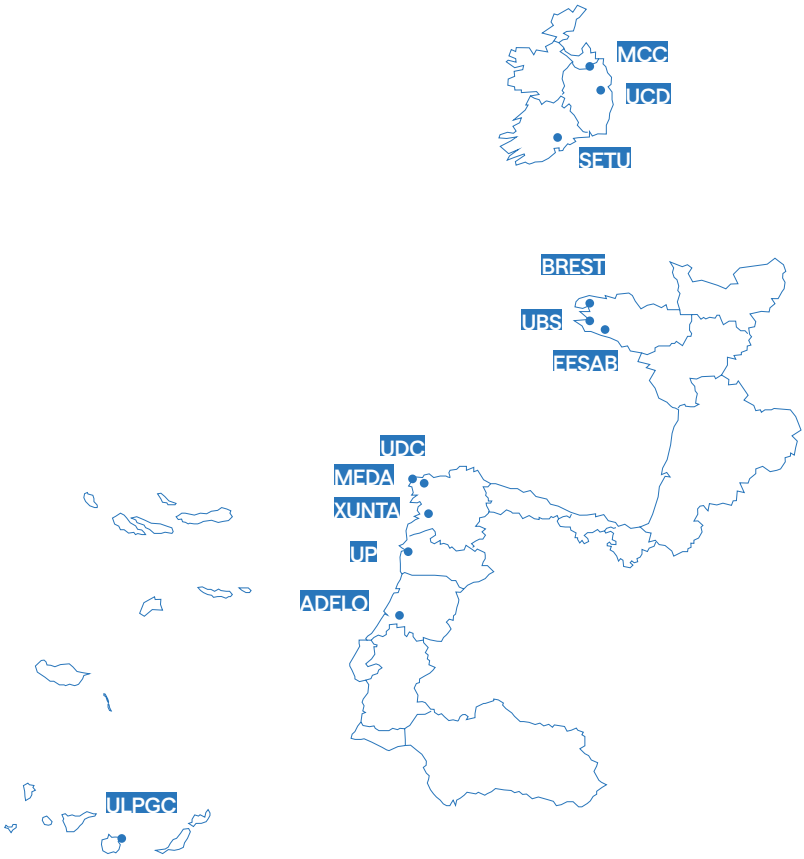
Laboratory Perspectives: A Conceptual Framework

Perspective	Focus	Key concepts
❶ Architecture	Coastal spatial practices	Architectures of the sea, place-based design, identity and memory, and adaptive environments
❷ Sustainability	Ecological and territorial balance	Climate adaptation, low-impact practices, resilience, and inclusive development.
❸ Blue Tourism	Regenerative coastal economies	Sustainable tourism, local identity, environmental responsibility, and community benefit.
❹ Art and Culture	Cultural interpretation of the sea	Narratives, creative practices, coastal identity, and cultural memory
❺ Professionalisation and Training	Knowledge transmission and skills	Traditional crafts, capacity-building, learning pathways, and knowledge exchange.

At its core, the Laboratory works as a platform that facilitates the exchange of ideas between different Atlantic regions. This transnational collaboration promotes a comparative understanding of these contexts and helps identify common challenges, such as environmental pressures, intense tourism, and preserving coastal identity. By providing a shared framework for addressing these issues, the Laboratory encourages coordinated responses while remaining attentive to local circumstances.

The initiative brings together a diverse range of stakeholders, including architects, artisans, researchers, cultural practitioners, public authorities, and tourism professionals, in a collaborative environment that fosters interdisciplinary and intersectoral dialogue. This structure enables the convergence of technical knowledge, lived experience and cultural insight.

Universities: University College Dublin (UCD), South East Technological University (SETU), Université Bretagne Sud (UBS), École Européenne Supérieure d'Art de Bretagne (EESAB), Universidade da Coruña (UDC), Universidade do Porto (UP), Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC). **Local and regional public administrations:** Brest Métropole (BREST), Xunta de Galicia (XUNTA), Meath County Council (MCC). **Social economy entities:** MedAtlantia (MEDA), Associação de Desenvolvimento Local da Bairrada e Mondego (ADELO).



Five Regions — One Vision

Country	Region	Territorial condition	Contribution to the Laboratory
Spain	Galicia	Continental Atlantic	● Maritime heritage
			● Productive coastal landscapes
			● Community-based practices
Portugal	North and Central Regions	Continental Atlantic	● Coastal management
			● Sustainability strategies
			● Atlantic systems
France	Brittany	Continental Atlantic	● Maritime identity
			● Cultural landscapes
			● Blue tourism models
Spain	Canary Islands	Insular Atlantic	● Island dynamics
			● Cultural expression
			● Tourism innovation
Ireland	Leinster, Munster	Insular Atlantic	● Coastal resilience
			● Training and skills
			● Community engagement

The Laboratory's conceptual approach is underpinned by the core principles of The New European Bauhaus: *beautiful, sustainable,* and *together*. Beauty is understood as the spatial and cultural characteristics of coastal landscapes; sustainability implies a balance between ecological systems and human activity; and togetherness refers to inclusion, that is, the active participation of communities in shaping their own futures. These values guide the Laboratory's strategic orientation and methodological development.

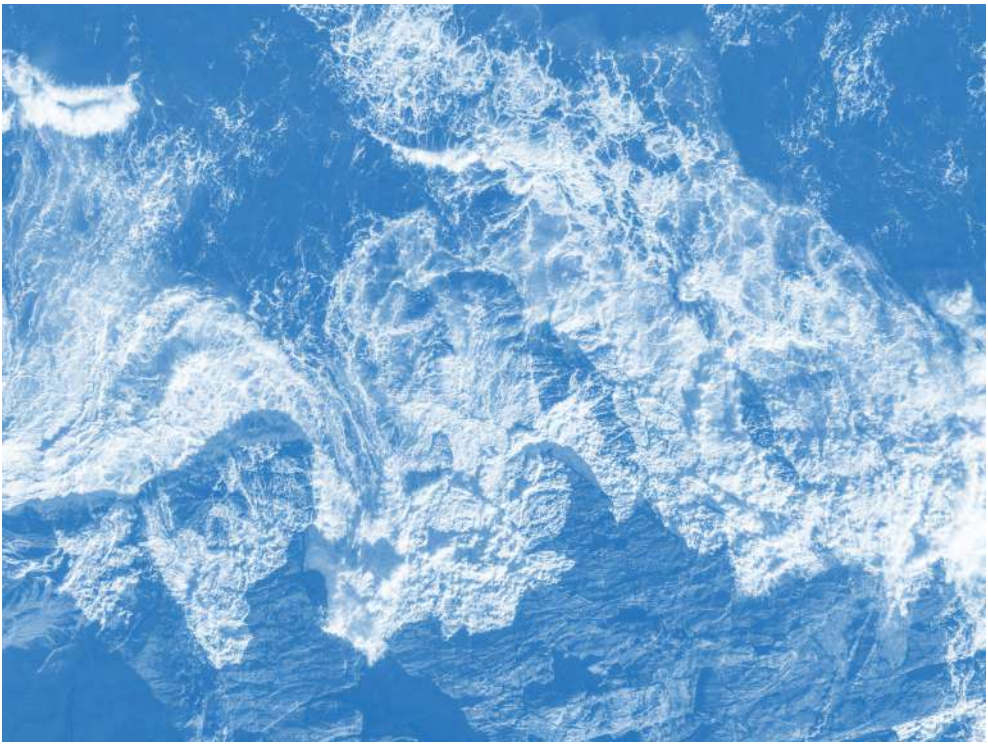
The Laboratory places particular emphasis on working processes. Through forums, collaborative sessions, and practical tools, it facilitates testing, adaptation, and transfer of knowledge between regions. Approaches developed in one context are critically examined and reinterpreted in others to support innovation based on real territorial conditions.

FIVE TRANSNATIONAL FORUMS

Between 2024 and 2025, five transnational forums were held across the participating regions. These gatherings laid the foundations for the Laboratory by fostering collaboration, testing ideas, and defining shared priorities for sustainable, community-centred blue tourism. Through this collective effort, the Laboratory has helped to rethink and revitalise the coastal tourism ecosystem, establishing heritage, architecture, culture, and the environment as vital components of resilience and well-being in coastal communities.

This publication summarises the key lessons, methodologies, and perspectives that emerged from these events.

Topic and Location	Summary
❶ **Architecture**	The inaugural forum examined ways in which architectural
A Coruña, Spain	approaches can contribute to the revitalisation of coastal areas.
	Discussions focused on design solutions that integrate harmo-
	niously with natural landscapes and strengthen the link between
	communities, maritime heritage, and tourism infrastructure.
❷ **Sea and Sustainability**	This forum, held in Portugal, addressed environmental challenges
Porto, Portugal	affecting coastal territories, highlighting strategies for ecological
	transition, nature-based solutions, and long-term sustainability
	within the scheme of blue tourism practices.
❸ **Blue Tourism**	The Brittany forum examined new blue tourism models based
Vannes, France	on maritime culture, environmental responsibility, and circularity.
	Participants discussed how tourism can support the resilience of
	coastal communities while protecting marine ecosystems.
❹ **Art and Culture**	This event showcased the creative potential of island territories,
Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain	emphasising art, cultural expression, and local narratives as tools
	to enrich tourism experiences, diversify local economies, and
	reinforce identity in coastal communities.
❺ **Professionalisation and Training**	The final forum focused on building skills and capacities for
Waterford, Ireland	sustainable tourism. It emphasised the importance of preserving
	maritime knowledge, supporting traditional crafts, and promoting
	training pathways that prepare communities for innovation in the
	blue economy.



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I. Architectures of the Sea

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1. INTRODUCTION

❶ I Transnational Forum: Architectures of the Sea, A Coruña, 14 and 15 May 2024, hosted by UDC.
← Go back to "Laboratory Perspectives and Forums"

The I Transnational Forum, Architectures of the Sea, was hosted by the University of A Coruña (UDC), coinciding with the inaugural Steering Committee Meeting, held on 13 May. The overarching concept that brought the forum's discussions together was the exchange of examples concerning the architectures of the sea. These sea constructions were defined as architectural pieces situated on the coastline, shaped by the traditions and trades of the sea, and integrated into the surrounding landscape and maritime culture. The forum's first focus was on sharing examples of these architectures found on the Galician coast. The examples provided were architectures that had been adapted to the current social context to ensure their preservation. This has entailed finding new uses to face the decline in sea trades and the growth of the tourism industry. The objective was to expand the scope to include similar examples of sea architecture in other areas of the Spanish peninsular Atlantic coast.

2. THEORETICAL CONTENT

As previously stated, the I Transnational Forum showcased good practices illustrating architectures of the sea. The basis for this forum was the search for examples of intervention in diverse building types and spaces, with a view to including a range of uses and functions. The initial presentation featured examples from the Galician territory and was followed by others drawn from various points across the Spanish coastal border. The architects responsible for the interventions on the heritage sites provided an explanation of the context, the landscape, and the architectural concept.

● **Recovery of the port edge** — Porto do Son, Galicia — 2022

● **Fishermen's huts** — Quilmas, Galicia — 1997

CREUSeCARRASCO

Juan Creus, Covadonga Carrasco





● **Rehabilitation of the traditional shipyard Ciprián** — Outes, Galicia — 2023

Fuertes-Penedo

Óscar Fuertes, Iago Fernández Penedo



● **Rehabilitation of the old salting factory** — Aldán, Galicia — 2000

Alfonso Penela



● **Restoration of fishermen's huts in the Port of Mutriku** — Mutriku, Basque Country — 2023

XLARK architects

Miriam Varela, Santi Lorenzo



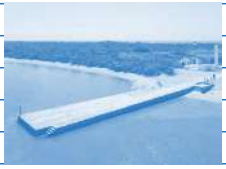
● **Recovery of the Cetárea** — Tapia de Casariego, Asturias — 2010

Jovino Martínez Sierra



● **Landscape interventions at the Almadraba de Nueva Umbría** — Lepe, Andalucía — 2022

Sol89. Juanjo López



This diverse set of architectures is analysed below from two perspectives. Initially, their genesis as spaces dedicated to the maritime production sector is reflected upon. Then, they are categorised according to their proposed new uses, current relationships with the space and surrounding landscape, and their production from a contemporary perspective.

Original Building and Space Typologies

The presented architectural projects include interventions in various spaces and buildings, originally related to fishing. This section provides a critical overview of diverse typologies, beginning with buildings and subsequently examining open spaces.

Fisherman's huts are small structures built with materials available in the area and with simple construction techniques. They are usually located in harbours or along the coast, close to sheltered areas suitable for mooring boats. Their purpose is to house and protect tools, fishing equipment, or even small boats. Two examples of fishermen's huts were presented during the forum. The first, in Quilmas (Galicia), a steep, rocky coastline far from the urban area, was described in detail by Juan Creus and Covadonga Carrasco. The huts built in this natural harbour have granite walls, small windows, and a door large enough for a small rowing boat to enter. The boat's size determines the width of the hut. The roof is made of wood and covered with tiles. The following example, presented by Miriam Varela and Santi Alonso from XLark Architecture and Urban Design Studio in Mutriku (Basque Country), has the same original functionality but is materialised in a very different way. Mutriku is a fishing village located in a well-sheltered harbour, where wooden fishing huts are built using the same decorative motifs and colours as the boats. In this case, they are smaller structures, only for tools, nets, fishing gear, etc., stacked on the edges of the harbour.

Another example refers to the salting factories in Galicia that were developed at the end of the 19th century in locations near coastal fish unloading docks. These factories exhibited a distinctive building typology, characterised by a central courtyard surrounded by stone-walled buildings with wooden floors and roofs. The ground floor comprised an open area, within which were granite cubes measuring approximately 2.5 metres on a side and around 2 metres in depth. These cubes served as a salting deposit,

● Based in A Coruña, **CREUSeCARRASCO** has received numerous architectural awards and their work is widely published in different media. They received the Ar+d Emerging Architecture Award (Architectural Review and RIBA) and were nominated for the Mies van der Rohe Award and the European Public Space Award.

● Founded in 2006, **XLARK** is a multidisciplinary group of professionals who, over the years, have developed a wide range of architectural projects of diverse nature and type, from small-scale to large-scale projects.

with the process aided by presses. The Aldán factory, for instance, is located in an area that was previously home to a number of similar structures, all used for the same purpose and situated in proximity to the sea. During the restoration process, as Alfonso Penela presented, the main building was preserved. It features the distinctive salting deposits and some auxiliary structures that are integrated into the complex. However, the relationship with the sea had already been altered by the expansion of the port, which has led to a filling that has shifted the coastline.

A traditional shipyard is a construction for building wooden ships. These buildings share a number of common characteristics, including their location on a platform built for riverside carpenters to work, with direct access to the sea via a ramp. They typically comprise a large main building and smaller attached structures. They are built out of wood using techniques from shipbuilding, with wooden enclosures that allow them to be removed and connected to the surrounding open space. The Ciprián shipyard in Outes (Galicia) represents a paradigmatic example of this type of building, many of which have already disappeared. Indeed, at the outset of the rehabilitation process, as Óscar Fuertes and Iago Fernández Penedo explained, the shipyard was in a state of advanced disrepair, having fallen into a state of severe neglect. However, through the implementation of an appropriate rehabilitation project, the original architectural character of the shipyard has been preserved, with a small portion of the building remaining closed and a large covered atrium being open and integrated with the surrounding landscape. This integration allows for the natural terrestrial and marine environments to be experienced within the shipyard.

The Almadraba constitutes a traditional site for the catch and processing of red tuna. Its location along the migratory routes of these fish is a key aspect of its historical and cultural significance. Although tuna fishing in the Lepe area (Andalucía) has been documented since the sixteenth century, the Almadraba was not constructed until the beginning of the twentieth century and has remained operational for approximately 40 years. The complex comprises three distinct areas: a barracks district where workers temporarily lived, the captain's residence, and a group of industrial and storage buildings connected to the sea in the most protected section of the river mouth. The restoration project, as explained by Juanjo López (Sol89), focuses

● **Alfonso Penela** has been an architect since 1981 and has run his own architecture studio in the city of Vigo since 1982, focusing mainly on design competitions and project development. He has taken partat least 85 competitions and won 45 first prizes as well as other honourable mentions. He was a professor at the University of A Coruña (UDC) from 1986 to 2023.

● **Fuertespenedo** is an architecture studio dedicated to design, architecture, and research, founded by Óscar Fuertes Dopico and Iago Fernández Penedo in Galicia in 2015. They received the XVI Spanish Biennial of Architecture and Urbanism Award (2023), XV Spanish Biennial of Architecture and Urbanism Award (2021), Young European Architects Award (2020), and the Rehabilitation Category Award at the XIX COAG Awards (2021).



Rehabilitation of the traditional shipyard Ciprián, Outes, 2023.
Fuertes-Penedo (Óscar Fuertes, Iago Fernández Penedo).
Photo: Ana Amado.

on the pier and a limited selection of symbolic industrial structures. However, only a few stones that belonged to the pier's location were preserved. The pier was rebuilt based on historical analysis and traditional construction techniques. The objective was to recover the industrial significance of the tuna fishing and processing process, thereby elucidating the heritage and ethnological legacy of an ancient fishing tradition that coexisted harmoniously with the coastline's landscape.

Cetáreas are traditional fish and shellfish nurseries situated in the open ocean. This protoindustrial activity is based on the premise that the surrounding environment allows for the creation of interlocking rock walls that form pools used to cultivate fish and shellfish. It is important to note that these structures are not edifices in and of themselves, but rather modifications to the landscape that facilitate the domestication of fish. Similarly, port installations represent modifications to the coastal edge. They facilitate the mooring of vessels in protected environments in proximity to urban centres and enabling the loading and unloading of people and goods. Initially, the relationship between the urban layout of fishing villages and the sea was direct; however, the expansion of port facilities and the construction of landfills resulted in a disconnection, as exemplified by Porto do Son (Galicia).

New Ways of Using and Relating to Landscape

In each of the projects presented, a current perspective on the rehabilitation of built heritage enables the creation of new uses and relationships within the landscape. This analysis will now examine these new relations and discuss their implications.

Some of the projects presented at the forum entail implementing interventions in specific elements of various typologies related to the maritime built heritage. This results in the transformation of the original structures into buildings for private use. An example of this approach is the fishermen's hut in Quilmas, which has been converted into a residential holiday refuge without compromising the formal integrity of the original structure. In order to achieve this, a skylight is installed on the roof ridge to allow more light in than entered the narrow apertures in the façade. Furthermore, renewable energy supply methods are employed. This approach is also evident in the restoration of the salting factory in Aldán, which has been converted

● **SOL89 (María González and Juanjo López de la Cruz)** is a studio that combines teaching, research, and professional practice. Their work has received numerous national and international awards. They have been associate professors in the Department of Projects at the School of Architecture of Seville since 2005. Together with Ángel Martínez, they were the curators of the 16th Spanish Architecture and Urbanism Biennial.



Landscape interventions of the Almadraba de Nueva Umbría, 2022.
Sol89 (María González and Juanjo López de la Cruz). Photo: Fernando Alda.

into a hotel that respects the original building. In addition, the structure is reinterpreted, and new elements are introduced, including boxes that differ from those previously in situ.

In contrast, other projects presented at the forum focused on implementing interventions for public use. The traditional Ciprián shipyard has been restored in accordance with the original techniques, materials, and character of the building. This means, consequently, that the modest enclosed area now serves as a museum of shipbuilding, while the extensive covered outdoor area has been preserved as a versatile space capable of hosting events or facilitating the eventual recovery of traditional boat-building techniques. Furthermore, the structure serves as a prominent feature within the surrounding landscape, thereby enhancing the coastal path. In this regard, the intervention of the Almadraba is analogous. It is worth noting that none of the rehabilitated structures have been assigned a new use. Instead, they have been integrated into the landscape to preserve the entire complex and prevent its complete destruction from abandonment. Furthermore,



Recovery of the port edge of Porto do Son, 2022. CREUSeCARRASCO + rvr arquitectos. Photo: Luis Díaz Díaz.

the emphasis of the project on the landscape is reinforced by the construction of a pedestrian path that connects the two banks (ocean and river mouth). The Mutriku fishermen's huts, on a smaller scale, have also been rehabilitated without any housing. Their symbolic and heritage value, along with their relocation within the port, serve to reactivate their historical value.

The intervention in the port of Porto do Son, by contrast, aims to restore structures, spatialities, and connections that have been eroded by the construction of landfills and the dominance of cars in the urban landscape. In this regard, vehicular traffic is separated from the façades of the urban core; the urban grid is continued until it meets the sea as it used to happen in the past; the structures of the drying sheds that used to be on the beach are incorporated into the new urban space as a landscaping and value-enhancing feature; and, finally, the waterfront promenade is extended beyond the urban centre, thereby establishing a connection with the entire coastal edge of the beach.

3. PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES

Within the framework of the I Transnational Forum, participatory activities were carried out with a dual objective, as explained further below. Two sessions were held on the first day of this forum at the Faculty of Architecture, University of A Coruña (UDC) by Femür, addressing two main fields of work: Reflection on the recovery of the Architectures of the Sea and its associated landscape, and the recovery of the Architectures of the Sea following the values of the New European Bauhaus.

● **Femür** is a specialist consultancy offering expertise in participatory methodologies, workshop facilitation, and collaborative knowledge production.

Reflection on the Recovery of the Architectures of the Sea and its Surrounding Landscape

The goal of this participatory activity was twofold: First, to facilitate networking among attendees; second, to generate ideas and discussion around the topic at hand.

The concept of *nesting* is a fundamental tenet of regenerative design. It aims to examine the potential for the recuperation of sea architecture in its surrounding environment. In this regard, the objective of this research is to elucidate the optimal relationship between the architectural entity and three axes: itself, its ecosystem, and the world. Three rounds of questions were conducted, and the ideas shared were collected and organised by topic as follows:

Approaches to Heritage Recovery. The recovery process should be approached with respect, ensuring that heritage is preserved and maintained to secure its survival, identity, and memory. Before taking action, it is essential to consider the intended use of this approach, and during implementation, the methodology must be robust and sustainable. Developing new solutions requires a balance between tradition and innovation, while anticipating maintenance needs is crucial. Whenever possible, local materials should be used and projects should be designed to address specific needs. Additionally, spaces should be reusable and adaptable to various disciplines.



Thinking About How to Use Heritage. The role of heritage must be connected to the production system in which it is embedded, promoting uses that value local imagination and intangible heritage. It is essential to define uses



Official opening of the Transnational Forum on Architectures of the Sea, School of Architecture of A Coruña. Photo: Tono Mejuto.

with the user in mind, prioritizing the local community and involving all stakeholders, such as local authorities and businesses. Developing activities that span the entire value chain—fishing, processing, markets, and catering—is crucial. Additionally, exploring productive and social uses from a regeneration perspective can foster community development. Making spaces dynamic is key to their success, and heritage presents an opportunity to create vibrant community meeting places.

Ideas About the Memory of Heritage. The allocation of financial resources should prioritise the dissemination of knowledge, recognise the unique expertise of each locale, reinforce each place's distinct identity, and foster appreciation for its collective memory. Additionally, it is essential that maritime heritage effectively communicates the essence of its culture.

Ideas for Heritage Communication. To facilitate effective communication, the architectural features of maritime structures can be used to enhance the value of our heritage, thereby increasing our self-esteem and appreciation of it. Additionally, prioritising the disclosure of assets is crucial, and establishing connections with similar cases can demonstrate the existence of a cluster. It is also vital to emphasise the distinctive characteristics, contrasts, and unique aspects of each location.



Ideas About Inclusion in Heritage. It is imperative that applications are designed inclusively to involve individuals of all ages, from early childhood to elderly people, incorporating intergenerational initiatives. Additionally, information must be disseminated to every member of society, and projects and programmes should be crafted with this goal in mind. Heritage offers an opportunity to highlight and make visible different ways of life.

Ideas About Sustainability. The topic of sustainability must be a pervasive and integral part of all decision-making processes, with a clear understanding of the limits of what can be achieved. It is urgent to reconsider the installation of wind farms and their impact on heritage. Additionally, the effects of tourism create a conflict that requires attention and deeper analysis, representing the main challenge. To address these issues, it is necessary to prioritise sustainable tourism and work to enhance the local cultural experience.

Reflection on the Recovery of Sea Architectures Following the Values of the New European Bauhaus

The objective of this session was twofold: First, to facilitate networking among participants; second, to generate ideas and discussion around the topic at hand. To accomplish this, it is relevant to consider the application of regenerative design principles, which are based on the concept of *potential*. This notion aims at examining aspirational and utopian ideas related to the recovery of sea architecture in alignment with the values of the New European Bauhaus. To this end, we inquired what would occur if its three axes—beauty, sustainability, and together —were developed to their full capacity.

If beauty were developed to its maximum potential, it could lead to several meaningful outcomes. It might generate a powerful sense of belonging, awaken memories that encourage individuals to re-root themselves, and heighten awareness of one's own uniqueness. Additionally, it could foster a timeless connection with the present, past, and future, while enabling the telling of a compelling story.

Assuming that sustainability were fully developed, it could lead to the preservation of the future through solutions based on natural principles, resulting in vibrant, economically viable places where harmony and local symbiosis are achieved. Additionally, this approach would foster the creation of flexible, multidisciplinary spaces that enhance community profitability.



On the condition that the concept of inclusion were fully realized, the tourism industry would become entirely inclusive, accompanied by transparent disclosure. There would be an accurate portrayal of women's roles in the sea and its industries, alongside the promotion of intergenerational activities. Oral transmission would ensure the preservation of collective memory, ultimately leading to a society without barriers where we act as agents of change.

Learnings From the Participatory Activities

It can be concluded that the workshops were not long enough to allow for the debate generated and to adequately address the return of experience. The themes could have been unified and divided into two sessions, or alternatively, a preliminary online session could have been held to prepare for the experience and optimise the results.

The integration of workshops throughout the day had the potential to enhance participation, as evidenced by the attendance of six individuals at the afternoon workshop held at the conclusion of the conferences. It would have been beneficial to encourage participation from individuals across different age groups (e.g., university students) to generate a more diverse range of ideas.

The incorporation of participatory dynamics that foster dialogue among all participants was perceived as a valuable addition by the group. In some cases, their involvement was to facilitate networking.

Good Practices Visits

● Porto do Son port edge recovery		Porto do Son	42.726056, -9.003700
● Intervention on the Porto do Son beach and dune System		Porto do Son	42.726794, -9.001856
● Noia Fishermen's Guild laboratory		Noia	42.780551, -8.884126
● Seafood nursery of the Noia Fishermen's Guild in Outes		Outes	42.780551, -8.884126
● Rehabilitation of the traditional shipyard Ciprián in Outes		Outes	42.805501, -8.930939
● Porto do Freixo in Outes		Outes	42.797083, -8.945524

The inclusion of a diverse range of professional profiles, including architects, historians, designers, and representatives from the third sector, enabled the generation of ideas from multiple perspectives, broadened the scope of the debate, and enriched the discourse.

4. GOOD PRACTICES VISITS

After the conferences and reflective activities on the architectures of the sea, a day of in situ visits was proposed. This activity aimed to observe some of the previous examples from a theoretical perspective, as well as other elements that led to a deeper comprehension and knowledge of the Galician Atlantic territory. The visits were scheduled within a small part of the Galician coast, the Muros-Noia estuary. The projects included the recovery of the Porto do Son port edge, interventions on the beach and dune system at Porto do Son, the development of a laboratory by the Noia Fishermen's Guild, the establishment of a seafood nursery by the guild in Outes, the preservation of ruins from a traditional sea industry building in Outes, and the rehabilitation of the traditional shipyard Ciprián also located in Outes.

These visits are regarded as an indispensable component of the forum, providing an opportunity to engage with the subject matter in a more practical and hands-on manner following the theoretical and participatory discussions. A section of the Muros-Noia estuary, encompassing a range of pertinent topics, was selected for a visit to promote an in-depth examination of the issues under discussion. Compared with other areas of the Galician coast, this estuary has experienced less urban pressure over the past half-century, because there are no towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants. This has facilitated the conservation of a section of the natural and constructed heritage.

In the context of maritime architecture, two of the projects presented the previous day were visited for closer examination: The intervention on the Porto do Son seafront and the Ciprián Shipyard project. This approach

allows for a comprehensive understanding of interventions across their contextual, material, spatial, and meaningful dimensions.

In Porto do Son, the historical connection with the dock was re-established through the creation of esplanades, steps, and viewing points, which mark the direction of the town streets towards the sea. The use of carved concrete, stone walls, and a network of wooden posts and beams evokes traditional drying structures and creates a novel spatial quality, thereby enhancing both the urban and maritime character of the town. The visit to the Ciprián Shipyard allowed for an understanding of the relationship between the coastal edge and the variation of the sea tides in the ramp; the materiality of the recovered wooden structure and façades; and the spatiality of both the promenade and the interior spaces in relation to the open outdoor space and the working platform.

Complementary visits were also carried out at the same time to gain a deeper understanding of the natural, environmental, and productive context in which the architecture of the sea has developed. This includes visits to the beach and dune system, as well as the Noia Fishermen's Guild laboratory and seafood nursery in Outes. Noia is the sole fishermen's guild in Galicia to possess its own hatchery. One of the defining characteristics of the cockle from the Muros-Noia estuary is its quality, which is the result of the sustainable management of resources and efforts made in terms of traceability. Furthermore, the Noia cockle is being considered for inclusion on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, in recognition of the intangible heritage value associated with this artisanal activity. In this regard, the guilds and town councils of the Muros-Noia estuary are engaged in an initiative to secure UNESCO recognition.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The goal of the I Transnational Forum was to facilitate a deeper understanding of the architectures of the sea among the partners of the SEALabHaus project and local participants, with a particular focus on the context of Galicia and, more broadly, the Atlantic coast of peninsular Spain. Given the limited timeframe of two days, it seems reasonable to conclude that the initial objective was overly ambitious. It might have been more prudent to focus on a smaller regional area, thereby freeing up time that could have been devoted to more complex and enriching participatory activities. It would have been advantageous to employ participatory dynamics that capitalised on the presence of local participants with expertise in architecture and those with knowledge of the sea from diverse sectors, as well as individuals from the various Atlantic regions involved in the SEALabHaus project. Nevertheless, it was also beneficial to provide an overview of the sea architecture in other regions to identify similarities and differences, facilitating reflection on these aspects.

UP
University of Porto

II. Sea and Sustainability

Diego Inglez de Souza. Integrated researcher, Faculty of Architecture, University of Porto.
André Tavares. Coordinator researcher, Faculty of Architecture, University of Porto.

❷ II Transnational Forum: Sea and Sustainability, Porto, 4-5 July 2024, hosted by UP.
← Go back to "Laboratory Perspectives and Forums"

1. INTRODUCTION

The II Transnational Forum on Sea and Sustainability brought together around 40 participants, including project partners and members of the Regional Action Group. The two-day program included thematic sessions, collaborative workshops, and field visits.

The main case study was the fishing community of Angeiras (Portugal), which provided a concrete context for discussing the social, architectural, and cultural dimensions of coastal areas shaped by traditional maritime practices. The visit to the field supported the reflection on the challenges of balancing heritage preservation with sustainable tourism.

Participatory activities encouraged dialogue among researchers, local actors, and professionals from different sectors connected to the sea. These exchanges contributed to identifying relevant practices and strategies for inclusive and sustainable development.

On the final day, participants visited Figueira da Foz and Nazaré, selected as examples of good practices in blue tourism. These site visits offered broader insights into approaches to coastal management in the Portuguese context.

The forum generated useful input for the next phases of the project, reinforcing the value of locally grounded, collaborative methodologies across the Atlantic regions.

2. THEORETICAL CONTENT

The forum provided a comprehensive exploration of the complex relationship between coastal environments, local communities, and the challenges posed by tourism and sustainability. Held at the FAUP, the event brought together experts and practitioners to discuss the future of coastal territories, with a focus on sustainable development and ecological preservation.

Ecological Sustainability and Coastal Preservation

The forum discussions underscored the pressing need for ecological sustainability, particularly along Portugal's coastline, which is increasingly under pressure from tourism, climate change, and industrial development. The importance of preserving coastal ecosystems—such as dunes, estuaries, and marine habitats—was highlighted as vital for maintaining environmental balance. Presentations

by Diego Inglez de Souza and André Tavares from FAUP explored various possibilities of good practices in blue tourism in the Portuguese territory.

One of the key case studies presented was the valorisation of the Nazaré Wave, one of Portugal's most famous natural features, which has become a symbol of both ecological beauty and economic potential. Inglez de Souza and Tavares proposed that tourism, when managed sustainably, can both highlight the wave's significance and bring economic benefits to local communities. However, they also warned against over-commercialisation, emphasising that local communities should remain the stewards of their natural heritage.

In contrast, the forum also examined the concept of *doing nothing* to preserve natural landscapes, particularly in areas such as Alentejo and the Algarve. Here, the creation of the South West Alentejo and Vicentine Coast Natural Park serves as a model of non-intervention to preserve the region's environment. The aim of such initiatives is not to restrict development, but to allow natural processes to unfold in balance with human interference. This approach underscores a commitment to ecological preservation and biodiversity protection. Yet, both tourism and agroindustry are challenging the potential benefits of the park's activities.

Following these presentations, Rafael Sousa Santos expanded the discussion with a case study focused on Angeiras, a small fishing community north of Porto. His talk built upon the ideas presented by Inglez de Souza and Tavares, offering a more detailed analysis of the relationship between traditional fishing practices, urban pressure, and community resilience. Sousa Santos's presentation was framed within the Fishing Architecture Research Project, also introduced by Tavares. Rather than being limited to small-scale fisheries, Fishing Architecture investigates the socioecological history of architecture in relation to fisheries across the North Atlantic. It seeks to understand how fishing—through technology, ecosystems, processing, politics, and consumption—has shaped the built environment over time, from the industrialisation of fisheries in the 19th century to their globalisation in the 20th century. The project crosses geographic and disciplinary boundaries to explore how marine life and fishing activity have historically influenced architectural practices and regional transformations.

● **Diego Inglez de Souza** graduated in Architecture and Urbanism at the University of São Paulo. Co-author of *Arquitectura do bacalhau e outras espécies*, written with André Tavares. **André Tavares** is an architect and holds a doctorate from the FAUP. He is principal investigator of the Fishing Architecture project,funded through a European Research Council consolidator grant. He is the author of *Architecture Follows Fish*.

● **Rafael Sousa Santos** is an architect and researcher at the Centre for Studies in Architecture and Urbanism at the FAUP. He is currently working as a postdoctoral researcher on the Fishing Architecture project, funded by the European Research Council, at the CEAU-MDT.



Architecture Follows Fish: A Research Hypothesis, lecture by André Tavares. Photo: Ricardo Raminhos.

In Angeiras, this broader research framework was applied through participatory workshops in which residents and researchers collaboratively mapped the community, discussed spatial pressures, and imagined future strategies. These workshops revealed both the fragility and vitality of the local fishing culture, pointing to the importance of inclusive planning tools that respect community knowledge and identity. Sousa Santos's contribution underscored the potential of interdisciplinary architectural research to foster place-based sustainability and bring visibility to fishing landscapes as part of a wider ecological narrative.

Diana Feijó contributed further insights from the perspective of environmental policy and intersectoral governance. Her presentation emphasized the role of integrated marine and coastal planning in achieving long-term sustainability goals. Drawing on real-world governance scenarios and fisheries management, Feijó argued that sustainable coastal development is only possible when

● **Diana Feijó** is a Fisheries Biologist and researcher at the Portuguese Institute of the Sea and Atmosphere (IPMA).

institutions coordinate across sectors and engage communities. Her work highlights the importance of governance frameworks that align national strategies with local action, reinforcing participation and transparency.

The Role of Tourism in Coastal Communities

Tourism, when improperly managed, can threaten the cultural identity and traditional livelihoods of local communities. A central topic of the forum was how tourism could coexist with, rather than undermine, local practices. This theme was explored through several case studies, including the impact of small-scale fisheries on local economies and communities. Rita Sá, representing the Associação Natureza Portugal, the local branch of the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (ANP–WWF Portugal), presented a compelling case for small-scale fisheries co-management, where fishermen play an active role in managing and sustaining their fisheries.

Sá introduced the ParticiPESCA Project, which exemplifies a participatory model that involves local fishermen in decision-making processes for marine resource management. By combining scientific data collection—through tools like NEMO devices and the FISHWebplatform—with the experiential knowledge of fishing communities, this approach strengthens the ecological and economic sustainability of fisheries. The initiative not only supports biodiversity and the preservation of fish populations but also promotes the social recognition and resilience of traditional fishing communities.

● **NEMO** is The Carter Center's open-source data collection and reporting system. **FISHWeb** is a user-friendly web portal for fleet managers that provides secure access to fishing fleet data generated by the installed devices.

Abel Coentrão's presentation reinforced the idea of cultural valorisation as a key strategy for promoting sustainable development. As a journalist and founder of the cultural association Bind'ó Peixe, Coentrão focused on the heritage of fishing communities in northern Portugal, particularly in areas such as Caxinas and Poça da Barca. Emphasising the specificity and richness of local traditions, he argued that the cultural identity of these communities should be seen as an asset rather than an obstacle to sustainability. His presentation advocated for initiatives that integrate cultural



Transnational Forum. Topics and Participants		
● Selection of good practices on blue tourism in Portugal	Diego Inglez de Souza and André Tavares	FAUP
● Case study: Angeiras	Rafael Sousa Santos	FAUP
● Atlantic GeoPark: Between case study and good practice	António Santos	ADELO
● Small-scale and industrial fisheries in Northern Portugal	Mónica Felício and Diana Feijó	IPMA
● Fishing communities in Northern Portugal	Abel Coentrão	Bind'Ó Peixe
● Fisheries co-management in Algarve and Berlenga	Rita Sá	ANP/WWF
● Architecture Follows Fish: A Research Hypothesis	André Tavares	FAUP

Participatory activities conducted by A-Grupa held during the II Transnational Forum on Sea and Sustainability at FAUP on 5 July 2026.
Photo: Ricardo Raminhos.



memory into development strategies, thus fostering tourism that respects and celebrates local ways of life while offering new economic opportunities.

The question of how tourism and local culture can coexist was further examined in the case of Angeiras, where Sousa Santos had already demonstrated how spatial and cultural mapping exercises could help communities to articulate their visions of development. The Fishing Architecture research work in the village showed the complex relationship between tourism and artisanal fishing.

Blue Tourism and its Challenges

The concept of blue tourism—a branch of sustainable tourism closely aligned with the values of ocean literacy, ecosystem protection, and community well-being—was explored as an alternative to conventional tourism practices that often generate environmental harm. Blue tourism advocates for tourism models that are low-impact, inclusive, and respectful of marine and coastal environments, while fostering economic development for local populations.

In the context of the forum, blue tourism was positioned as a key strategy for balancing conservation and livelihoods, especially in territories with high marine biodiversity and strong traditional practices. Blue tourism encourages educational and experiential travel rooted in the sea—focusing on activities such as eco-friendly fishing tours, marine interpretation centres, or responsible gastronomy initiatives that rely on sustainably caught seafood. It aligns with broader EU blue economy goals and prioritises long-term ecological health over short-term commercial gain.

However, the forum also highlighted challenges associated with implementing blue tourism, especially in areas already suffering from overtourism or lacking adequate infrastructure. Seasonal peaks in tourist activity, for example, continue to create significant pressure on local ecosystems and services. This was evident in regions like the Algarve, where environmental degradation has often gone hand in hand with unchecked development. In such cases, blue tourism offers a guiding framework but requires robust governance, local capacity-building, and inclusive planning to be truly effective.

Architecture and the Transformation of Coastal Landscapes

The role of architecture in coastal sustainability was also a key topic at the forum. Architectural interventions can either aid in the preservation of coastal regions or worsen environmental and social issues. Discussions emphasised the importance of designing buildings and public spaces that respect local environments and cultures. The case of Angeiras, revisited in different presentations, was used to demonstrate how unplanned growth and informal architecture could lead to the loss of local identity and environmental decline.

Architectural interventions that respect the traditional context of coastal regions can help foster a sense of belonging among residents and promote long-term sustainability. The adaptive reuse of historical buildings, for example, can preserve the cultural heritage of coastal communities while addressing contemporary needs. The forum also discussed the need for urban planning that accounts for the unique social and ecological characteristics of coastal areas, ensuring that development supports rather than undermines local identity and environmental health.

Toward a Sustainable Future for Coastal Communities

The II Transnational Forum on Sea and Sustainability concluded by emphasising the need for a balanced, community-driven approach to coastal development. Presentations by experts such as Inglez de Souza, Tavares, Sousa Santos, Feijó, Sá, and Coentrão highlighted the importance of integrating local communities into the decision-making process, ensuring that their cultural, social, and economic needs are met while maintaining ecological sustainability.

The forum underscored the significance of approaches that blend tourism with local culture and ecology, offering a model for how coastal regions can thrive without compromising their environmental integrity. Whether through the valorisation of natural landmarks such as the Nazaré Wave or the protection of regions like the Vicentine Coast Natural Park, the discussions pointed to a future in which coastal communities can prosper through sustainable practices that respect both the land and the people who live there.

In conclusion, the II Transnational Forum on Sea and Sustainability highlighted the importance of a multifaceted approach to coastal sustainability, one that recognizes



Octopus and other fish drying racks in Nazaré. Photo: Ricardo Raminhos.

the interconnectedness of environmental, social, and economic factors. By promoting active community participation, respecting local culture, and prioritising ecological preservation, it is possible to create a more sustainable future for coastal regions.

3. PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES

The participatory dynamics session focused on sustainable and creative blue tourism. They brought together a diverse group of stakeholders in a multifaceted process to reflect, exchange ideas, and innovate on coastal tourism practices in Portugal. Anchored by the morning's presentations and culminating in immersive group discussions and field visits, the session combined theoretical input with real-world observations. The event fostered critical thinking about what constitutes good practices in blue tourism, how to assess them, and how to reimagine tourism in ways that support both local identity and environmental stewardship.

At check-in, participants received coloured wristbands, each representing a group for the afternoon sessions. They also received maps of Angeiras, complete with suggested exploration routes. This preparation aimed to encourage early interaction, allowing participants to connect informally over lunch and during the bus journey to Angeiras. Following a structured morning session with presentations and roundtable discussions, participants moved on to field activities and group-based reflections facilitated by A-Grupa.

The objectives of these activities included developing ideas for good practices in blue tourism tailored to the Portuguese context and fostering a critical approach among stakeholders to prevent superficial solutions. Additionally, the goal was to gather targeted feedback on tourism proposals and to collect qualitative data for catalogues focused on good practices and maritime heritage.

● **A-GRUPA (Sofia Costa Pinto, Laura Sobral, Letícia Carmo and Madalena Vidigal)** is a network of women professionals in urban planning who work in the activation and management of urban spaces. It brings complementary experiences in the areas of architecture, urban planning, arts, culture, sociology, education, and active citizenship.

Field Visit and Group Work in Angeiras

In Angeiras, participants broke into five groups, each following unique routes and exploring aspects of the local community. Observations included urban layout, fishing practices, tourism dynamics, and environmental conditions. Groups later returned to the base venue to reflect and present findings through facilitated discussion blocks.



Blue Tourism. This group focused on the intricate dynamics of the local economy in Angeiras, particularly its dependency on fishing and the pressures from tourism. There was a shared perception that the economic fragility of the fishing industry stems from its seasonality and fluctuating profitability. Participants emphasised the need to enhance local infrastructure to support economic diversification. Ideas included improving cold storage facilities, transportation logistics, and fish processing capabilities to maximize the value of local products.

Concerns were raised about urban pressure and gentrification as tourism increases. Rising real estate prices and the cost of tourist accommodations threaten the affordability and accessibility of housing for local residents. This group also stressed the importance of cooperative

models for fishermen and small entrepreneurs, supporting the idea of economic solidarity as a tool to strengthen local resilience.

Moreover, the group considered that infrastructure investment must align with community priorities and not solely with tourist development. Attention was drawn to examples of poorly integrated interventions that, despite good intentions, lacked dialogue with local stakeholders.

Architecture. This team reflected deeply on the tension between tourism and local identity. While tourism offers economic potential, it also risks diluting or replacing cultural practices. The need for a more conscious, place-based tourism model was emphasised—one that values local traditions, supports residents, and ensures meaningful encounters rather than commodified experiences.

Participants proposed promoting experiential tourism based on intergenerational exchange, gastronomy, and the daily rhythms of fishing communities. There was

Casas do mar in Angeiras. Photo: SEALabHaus.



also a call to prevent coastal destinations from becoming generic experiences, arguing instead for a tourism that reinforces local uniqueness.

A key point in the discussion was the role of education for both visitors and locals. Community-led tours, local storytelling, and participatory experiences, such as cookery classes or visits to the fish market, were seen as mechanisms to bridge the gap between outsiders and residents.



At the same time, the group acknowledged locals' exhaustion regarding the constant flow of tourism and called for regulating tourism density in small places like Angeiras.

Art and Culture. This group explored the relationship between artistic practices and coastal heritage. The discussion began with a conceptual distinction between maritime cultural landscape and heritage, yet concluded that both should be approached as evolving, lived realities. The group emphasised the potential of contemporary art, design, and performance to activate and resignify traditional knowledge.

Examples from other regions, such as the Festival d'art de l'Estran, demonstrated how tides and landscapes can become temporal stages for cultural events that are both reflective and respectful. The participants highlighted the need for artists to engage deeply with communities, suggesting residencies and collaborative formats in which art emerges from shared experience rather than from external extraction.

The issue of built heritage was raised during the visit to Angeiras, including the presence of a reenactment of Roman fish vats that provoked debate over authenticity and the motivations behind heritage staging. Participants emphasised that stories and legends matter deeply to local identity, but they must be grounded in shared knowledge rather than invented narratives for touristic consumption.

The discussion also addressed the invisibility of fishermen's work—often carried out at night and far from public view. Artistic documentation and engagement can help reveal such hidden dimensions, counteracting the romantic or museum-like portrayals that risk freezing fishermen in time.



Lunch being served at FAUP courtyard. Photo: Ricardo Raminhos.

Finally, the group warned against extractive artistic practices and called for reciprocity. Artists should share their processes and results with the communities they engage with, ensuring mutual benefit and avoiding the imposition of external narratives.

Sustainability. The team on sustainability initiated its reflection by exploring the idea that sometimes doing nothing can itself be a radical environmental act. However, this notion was soon called into question, especially in the context of habitat management and human intervention. It was acknowledged that sustainability involves active choices and long-term commitments, particularly in areas such as Angeiras where sea-level rise poses a significant threat.

The group identified three interlinked pillars of sustainability: social, economic, and ecological. Social sustainability requires dialogue with local communities, particularly in assessing the impacts of tourism. Proposals were made to incorporate residents' feedback through structured interviews and surveys. Ecological sustainability focuses on respecting natural limits, such as dune systems and marine biodiversity, while addressing pollution, particularly plastic waste from fishing activities.

Quantitative and qualitative indicators were considered necessary for monitoring the sustainability of local practices. Additionally, the group called for multi-seasonal planning, recognising that tourism often peaks during short periods, leaving behind economic and environmental stress.

Crucially, the group emphasised the importance of engaging communities in environmental stewardship. Protecting dunes, managing waste, and restoring habitats cannot be done without the knowledge and participation of local stakeholders.

Training and Professionalisation. This group began the discussion by sharing personal motivations and gradually moved towards a collective vision for professional development in coastal communities. The ageing population in Angeiras was seen not only as a demographic challenge but also as a call for creative solutions to attract and retain younger generations.

A significant thread in the discussion was the potential of non-extractive maritime economies. The group discussed festivals, crafts, and environmental arts that valorise local resources without depleting them. The Catraia Festival Praia de Tocha, which transforms maritime debris into art, was cited as an example where training, sustainability, and culture intersect.

Education and skill-building were seen as essential to revitalising the sector. Opportunities, such as algae harvesting or alternative fishing techniques, were identified as potential new professions. Therefore, training programs should not only teach technical skills but also foster pride and intergenerational transmission of knowledge.

Tourism, once again, emerged as a double-edged sword. The group encouraged experiential and regenerative tourism, suggesting activities such as visiting the local market, storytelling about marine species, and even cooking with fishermen. However, concerns about over-dependence on tourism were also voiced. The group advocated for diverse and complementary economic activities to ensure resilience.



Collective Reflection. Following the group sessions, all participants reconvened in a courtyard for a final collective activity using the fishbowl discussion method. Observers from each group summarised their discussions in the inner circle. Despite the richness of these presentations, the session ran behind schedule, and the outer circle's opportunity for feedback was curtailed.

● The **Fishbowl method** is a facilitated discussion format in which a small group discusses a topic in an inner circle while others observe from an outer circle. It is designed to promote structured dialogue and collective reflection within a larger group.

Although the full potential of the participatory method was not realised, the shared feeling was one of accomplishment. Key themes had emerged clearly: the need for long-term, inclusive strategies that combine tradition and innovation; the importance of respectful, community-based tourism; the creative power of arts when embedded locally; and the urgency of environmental stewardship.

Most importantly, connections were formed across disciplines and perspectives. Participants left with a broader understanding of coastal communities not as static landscapes or nostalgic pasts, but as vibrant, living territories facing real challenges—and full of possibility.

4. GOOD PRACTICES VISITS

Participants embarked on a field trip designed to engage directly with local actors and practices along Portugal's coast. The journey, from Figueira da Foz to Cabedelo and finally to Nazaré, provided a vivid sense of how artistic, ecological, and cultural efforts intersect in the coastal landscape. These visits offered opportunities to observe and reflect on good practices in marine and fishing-related territories, particularly in sustainability, heritage, creativity, and community engagement.

The itinerary began in Figueira da Foz, where the group visited the exhibition Our Land is the Sea, guided by architect and surfer Miguel Figueira. The exhibition offered an overview of how the sea shapes both the physical environment and its cultural identity. Through visual documentation, historical mapping, and architectural insight, it showcased the evolution of coastal landscapes, emphasising the complex relationship between human intervention and marine dynamics. Figueira's reflections stressed the importance of listening to the rhythms of the sea, not only metaphorically but also in the design of urban, infrastructural, and ecological responses. This sensibility towards the coastline as a living, adaptive system set the tone for the rest of the day.

● **Our Land is the Sea: The Sensitive Construction of the Coastline,** curated by André Tavares and Miguel Figueira, was first presented at Garagem Sul – Centro Cultural de Belém, Lisbon, Portugal, in 2020–2021, and later shown in Nice, France and Figueira da Foz.

Crossing the Mondego River to Cabedelo in an electric boat added an experiential layer to the visit. Upon arrival, participants were welcomed by Eurico Gonçalves, founder of the Gliding Barnacles festival and the Mais Surf Association. Here, a different kind of good practice unfolded—one that blends surf culture, artistic experimentation, and environmental awareness. The Gliding Barnacles festival, organized annually on the beach, offers an alternative to mass tourism by fostering a small-scale, community-rooted cultural gathering. It brings together artists, musicians, surfers, and cooks in a celebration of place, respecting the local ecosystem.

● **Gliding Barnacles** is an annual surf, art, and music festival founded in 2014 in Figueira da Foz, Portugal, and organized by the Associação de Desenvolvimento +Surf (Mais Surf Association), under the direction of surfer and cultural promoter Eurico Gonçalves. Conceived around the Praia do Cabedelo, the festival promotes surf culture as a form of artistic and communal expression through performances, artistic residencies, music, gastronomy, and environmental engagement.

Gonçalves presented the guiding principles of the Gliding Barnacles festival over lunch at the association's headquarters. These values approach cultural production by favouring informality, experimentation, and conviviality. By resisting expansion and focusing on intimacy and quality, this festival cultivates a sense of belonging and care. The project's commitment to keeping the beach wild, its

Good Practices Visits

○ **Visit to the exhibition Our Land is the Sea** with the curator Miguel Figueira		Figueira da Foz	40.148986, -8.865538
			
○ **Visit and lunch in Cabedelo** with Eurico Gonçalves (ADMS - Associação de Desenvolvimento Mais Surf)		Cabedelo	41.678091, -8.830561
			
○ **Visit to Nazaré Cultural Center** with local representatives		Nazaré	39.596386, -9.072005
			

low-tech aesthetics, and its fusion of surf and art emerged as strong indicators of how creative practices can align with ecological and social values.

From Cabedelo, the group travelled to Nazaré, a town globally famous not only for its massive waves but also for its rich maritime tradition. The visit began at the Cultural Centre, where an exhibition showcased the history of fishing in Nazaré. Participants noted the nostalgic tone of the display, which, while informative, risked casting the past in a frozen, idealised light. This raised critical questions about how heritage is curated and who it speaks to. While honouring memory is essential, the challenge lies in doing so without turning living practices into static exhibits.

On the beach, participants observed the fish drying racks, a practice upheld by local women and partly adapted for visitors. Its role is now hybrid, combining economic activity with cultural performance. This moment underscored the delicate balance between preservation and museumification, demonstrating that practices can be made visible without losing their social function when managed with care and local agency.

The group then ascended to Sítio, a historical and spiritual site with deep ties to Nazaré's maritime and religious identity. The pilgrimage route and its associated legends revealed the town's layered cultural history, where fishing, faith, and folklore converge. This spatial elevation mirrored a conceptual one—allowing participants to reflect on the symbolic and immaterial dimensions of the coast as a territory of meaning as well as material livelihood.

The final visit was to the Fort of São Miguel Arcanjo, a powerful site perched above the ocean and now a centre of big-wave surfing culture. It is managed by Nazaré Qualifica, the local agency responsible for promoting surf-related development. The fortress houses a striking exhibition of surfboards and photographs commemorating Nazaré's transformation into a world-class surf destination. Welcomed by the organisation's president, the group heard how Nazaré leveraged its natural marine conditions to reposition itself on the global scene, attracting surfers, media, and investment while also seeking to benefit the local economy and infrastructure.

Rather than a simple branding exercise, this initiative showed how surf culture can be woven into a broader cultural and economic strategy, provided that it respects the community and the landscape. The day ended with a tasting session that encapsulated this hybrid ethos: traditional dried fish and new sea-based products, such as algae, were turned into a culinary experiment that bridged heritage and innovation.

In these three locations, the visits revealed distinct yet interconnected approaches to valuing marine culture and territory. First, in Figueira, architectural knowledge and environmental awareness framed the sea as a design partner, demanding humility and responsiveness. In Cabedelo, artistic and surf-based community action demonstrated how creativity can support local economies and ecological integrity without succumbing to commercial pressures. Finally, in Nazaré, both the challenges and the potential of combining tradition with tourism were on display, showing how memory, performance, and entrepreneurship can coexist when handled with care.

Taken together, these good practices show how the coast can be a space of renewal—not only ecologically but also socially and culturally. Each place demonstrated a model of local engagement: rooted in place, adaptable to change, and mindful of the tensions between visibility and preservation, growth and continuity. The most successful experiences were those that involved local leadership, modest scales, creative experimentation, and a clear sense of responsibility towards the land.

By walking, listening, crossing water, and sharing meals, the forum participants were not merely observers but active participants in a living dialogue between the land, the sea, and the culture. These embodied encounters underscored the importance of immersion and direct exchange in understanding the complexity of coastal good practices. The field trip was not only a backdrop to the forum's themes—it was itself a moment of learning, transformation, and reflection on what it means to live well with the sea.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The Transnational Forum on Sea and Sustainability assembled a diverse group of practitioners, researchers, artists, community leaders, and policymakers to engage critically and creatively with the social, cultural, and ecological dynamics of coastal territories. Rooted in participatory methods and field-based learning, this forum served as both a space of dialogue and a platform for collaborative reflection across disciplinary, geographic, and institutional boundaries.

Structured around thematic working groups, the Forum promoted in-depth exploration of the challenges and opportunities confronting small-scale fishing communities and marine environments. Discussions underscored tensions between conservation and change, tourism and tradition, visibility and invisibility, and emphasised the importance of inclusive, long-term strategies grounded in local knowledge and capacities.

Site visits to Figueira da Foz, Cabedelo, and Nazaré provided tangible insights into good practices. These included cultural festivals, artistic interventions, heritage preservation, ecological engagement, and regenerative economic models. Participants witnessed how creative and community-led initiatives can shape meaningful responses to complex coastal issues without reducing them to mere spectacle or commodification.

A central thread across all activities was the importance of listening—whether to the rhythms of the sea, to local narratives, or to the often-unseen labour of coastal communities. Rather than seeking one-size-fits-all solutions, the Forum emphasised situated responses, mutual learning, and co-creation.

In conclusion, the Transnational Forum on Sea and Sustainability succeeded in fostering rich exchanges and identifying practical pathways forward, while reinforcing the value of relational, place-based approaches. The connections formed, insights shared, and practices observed point to a future in which the sea is not only a resource or frontier but also a shared space of cultural meaning, collaboration, and care.

UBS
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III. Blue Tourism and Culture

Paul Caudan. PhD candidate and research project manager at the University of Southern Brittany (UBS). After a decade of professional experience in consulting for companies, associations, and public institutions, he joined the LEGO Research Laboratory.

1. INTRODUCTION

❸ **III Transnational Forum: Blue Tourism and Culture, Vannes and Lorient, Britanny, France, 7-9 October, 2024, hosted by Université de Bretagne Sud (UBS).**
← Go back to "Laboratory Perspectives and Forums"

The III Transnational Forum on Blue Tourism and Culture was divided into three main segments. The first session, held on Monday afternoon, focused on overall project management. On Tuesday, a series of conferences took place, including a participatory activity to encourage engagement. The final session, held on Wednesday, involved site visits to demonstrate best practices.

The forum explored various dimensions of blue tourism and culture, addressing current challenges in this field. Key topics included citizens' participation in tourism governance, accessibility in boating activities, the repurposing of former military bases, the reinvention of local craftsmanship using regional materials, resource and waste management, and the revitalisation of historical museums. The event aimed to bridge theoretical discussions and innovative approaches with practical applications by organising visits to places where these concepts are actively being implemented.

2. THEORETICAL CONTENT

Residents' Inclusion: A Transformative Potential

● The **EFRIL** project, launched in 2024 in Saint-Armel (Brittany), explored the impact of tourism on local residents through participatory science. In collaboration with researchers, local authorities and citizens, the project collected data on disturbances such as noise and litter using a simple web form from June to September. This initiative served both as a scientific tool and a mediation instrument to foster community engagement and develop more inclusive and sustainable tourism practices.

Two initiatives served as context for these lectures: one relating to the EFRIL project and the other to the Morbihan Coast Citizens' Observatory.

On the one hand, the EFRIL project, launched in Saint-Armel, studies the impact of tourism on residents through participatory science, involving researchers from the University of Rennes (UR) and Southern Brittany University (UBS in French), residents, and local authorities. Participants tracked disturbances, such as noise and litter, by submitting a simple web form for four months. The project aimed to experiment with this innovative method of data collection and to foster community engagement, despite challenges such as participant motivation and potential fatigue over the duration of the study. The project served as both scientific research and a mediation tool. Saint-Armel's experimental initiative may serve as a model for other applications, with future steps including interviews to explore deeper social impacts of tourism.

On the other hand, the marine geology project run by the Observatoire Citoyen du Littoral Morbihannais (OCLM) combines science with citizens' action. For several years, OCLM has tackled coastal erosion and climate change impacts by involving citizens in data collection dur-

ing their daily walks, known as *useful walks*. This initiative improves data gathering and increases public awareness and activism on coastal management. By integrating tourists through innovative methods, such as CoastSnap, which encourages them to photograph coastlines at specific spots, the project's impact extends and enhances scientific research and sustainable practices. This approach fosters social connections and cultural exchanges while protecting data privacy, demonstrating how inclusive participation can help develop environmental awareness and stewardship.

● The **Morbihan Coast Citizens' Observatory (Observatoire Citoyen du Littoral Morbihannais, OCLM)** is a citizen science initiative dedicated to monitoring coastal erosion and climate change impacts along the Brittany coastline. Since 2018, it has engaged local citizens in data collection through *useful walking* during their daily coastal walks, while integrating tourists via tools such as CoastSnap for photographic evidence. This participatory approach strengthens scientific knowledge, raises public awareness, and fosters active stewardship of the marine environment.

Theoretical Contribution

These initiatives demonstrate the transformative potential of integrating citizens and the sciences into environmental and cultural research projects. Participatory methods can bridge the gap between academic research and community involvement, which leads to more sustainable and inclusive outcomes. Using research to facilitate dialogue among stakeholders, scientific projects can be designed to meet both community needs and academic goals. Thus, it ensures that projects are adaptive and responsive to feedback. The use of daily observations by community members, whether locals or tourists, enables data collection on phenomena such as coastal erosion and cultural shifts. This approach democratises science and leverages participants' concrete experiences to inform research. By engaging citizens in data collection through methods such as text message surveys or smartphone apps for photographic evidence, it is possible to capture real-time, nuanced data that would otherwise be challenging for traditional scientific frameworks to obtain. Participants gain firsthand knowledge of environmental and cultural issues, which can help promote sustainability and policies concerning these topics. Moreover, tourists, who are often only seen as visitors, become active participants in the preservation and understanding of the territory and cultural features of their holiday destination.

However, this approach raises considerations about participant selection and data quality. The potential risk of volunteer fatigue and demographic biases requires careful management through inclusive recruitment strategies and qualitative methods, such as personal interviews, to ensure a holistic understanding of the data. Ethical considerations, particularly in data handling and privacy, are

Transnational Forum. Topics and Participants			
● Tourism and inclusion of residents	François Bodin	Professor	Univ. of Rennes
	and Mouncef Sedrati	Professor	UBS
● Nautism and disability	Bastien Séantier	Maître de confeérence	UBS
● Azimut and La Sellor, the maritime sector and tourism	Candice Crépeau,		Azimut
	Jean-Marie Corteville,		Azimut
	and Jean-MarcBeaumier		La Sellor
● Storytelling : rethinking and telling the story of a tourist destination	Russel Belk	Professor	York University
● Renovation of Océanopolis	Christophe Dubois		Brest Métropole
● Geoverry and geoceramics	Frédérique Calvez,		Ecole Européenne
	Isabelle Kaiser,		Supérieure d'Art
	and Xavier Moulin		de Bretagne

Boats in the Presqu'île de Conleau in the Gulf of Morbihan. Photo: SEALabHaus.



very important. As data is collected from a public database, maintaining trust through transparent, secure practices is essential to the continuity and success of these projects.

Constraints as Opportunities for Change

First, the Nautisme et Handicap project aims to facilitate nautical sports for people with disabilities following the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. Coordinated by the UBS, this initiative focuses on identifying welcoming structures, supporting local authorities with accessibility, and developing navigation aids. Practical actions include participating in events such as the telethon and inclusive championships. Research is particularly helpful in improving infrastructure accessibility and in adapting nautical equipment for inclusive practice.

● The **Nautisme et Handicap** project is coordinated by UBS and aims to make nautical sports and boating activities accessible to people with disabilities. It focuses on identifying welcoming nautical structures, supporting local authorities in improving accessibility, and developing adapted navigation aids and equipment.

Second, Lorient La Base, a former German submarine base built during the Second World War, is a dynamic hub that was successfully transformed into an international centre for offshore racing. It combines cultural, tourist, and business initiatives and offers waterfront promenades and social venues. It is the home to 258 innovative companies and 2,600 jobs. Lorient La Base is also tightly connected to competitive sailing mainly through the Défi Azimut-Lorient Agglomération. Managed by La Sellor, the place also hosts maritime events, trade fairs, and scientific missions. This site includes the Cité de la Voile Éric Tabarly, multiple marinas, and nautical bases, which makes it a key economic and sporting asset in the Bretagne Sailing Valley.

● **La Sellor** is the public agency responsible for managing Lorient La Base, a former Second World War submarine base successfully transformed into a major international hub for offshore racing and maritime innovation. The **Cité de la Voile Éric Tabarly**, located at the heart of Lorient La Base, serves as a flagship cultural and educational centre dedicated to sailing heritage, ocean discovery, and public engagement. They combine economic development, tourism, scientific missions, and competitive sailing events, creating an ecosystem that blends maritime history, innovation, and sustainability in Brittany's Sailing Valley.

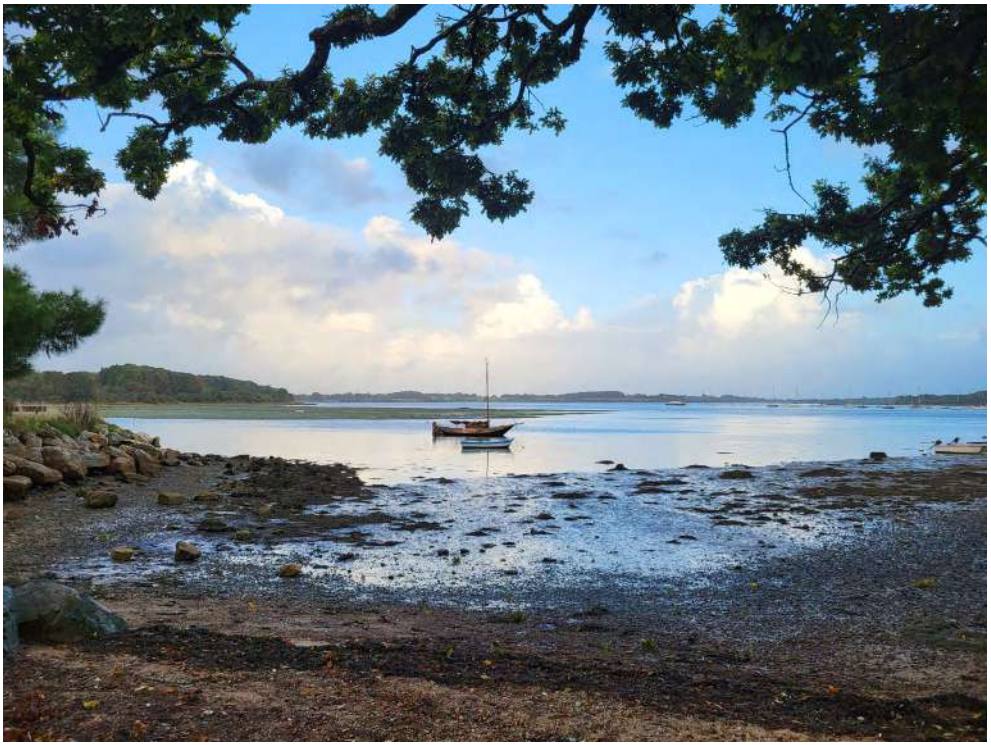
Third, the Océanopolis Metamorphosis is a project to modernise the National Centre for Scientific Culture (CCSTI) in Brest, which is dedicated to the study of the ocean. This transformation aligns with the New European Bauhaus framework. To address the challenges posed by the site's decline, such as ageing infrastructure and a decrease in tourist numbers, the project plans to improve visitors' experience through interactive storytelling, sensory tours, and updated facilities. It aims to promote sustainability through solar panels, rainwater harvesting, and green mobility. Architectural improvements include planted roofs, botanical gardens, and ocean views. Inclusivity is central, with accessible design and dedicated spaces for all visitors. This transformation strengthens Océanopolis's role in ocean education and increases Brittany's maritime attractiveness.

In these three cases, constraints are seen as opportunities that can stimulate innovation and foster changes in three different ways.

First, reimagining inclusivity as a catalyst for progress. The barriers posed by social perceptions and physical limitations for people with disabilities, as addressed in the adaptations of nautical sports, present an opportunity to develop a more inclusive society through navigation aids and ergonomic solutions. At Lorient La Base, the challenge of attracting diverse audiences becomes an opportunity to enrich cultural offerings through events and museums, while Océanopolis leverages the site's decline to design accessible, engaging spaces with sensory tours and specific features. Accessibility appears to be a spark for transformative change.

Second, sustainability and technical challenges offer opportunities for innovation. The Nautisme et Handicap project turns the constraint of inaccessible equipment into an opportunity to develop high-performance, environmentally friendly solutions, including navigation aids for visually impaired people. Lorient La Base seizes the challenge of environmental impacts, such as water quality and plastic use in ocean racing, to pioneer sustainable event management and digital tools that boost economic growth. Similarly, the Océanopolis Metamorphosis turns its infrastructure and its unsatisfactory carbon footprint into a compelling reason to implement green technologies and vegetation, thereby improving aesthetics and ecological health.

Third, collaboration with local stakeholders emerges as another constraint that can become an opportunity for a long-lasting, robust change. The Nautisme et Handicap project sees fragmented local support as a chance to build strong networks with councils and associations, thereby ensuring tailored solutions, such as improving accessibility at the harbour. Lorient La Base transforms the complexity of coordinating multiple parties—universities, businesses, and media—into an opportunity to enhance innovation and global visibility by sharing expertise regarding competitive sailing. The Océanopolis Metamorphosis project is committed to its mission of renewal, engaging scientists and communities, and strengthening its role as an educational hub. Bringing together diverse stakeholders can lead to practical, sustainable outcomes that revitalise the region.



Gulf of Morbihan. Photo: SEALabHaus.

● The **Géoverrerie** and **Géocéramique** projects are led by the École Européenne Supérieure d'Art de Bretagne (EESAB). Both projects explore the creative reuse of local marine and geological resources to develop sustainable artistic and artisanal productions. Géoverrerie transforms marine waste and regional materials into high-quality glass *(bon verre)* using low-tech, low-carbon processes, whilst Géocéramique draws inspiration from Japanese techniques to create innovative ceramic crucibles from halieutic and geolocalised resources.

Cultural Identity: A Vector of Revitalisation

On the one hand, the Géoverrerie project is an initiative focused on becoming familiar with regional elements, such as marine resources, raw materials, and fishing waste. Through collection, classification, typology, design, and testing, new products are created, in particular, a high-quality glass known as *bon verre*. To do so, low-tech machines were reinvented and employed to explore low-carbon production processes such as an *egg oven* for production. Finally, the general public was involved through participatory funding and an exhibition in Rennes showcasing itinerant displays.

On the other hand, the Géocéramique project draws inspiration from Japanese ceramicists. It focuses on local resources and aims to distinguish itself from the typical industrial processing of materials in France. It uses a halieutic method and geolocalised resources to develop innovative local crucibles so effective that they could establish new production lines. Artist workshops inspire future designers to create sustainable local supply chains.

Both projects, led by the École Européenne Supérieure d'Art de Bretagne (EESAB), aim to foster creativity, sustainability, and regional identity through art and design, while addressing environmental and cultural challenges.

Combining tradition and creativity, and reinventing culture could help to revitalise coastal communities, improving regional attractiveness and vitality.

First, cultural identity plays a key factor in innovation. Both Géoverrerie's focus on Île de Groix's marine wealth and Géocéramique's use of local marine resources and geological materials show how a deep understanding and promotion of the region's cultural and natural assets can inspire new methods of design and production. Recognising and classifying local traditions and materials, and experimenting with them, can lead to sustainable practices and innovations. This preserves and celebrates cultural heritage by updating it and bringing it back to life. The scarcity of resources and the decline of traditions can thus be turned into new opportunities that awaken cultural identity, economic growth, and a sense of community pride—e.g., through the adaptation of local crafts and maritime practices. In a sense, this enables better practices of inclusivity and resilience within the land.

Second, focusing on cultural exchange and community involvement drives transformation. Within the territory, local citizens and artists reconnect with their own culture through their crafts; outside, craftwork and other cultural initiatives serve as testimony of the living local culture and resilient identity, particularly when tourists visit artists' workshops or exhibitions, or when the general public participates through crowdfunding. Such activities may weave stronger networks with local authorities, businesses, and the public. This approach not only resembles other maritime projects, in which mobilising local councils and cultural associations enhances visibility and sustainability, but also turns isolation into a reason to celebrate and share regional heritage (e.g., festivals, cultural exchanges, and education).

Third, basing creativity on local culture encourages regional and cultural sustainability. Embracing traditional techniques and local materials can inspire low-impact, aesthetic, and meaningful solutions that honour tradition. Such products are sustainable by design: rooted in local culture, made from local materials, and shaped by the region's constraints. Thus, pressures on the coastal environment and culture may appear not as a curse but as opportunities for renewal. There are opportunities to integrate green technologies with artistic value, grounded in local knowledge, to ensure durable, appealing, and unique products. Reimagining historical sites or declining communities in this way may foster the engagement of new generations in preserving natural and cultural heritage.

3. PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES

Professor Russell Belk delivered a 30-minute presentation on filmmaking and storytelling, followed by an interactive exercise in which attendees created storyboards for a short film on blue tourism and the culture of the sea. Known for his expertise in videography, Belk brought insights from previous projects, including collaborations with Professor Robert V. Kozinets, to illustrate how stories transform perceptions and engage audiences. He shared several video examples, such as *Face Value* (2023), a collaborative film with Professor Lena Cavusoglu. This film interviews people with facial differences who share authentic and impactful stories without voiceover. Professor Belk's approach connected cultural identity to transformation, demonstrating how storytelling can reimagine challenges—such as environmental impact or cultural loss—as opportunities for innovation and community engagement. The interactive exercise, led by Professor Belk, produced three distinct storyboards from the workshop groups, each addressing the forum's theme with a special focus on blue tourism. The outcomes are as follows:

● **Russell W. Belk** is a distinguished research professor at the Schulich School of Business, York University. He is a foundational figure in Consumer Culture Theory and a globally recognized authority on the extended self, materialism, collecting, and sharing.
Lena Cavusoglu is an assistant professor of Marketing at Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon. She is a specialist in Consumer Culture Theory and Transformative Consumer Research, focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within creative industries such as fashion, media, and entertainment.

Respecting and Understanding Local Values. This group focused on inclusivity, sustainability, respect, heritage preservation, maritime culture, and local engagement. The storyboard featured a character, Bernard the Hermit Crab, as a guide to teach tourists how to respect and understand local values. The narrative highlighted a cycle involving economic development (e.g., supporting local crafts and markets, including farmers' markets), cultural appreciation (e.g., respecting maritime heritage, including boat-building or traditional dancing), and environmental mindfulness (e.g., leaving no trace and not collecting shells or rocks). The target audience was tourists, and local people designed the message to promote a balanced approach to tourism that preserves heritage and fosters sustainability.



Wood for Life. This group focused on sharing culture, know-how, and heritage globally. Their storyboard depicted a grandfather teaching his granddaughter how to build a boat, emphasising traditional methods, wood selection,

and craftsmanship. The granddaughter then sails the boat around the world, spreading her grandfather's knowledge among tourists and communities through cultural exchange and human connection. The boat, named Wood for Life, symbolised a universal call to preserve and share maritime heritage, to inspire similar initiatives globally and connect humanity.

Environmental Awareness Through a Fish's Perspective. This group told a story from a fish's perspective. It starts underwater, where pollution, plastics, fishing nets, and cruise ships are visible. Two fish—one young and one old—discuss how the sea has deteriorated over time. At that point, the older fish remembers a cleaner, less crowded past through a flashback. The story then shifts to an exploration of underwater damage, suggesting awareness and action. The story focused on environmental impact, asking viewers to address pollution and overtourism in coastal areas, using visual storytelling to highlight the contrast between past and present marine health.

Professor Belk observed that none of the storyboards promoted unchecked or mass tourism; instead, they addressed constraints and sought a balance between environmental concerns and cultural preservation. He highlighted the collaborative process, mentioning his visits to each group where he saw the evolution from initial uncertainty ("What do we do?") to cohesive, creative outputs. This activity emphasised the value of thinking collectively and communicating ideas succinctly through short and impactful narratives. In doing so, this approach could be reused in other initiatives to bring stakeholders together and plan practical actions, whether for SEALabHaus's upcoming tasks or for other projects.



4. GOOD PRACTICES VISITS

Participants explored the Lorient maritime heritage through five engaging activities. First, they attended the opening of the Les Aventuriers de la Mer festival. This event celebrates ocean adventures and innovations. It takes place at Lorient La Base and the Cité de la Voile Éric Tabarly, featuring talks, exhibitions, and films. Second, they visited Lorient La Base, where they toured Tara, a scientific vessel also based in Lorient, and learnt about its role in ocean research on biodiversity and climate change. Third, they went on a guided boat tour of the Rade of Lorient, focusing on its history and evolution. Fourth, they visited the Citadelle of Port-Louis, a Vauban fortress that hosts the Museum of the French Indian Company. Finally, they took a tour of the offshore racing centre at Lorient La Base. These experiences showed participants how Lorient combines history, tradition, and sustainability.



Visits showed participants how communities can improve marine sustainability and innovation, and how to engage stakeholders in preserving ocean health. As a result, three key practices emerged: integrating science and public education, combining heritage with modern technology, and promoting environmental stewardship.

First, integrating science and public education is crucial for raising awareness and driving sustainable change. This practice was illustrated during the Les Aventuriers de la Mer festival and the visit to the Tara. The festival brought together scientists, explorers, and artists to share knowledge through interactive discussions and film screenings. It demonstrated how interdisciplinary work can inspire action on ocean issues like pollution and climate change. Tara, as a floating laboratory that not only conducts research on marine biodiversity and plastic pollution but also opens its doors to the public during port calls, transforms scientific findings into educational opportunities. It guarantees that scientific advancements benefit both the environment and society.

Second, combining heritage with modern technology offers a model for sustainable innovation, honouring the past. At Lorient La Base, participants saw how a former military base has evolved into a hub for high-tech sailing,

● Meeting at Lorient la Base		Lorient	47.729887, -3.373611
● Schooner visit and Lorient Harbour guided boat tour		Lorient	47.732695, -3.374964
● Boat tour to Port Louis Citadel, visit, and lunch		Port Louis	47.709402, -3.362454
● Cité de la Voile visit (offshore sailing)		Lorient	47.730568, -3.374171

showcasing advancements that reduce environmental impact while maintaining a competitive edge. The Citadelle, with its historical museums detailing centuries of navigation and trade, provided context for how past maritime knowledge can inform today's technologies. It shows how preserving cultural heritage can inspire innovative solutions, while making progress respects historical lessons while addressing contemporary challenges.

Finally, promoting environmental stewardship creates a connection between people and the marine environment, thereby encouraging active participation in its conservation. The boat tour allowed participants to experience the Rade's ports and historical sites, such as the submarine base, offering a tangible understanding of their ecological and cultural significance. This direct engagement shows the importance of observing and valuing marine ecosystems firsthand. Talking with Tara's crew and exploring its research laboratories gave participants an insight into the real-world impact of scientific work on ocean health, motivating them to encourage conservation efforts. Immersive experiences foster a sense of responsibility among visitors and locals, promoting the protection of the maritime environment.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The III Transnational Forum facilitated SEALabHaus partners' exploration of blue tourism and cultural sustainability. Discussions encompassed citizen participation in tourism, the repurposing of military bases, local craftsmanship, waste management, and museum revitalization, thereby integrating theoretical concepts with practical applications.

Resident participation was examined through the EFRIL project in Saint-Armel. This initiative brings together the local community and researchers to monitor the impact of tourism. The Observatoire Citoyen du Littoral Morbihannais further illustrated this by engaging citizens in coastal data collection, for example, through useful walks and CoastSnap photography, which enhance environmental awareness and sustainable practices. These inclusive approaches demonstrate how citizens and scientists can transform communities into active ambassadors and stewards of environmental and cultural change.

The ability to see constraints as opportunities was illustrated by projects such as Nautisme et Handicap, which adapts nautical sports for people with disabilities in align-

ment with the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. Similarly, the development of Lorient La Base and its transformation into a centre for offshore racing, which combines cultural and economic innovation. Océanopolis Metamorphosis in Brest also showed how ageing infrastructure could be reimagined from a sustainable and inclusive perspective, using green technologies and interactive tours. These examples turned challenges into chances for innovation, collaboration, and public engagement.

Cultural identity was explored through Géoverrerie and Géocéramics. These projects use local marine and geological resources to create sustainable glass and ceramics, reinforcing regional heritage while addressing environmental concerns. Participatory activities, led by Professor Belk, included storytelling workshops in which groups crafted storyboards on blue tourism, emphasising respect for local values, heritage sharing, and environmental awareness, while avoiding the overtourism narratives.

Lorient La Base. Photo: SEALabHaus.



ULPGC
University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

IV. Art and Culture

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Francisco A. García Pérez. Architect. PhD. Assistant professor, School of Architecture, University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Member of SEALabHaus Canarias.
Juan Manuel Santana Pérez. Graduate in Geography, Philosophy, Journalism, and English Philology. Full professor of Modern History at the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Member of SEALabHaus Canarias.
Alessandra Vignotto. Architect. Technical member of SEALabHaus Canarias.

1. INTRODUCTION

The term culture has been defined in multiple ways over time, reflecting its inherent complexity and polysemy. In academic discourse, it is understood as the set of practices, beliefs, knowledge systems, and symbolic expressions that shape the identity of a human group. The arts, as sensitive manifestations of this culture, represent not only aesthetic values but also social and historical constructions that enable us to interpret the world and the community that produces them.

This relationship between culture and art is strong among the peoples of the Atlantic coast, in which interaction with the sea, migratory flows, and geographical diversity have given rise to hybrid cultural expressions. In the case of the Canary Islands, this interaction results in an artistic production that combines European, African, and American influences.

The IV Transnational Forum on Art and Culture takes the Canary Archipelago as a case study. It aims to highlight the complexity of its mestizo culture, inexorably linked to the Atlantic, by emphasising its relationship with the arts. The forum seeks to identify significant practices that serve as a basis for developing transformative and sustainable revitalisation policies relating to maritime spaces and the communities that inhabit them.

❹ **IV Transnational Forum: Art and Culture, Gran Canaria, 3–4 April, 2025, hosted by the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.**
← Go back to "Laboratory Perspectives and Forums"

2. THEORETICAL CONTENT

The complex relationship between art and culture in maritime communities has been approached from various perspectives. Considering this, the IV Transnational Forum was structured through a series of lectures. Each of these lectures addressed the concepts of culture and art from diverse viewpoints, exploring them through different theoretical frameworks and scopes. Accordingly, these lectures can be grouped into two categories.

The first group, more theoretical in nature, focused on contemporary tourism and its inseparable connection with the cultural heritage of maritime communities. The second group shared a common aim: to address the complex, multidimensional relationship between culture and art by presenting different good practices, each intrinsically linked to the specific activities undertaken.



The Tenefé Salt Pans represent a cultural and ethnographic heritage on the eastern coast of Gran Canaria, preserving the traditional art of salt production shaped by the sea, sun, and wind. Photo: Lucía Martínez Quintana.

Culture and Tourism

Lights and Shadows of Sustainable Tourism. The lecture given by Professor Carmelo León González addressed the complex relationship between tourism and sustainability, highlighting both progress and current challenges.

● **Carmelo León González.** Full professor of Applied Economics at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC), chairholder of the UNESCO Chair in Tourism and Sustainable Economic Development (ULPGC).

Tourism has driven the socioeconomic development in regions such as the Canary Islands, generating employment and infrastructure and promoting the conservation of natural areas, with an increasing focus on sustainability that values environmental, cultural, and social respect. However, numerous issues arise, revealing the difficulty of achieving a genuine balance. Tourism significantly contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, primarily through fossil-fuel-based mobility, and this impact is projected to double by 2050 unless radical changes are implemented. Furthermore, mass tourism exerts pressure on local resources, damaging ecosystems and negatively affecting the quality of life of host communities. A contradiction between tourists' attitudes and behaviours is underscored; tourists often desire sustainability but do not act accordingly during their travels. This reflects a gap between ideals and actual practices, compromising the effectiveness of sustainable tourism management. The concept of responsible and sustainable tourism demands a coordinated approach that integrates cultural, social, economic, and environmental aspects, promoting active participation and empowerment of local communities to generate equitable benefits. Additionally, there is a highlighted need for a profound shift in current values and paradigms, oriented toward a circular economy, environmental regeneration, and a peaceful relationship between humans and nature. Finally, it is emphasised that sustainable tourism depends on transformations in individual behaviour, planning, and social ethics to preserve both natural and cultural resources and ensure viable, just tourism in the future.

Heritage and Sustainable Tourism in the Canary Islands. Professor Juan Manuel Santana Pérez explored the relationship between heritage and sustainable tourism in the Canary Islands, highlighting the tensions, challenges, and opportunities inherent in this dynamic. The speaker considered not only environmental factors but also cultural heritage as a key component of sustainable tourism development. A distinction was drawn between tangible and intangible heritage, stressing that both constitute a

● **Juan Manuel Santana Pérez.** Member of SEALabHaus, Canarias, Full Professor of Modern History at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC).

collective legacy that must be preserved and passed on to future generations. Santana Pérez advocated recognising everyday structures and vernacular expressions of heritage, challenging the traditional focus on monumental or elite architecture. He supported an inclusive and universal conception of heritage, asserting that it does not belong only to those born in a particular place but to humanity as a whole, including future generations. This perspective also raises important questions about the legitimacy of preserving heritage associated with authoritarian regimes.



The dominant tourism model in the Canary Islands was criticised for its limited engagement with cultural learning and environmental awareness. This model contributes significantly to environmental degradation and cultural homogenization, particularly given the stark contrast between the resident population and the volume of incoming tourists. Ultimately, Santana Pérez called for a model of sustainable tourism that integrated respect for heritage, culture, and the environment, while fostering tourist education and active community engagement. Only through such an approach can the cultural legacy of the Canary Islands be safeguarded and tourism transformed into a constructive force for sustainable and equitable development.

Culture and Art: Blue Economy, Heritage, and People

The Diversification of the Canarian Economy: The Maritime-Port Sector and Its Sustainable Energy Transition. Professors Lourdes Trujillo and Antonio Pulido addressed the main challenges and opportunities facing the maritime sector in the Canary Islands, which is crucial to its economy and sustainable future.

A central issue is pollution from ship engines, which currently rely on fossil fuels that emit greenhouse gases and harmful particulate matter, adversely affecting the health of port communities and nearby cities. To mitigate this, efforts are underway to promote shore-to-ship electrical connections, enabling vessels to shut down their engines. However, the current electrical grid infrastructure in Las Palmas is insufficient to meet this demand, requiring technological solutions.

● **Lourdes Trujillo Castellano.** Full professor of Economics at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC), director of the Maritime-Port Chair (PORMAR), member of the Research Group in Economics, Trade, and Maritime Transport (ECOMAR). **Antonio Pulido Alonso** is professor of Engineering at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC), University Institute of Intelligent Systems and Numerical Applications in Engineering (SIANI), CEANI Division.

Additionally, liquefied natural gas (LNG) is increasingly considered as an alternative and transitional fuel to reduce emissions, though it remains a controversial due to environmental impacts and safety concerns. Concurrently, research is underway on renewable marine fuels, such as hydrogen and ammonia, which offer environmental advantages but face significant technical and economic challenges. Given the long lifespan of vessels, there is a demand for dual-fuel ships capable of operating on both fossil and alternative fuels.

Maritime transport is vital to the Canary Islands, underpinning both tourism and the supply of goods. Nonetheless, the regional economy exhibits structural issues, including low gross domestic product (GDP) per capita and wages despite the tourism boom, largely because tourism revenues have not translated into sufficient investment or wage growth. Therefore, the lecture emphasises the need to strengthen the economic supply side by enhancing the efficiency, digitalisation, and sustainability of companies involved in maritime transport. Furthermore, the marine sector has significant potential for economic diversification, particularly in biotechnology and marine agriculture. In conclusion, the energy transition and modernisation of the maritime industry are essential for achieving a more equitable and sustainable development in the Canary Islands.



La Rochelle is a Reference Destination for the Recreational Boating Sector in the Province of Las Palmas. Dr María del Pino Rodríguez highlighted the collaboration between the employers' associations in the recreational boating sector in the province of Las Palmas—Federación Provincial de la Pequeña y Mediana Empresa del Metal y Nuevas Tecnologías (FEMEPA) and Aenautica—and the French city of La Rochelle, which has become a laboratory for innovation and competitiveness for companies within the leisure boating industry. This partnership aims to strengthen the internationalisation, modernisation, and professionalisation of local enterprises within the context of island geography and Gran Canaria's strong historical connection to the sea. The French experience, particularly in the revival of traditional boat design and craftsmanship,

● **María del Pino Rodríguez Socorro.** PhD in Geography and technical secretary of the Recreational Boating Business Association of the province of Las Palmas AENÁUTICA (FEMEPA).

has served as a benchmark for restoring nearly lost trades in the Canary Islands. The bilateral exchange has facilitated knowledge transfer, technical training, and the opening of new business opportunities.

The significance of the Port of La Luz and Las Palmas as a historical and current hub for vessel repair and maintenance is underscored, supported by a diverse business ecosystem that spans from naval carpentry to equipment sales and accessories. The city aims to establish itself as a key nautical destination, promoting international regattas such as the Mini-Transat, which departs from La Rochelle and stops off in the Canary Islands before heading to the Caribbean. Institutional support from the Canary Islands Government, the Gran Canaria Island Council, and the Las Palmas City Council has been crucial for formalising agreements and participating in prominent nautical fairs such as the Grand Pavois La Rochelle and the Paris Nautic Show, thereby increasing the sector's international visibility. Finally, the successful training and student mobility program between Gran Canaria and La Rochelle is emphasised. This initiative preserves and promotes the craft of ship carpentry, an intangible heritage intimately connected to the region's maritime identity, thereby ensuring the continuity and innovation of the local recreational boating industry.

Networks and Associationism for Urban Transformation: Architecture and Gender from an Island Perspective.
Noemí Tejera Mújica explored urban transformation through an interdisciplinary approach that integrates community networks, associationism, and a gender perspective, with a particular focus on the context of the Canary Islands.

Emphasis is placed on building community across different scales to strengthen collective and regional life, centring everyday experiences and public space as domains of participation and shared responsibility. A key practice discussed is the exploratory walk, which involves navigating the city on foot to interpret it through a gender-sensitive lens attentive to issues of safety and social inclusion. Rooted in feminist studies and activism, these walks highlight urban challenges in daily life, from perceived security to social inclusion, and to the shared management of care responsibilities within the community. In this context, a flexible and sustainable device has been designed to adapt to various urban and rural settings and to

● **Noemí Tejera Mujica.** Architect, urban planner, and professor at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC), President of Marca Púrpura-Association of Canarian Women.

Transnational Forum. Topics and Participants			
● Heritage and sustainable tourism in the Canary Islands	Juan Manuel Santana	Full professor	ULPGC
● Lights and shadows of sustainable tourism	Carmelo J. León	Full professor and chairholder	ULPGC/UNESCO Chair
● Networks and associations for urban transformation: architecture and gender from an Island Perspective	Noemi Tejera Mújica and María González Santana	President and secretary	Marca Púrpura
● The diversification of the Canarian economy: the maritime-port sector and its sustainable energy transition	Lourdes Trujillo and Antonio Pulido	Full professor and director, professor	ULPGC/PORMA
● Traditional salt pans of Gran Canaria	José González	Historical heritage inspector technician	Cabildo of Gran Canaria

visualise and support shared care practices. This intervention embodies the concept of community as the guarantor of care, providing an intergenerational and multifunctional space for social interaction and leisure. Furthermore, the lecture addresses the historical invisibility of women in Canarian architecture, highlighting the establishment of the Canary Islands Women Architects festival, which promotes the recovery and living archive of their contributions. Finally, the need to move beyond hierarchical and androcentric perspectives is stressed in order to develop a collective and pluralistic understanding that recognises dialogue and cooperation as essential drivers of architectural practice.

Traditional Salt Pans of Gran Canaria. José González Navarro addressed the historical, cultural, and environmental significance of the salinas—the salt pans of Gran Canaria—emphasising their role as both tangible and intangible heritage.

Primarily located along the northeastern and southeastern coasts of the island, these salt flats were essential infrastructures for salt production and also served a strategic defensive function against pirate attacks. These facilities not only ensured the productivity of salt extraction but also reflect a profound understanding of traditional engineering and the interaction with the natural environment. It is highlighted that the salt flats exemplify a harmonious coexistence between natural energies and human activity, employing traditional windmills to elevate seawater and uti-

lising solar energy to crystallise the salt. The culture and craft of the salt workers are imbued with specialised vocabulary and knowledge, constituting valuable intangible heritage. For instance, the Tajo Pintón, a reddish, hypersaline water with antiseptic properties, exemplifies ancestral knowledge later validated by modern science. Moreover, the salt flats serve as artificial marshlands and vital ecosystems for migratory birds and native species, providing significant ecological value that is currently targeted for conservation and restoration projects. However, these sites face serious threats from urban pressure, industrialisation, and climate change, particularly the rising sea levels that jeopardise many of these historic infrastructures. González Navarro underscores the need of valuing these salt flats not only as historical and cultural heritage but also as educational, ecological, and productive assets that can contribute to food sovereignty and a more harmonious relationship with the coastal natural environment. Human intervention must respect this legacy to preserve both the memory and biodiversity associated with the salt pans of Gran Canaria.



● **José González Navarro.** PhD in Anthropology and historical heritage inspector technician at the Cabildo of Gran Canaria.

Proyecto Salinas. Visual artist Luna Bengoetxea presented her project, Proyecto Salinas. This artistic initiative explores the traditional artisanal production of salt in the Canary Islands, emphasising its ecological, cultural, and historical significance. Salt pans, though human-made, support the survival of species adapted to saline environments, particularly migratory shorebirds that rely on these habitats during their seasonal journeys.

Bengoetxea highlighted the decline of traditional salt production due to competition from industrial imports, resulting in the abandonment of many salt pans and the disappearance of associated traditional trades. Supported by the Government of the Canary Islands and the César Manrique Foundation, the project comprises a series of ephemeral artistic interventions conducted in historical or currently active salt flats across the archipelago. These works aim to make underutilised or endangered spaces visible, employing environmentally respectful materials, mainly locally sourced sea salt.

The conference concluded with a reflection on the importance of salt flats as both cultural and natural heritage. Bengoetxea emphasised the value of reactivating these landscapes through contemporary artistic practices that engage sustainability, memory, and tradition.

Landscape, Territory and Heritage: A Journey Along the East Coast of Gran Canaria. The final lecture, given by Lucía Martínez Quintana and Francisco García Pérez, focused on the significance of the cultural and natural heritage of the eastern coast of Gran Canaria, emphasising its regional diversity and its relevance to the local population and productive activities such as agriculture, salt production, and tourism. It highlighted the interaction between human beings and the environment, shaping a cultural landscape in constant transformation that must be understood as an evolving, dynamic process rather than a static entity.

Additionally, the conference reflected on the concepts of time and memory in relation to heritage, arguing that the past remains present within the landscape. Places should not be regarded as static existential containers but rather as dynamic stages for encounters, events, and ephemeral processes. The session concluded by asserting that cultural and natural heritage is not merely a legacy of the past, but also a promise for the future—serving as a driver of sustainable development and an opportunity to interweave tradition, identity, and economic potential within the Canary Islands.

● **Lucía Martínez Quintana.** Principal investigator of SEALabHaus Canarias, professor and director of the Department of Art, City, and Territory at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC). **Francisco A. García Pérez.** Member of SEALabHaus, Canarias, and professor in the Department of Art, City, and Territory at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC).

3. PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES

The Collective Memory of the Atlantic

The participatory activity entitled The Memory of the Sea was designed and implemented by Ramón del Pino de León and Rosa Delia Rodríguez Pérez. It aimed to explore the symbolic, historical, and material dimensions of the sea as a structuring axis of Atlantic collective memory. The initiative was part of a broader reflection on the cultural identity of island territories, particularly those in the Atlantic, highlighting the sea not only as a physical boundary but also as a connector of experiences, knowledge, and shared memories.

● **Ramón del Pino de León and Rosa Delia Rodríguez Pérez.** Teachers at Instituto de Enseñanza Secundaria (IES) Pérez Galdós, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. They are members of the Regional Action Group of the Canary Islands.



Evaporation ponds at the Tenefé Salt Pans, Gran Canaria.
Photo: SEALabHaus.

The Memory of the Sea. The main objective of the workshop was to explore the expressive and evocative potential of photographic images as a vehicle for narrating memories and to establish meaningful connections between the local memory of the Canary Islands and other coastal communitiesof the Atlantic. The aim was to create a symbolic space where historical images, materials extracted from the sea, and personal reflections could intertwine in a collective experience of recovering and resignifying the past. The sea, in this sense, was understood as a shared space of cultural reference, a dynamic archive, and an active metaphor of memory in constant transformation.

The workshop methodology centred on the poetic and symbolic interaction between sensitive materials, images from the historical archive of the Fondo para la Etnografía y el Desarrollo de la Artesanía Canaria (FEDAC), and the participants' reflective production. Each attendee was invited to select a historical photograph from the archive. Based on this image, participants were encouraged to write a free reflection that would activate individual memories, sensations, evocations, or thoughts related to maritime culture, either directly or symbolically. The medium chosen for writing was salted paper, a technique inspired by 19th-century photographic processes attributed to William Fox Talbot. Although the complete chemical development procedures were not applied, the use of this salt-prepared paper acquired central metaphorical value. Instead of revealing latent images through light and chemical agents, the salted paper was intended to reveal words, thoughts, and memories. This poetic inversion of the technical process lent a ritual dimension to the activity: writing on salted paper became an act of memory enunciation, a symbolic fixation of recollection on a porous surface sensitive to time and the elements, much like memory itself. Once the reflections were written, the various written fragments were assembled into a memory map that condensed individual voices into a symbolic cartography.

The reflections formed a visual and textual fabric that connected personal memories with a collective maritime imaginary. The physical arrangement of texts and images in the exhibition space enabled a fluid reading of the contributions, while suggesting a network of transversal relationships and intersecting meanings across different stories and territories. The use of materials such as salt and rust, present in the paper preparation process and addition-

al exhibition elements, reinforced the connection between the artistic activity and the marine environment. These materials not only evoked the ocean's physical setting but also prompted reflection on corrosion, wear, the traces of time, and the transformation of elements. Thus, the final installation did not aim to fix closed narratives but rather to leave open possible meanings of evocation, acknowledging the fragmentary, unstable, and at times diffuse nature of remembrance.



The FEDAC photographic archive played a fundamental role in activating these memories. The selected historical images were not merely visual documents but also memory-generating devices. Their evocative power resided in both their content and their materiality. Contemplation of these images, often anonymous or decontextualised, allowed participants to project their own memories or interpretations onto them, triggering processes of emotional identification and narrative reconstruction. The cartographic representation, created through written reflections, was complemented by a video in which each participant individually narrated the emotional and personal experience elicited by the selected photograph. All the recordings were edited and assembled by del Pino de León into a video that serves as a vivid synthesis of the Atlantic testimonies.

In terms of outcomes, the activity elicited strong emotional and symbolic engagement from the participants. The written reflections exhibited a wide variety of registers: from intimate and melancholic evocations to critical observations on the transformation of the coastal landscape and the loss of traditional maritime knowledge. In many cases, the selected images served as triggers for family or community stories that, although not explicitly depicted in the photos, were activated through them. This resonance between image and word underscored the archive's potential as a living resource. The collective memory map created at the end of the workshop was not a geographic representation in the strict sense, but a sensitive cartography. Although the starting point was the Canary Islands, many reflections transcended the local scale to address shared experiences in other maritime contexts: migration, fishing, life in port towns, the transformation of the coastal



The Charca de Maspalomas, an oasis of water, sand, and life, is the heart of the Maspalomas Dunes Nature Reserveand a high-value ecological ecosystem that serves as a refuge for migratory birds.
Photo: SEALabHaus.

landscape through tourism, and the oral transmission of sea stories, among others. This transatlantic dimension emerged organically, highlighting the ocean's relational nature as a cultural space.

In conclusion, the workshop The Memory of the Sea revealed the value of collective memory as a tool for understanding and revaluing the culture of Atlantic peoples. The methodological approach fostered a meaningful experience of recovering and rewriting the past, in which participants not only evoked individual memories but also shared them, generating a space for dialogue and mutual recognition. The sea, as a thematic and symbolic axis, enabled this exercise in reflection from an open, interconnected, and plural perspective. Beyond the workshop's material outcomes, the most significant aspect was the process of activating memory as a form of situated, sensitive, and shared knowledge. The experience demonstrated that it is possible to foster cultural research processes through non-strictly academic languages, incorporating tools from art, creative writing, and installation. Memory, within this framework, is not only the object of study but also its means and end: a path to interpret the present and envision possible futures from the traces of the past.

4. GOOD PRACTICES VISITS

The field program is conceived as a fully immersive itinerary that brings together the sea, industry, agriculture, landscape, and culture in a single day. Its premise is simple: each stop serves as an open-air laboratory for observing sustainability best practices, engaging with local stakeholders, and exploring transferable solutions applicable to other Atlantic territories.

The journey begins at Marina Las Palmas, the largest marina in the Canary Islands and a key stop for the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC) regatta. With over 1,200 moorings and a dense network of workshops and sailing schools, the site exemplifies the potential of the island's blue economy: year-round nautical tourism, vocational training, and pilot projects for floating plastic recycling and solar energy generation on vessels. A walk along the docks reveals sensor buoys monitoring microalgae and water quality.

Just steps away is the Varadero, a dry dock upgraded in 2012 with hoists capable of lifting vessels to 850 tons, ranging from wide-beam catamarans to research

● Meeting at Marina Las Palmas and visit to Varadero (dry dock)		Las Palmas	28.127060, -15.425766
● Visit of the Museo de la Zafra (Harvest Museum)		Vecindario	27.848657, -15.439043
● Visit to the Salinas de Tenefé (Salt Pans)		Vecindario	27.814207, -15.422003
● Visit to Maspalomas Dunes Nature Reserve and Ethnographic Centre Maspalomas Lighthouse		Maspalomas	27.741500, -15.573705

ships. Recently cleaned hulls, composite workshops, and coordinated cranes illustrate the port's international dimension: expedition cruises, African fishing boats, and scientific yachts converge here for efficient and responsible repairs. Engineers present protocols for bilge water management and the reuse of blasting sand.

The bus then heads inland to Vecindario, where a former tomato packing facility has been converted into the Zafra Museum. Wells, sorting tables, and oral histories from day labourers reconstruct the agricultural legacy of the 20th century. A now-accessible underground canal showcases how hydraulic innovation transformed arid land into productive export farms. The museum narrative connects agriculture, desalination, and transatlantic migration, encouraging reflection on food security and human mobility in the context of climate change.

Back on the coast, the Tenefé Salt Pans are introduced by Juan Manuel Santana, a representative of SEALabHaus's Canarian partner. Built in the late 18th century to supply salt to fishing vessels and the local market, they were initially known as the Salt Pans of the Three Windmills, referring to the devices that pumped seawater. Production continued until the mid-20th century, after which the site declined and neared abandonment. Restoration efforts, supported by community-based funding through the sale of gourmet salt, now preserve the site's ethnographic value and artisan techniques. A dedicated Interpretation Centre illustrates its historical and environmental significance and serves as a model of sustainable economic diversification.

Southern Gran Canaria features 400 hectares of shifting dunes, palm groves, and the brackish lagoon of La Charca, a habitat for egrets and terns. From the raised walkway, visitors observe how the wind can move sand up to ten meters per year and how natural barriers made of dried seagrass help slow erosion. This stop fosters discussion on nature-based solutions and adaptive management in the face of growing tourism pressure on the ecosystem.

The final stop lies beneath the 60-meter Maspalomas Lighthouse, inaugurated in 1890 and a landmark of Atlantic navigation. Since 2018, its ethnographic centre has housed nine exhibition rooms and nearly 1,000 objects that trace the island's history. Immersive projections recreate the lighthouse's stone-by-stone construction, while the rooftop terrace offers a panoramic view that unites all the landscapes visited during the day.



The Faro de Maspalomas, designated a site of cultural interest, is a landmark on the southern coast of Gran Canaria and forms part of the cultural landscape linked to navigation and the island's maritime history.
Photo: Lucía Martínez Quintana.

The itinerary, which begins at sea and ends in the sand, weaves together port professions, rural culture, and natural heritage under a shared theme: the Atlantic as a source of identity and a space for future development. Each stop serves as a platform for SEALabHaus partners to explore practices and engage with cultural knowledge bearers who safeguard both memory and local resilience. Thus, what might seem like a day of visits becomes a practical exercise that positions Gran Canaria as a potential laboratory for sustainability and the consolidation of cultural identity.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The IV Transnational Forum on Art and Culture reaffirmed SEALabHaus's commitment to establishing an Atlantic laboratory for sustainable territorial development through art, culture, and shared memory. Grounded in a dynamic understanding of culture as a set of evolving practices, symbols, and knowledge systems, the forum fostered dialogue among researchers, artists, local agents, and institutional representatives to explore the transformative potential of cultural dimensions in Atlantic coastal territories. Within this framework, art was presented not merely as an aesthetic expression but as a powerful tool for reactivating heritage, encouraging critical reflection, and strengthening community resilience.

The theoretical sessions addressed key issues, including sustainable tourism, heritage preservation, blue economy strategies, and spatial justice from a gendered perspective. Particular attention was given to the negative impacts of mass tourism on the ecological and cultural balance of island territories, and to the pressing need for integrated policies that foster civic participation, environmental stewardship, and the valorisation of local knowledge. The maritime economy was highlighted as a strategic area for diversification and energy transition, with discussions on sustainable port operations, the revival of traditional crafts, and international cooperation in the recreational nautical sector. The forum's social dimension was strongly expressed in urban transformation initiatives with a gender perspective and in the participatory workshop. This hybrid activity produced a collective emotional cartography that linked local memories to broader transatlantic narratives. The workshop illustrated art's capacity to serve as a language for cultural research and the construction of shared

identity. Site visits to places where good practice is being implemented provided an immersive itinerary through local initiatives that combine sustainability, heritage recovery, and community engagement.

SETU
South East Technological University

V. Training and Professionalisation

Mary Clare Curran. Project researcher, BRIM-RIKON Research Centre, South East Technological University.
Lorna Bailey. Project researcher, BRIM-RIKON Research Centre, South East Technological University.
Emmett Cullinane. Learning designer, South East Technological University.
Neill Wylie. Learning designer, South East Technological University.

1. INTRODUCTION

The V Transnational Forum is dedicated to advancing professionalisation and training in the growing blue tourism sector, with a particular focus on the unique opportunities and challenges coastal communities face along the Irish Coastline. This Forum is inspired by the values of the New European Bauhaus and is committed to working towards a future that is sustainable, inclusive, and enriching for both people and places. Focusing on blue tourism along the Irish coast, the Forum draws on local examples of good practice to explore how professionalisation and training in tourism, conservation, art, education, and community engagement can be strengthened. By bringing together project partners—the SEALabHaus Pilot Initiatives promoters, practitioners, educators, artists, policymakers, and local communities—the Forum aims to build strong networks that foster knowledge sharing and collaboration. Together, these efforts will help create more connected, creative, and resilient coastal communities capable of sustaining a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable blue tourism economy.

The Forum's format reflected the New European Bauhaus (NEB) values of beauty, sustainability, inclusion, and collaboration. It featured six thematic lectures exploring professionalisation and training in blue tourism with examples from the Irish coast. A hands-on, participatory session—led by instructional designers from the South East Technological University (SETU)—focused on the process of co-creating a regionally relevant and inclusive SEALabHaus training programme. The event also included a day of site visits, with tours of good-practice projects in the Port City of Waterford, a city currently undergoing significant transformation in line with Failte Ireland's 5-year tourism development plan.

❺ V Transnational Forum: Professionalisation and Training, Waterford, Ireland, 18-20 November, 2025, hosted by the BRIM-RIKON Research Centre, South East Technological University.
← Go back to "Laboratory Perspectives and Forums"

2. THEORETICAL CONTENT

Despite the growing recognition that the success of the global tourism industry will ultimately depend on the professionalism of its workforce, there is a scarcity of knowledge on what tourism professionalism is and a lack of consistency in its use and meaning. What is recognised is the criticality of the *human factor* and the fact that professionalism ultimately impacts the innovation, competitiveness, destination development, growth, and success of the tourism industry. Professionalisation in blue tourism is even less represented in research and literature, and, as such, the talks at the V Transnational Forum were structured to initially ground the subject matter in theory and concept. Further lectures highlighted the human factor and how the professionalisation of local groups and initiatives with a common aim have served to create regional good practices for the benefit of local maritime communities.

Professionalism in Coastal and Marine Tourism

Professor Felicity Kelliher's lecture provided theoretical context for the day's activities by defining blue tourism, its components, and the emerging skills shaping the evolution of coastal tourism. Skills such as those required for eco-friendly operations, marine conservation, data analysis, and customer service. Along with these emerging skills lie traditional tourism skills, knowledge, and expertise. During the lecture, participants were encouraged to share their own understanding of blue tourism and how it shapes the experiences of tourists and service providers. The concept of professionalism, through the lens of ethical conduct, was introduced alongside other driving forces for the sector, including environmental stewardship, community engagement and fairness, transparency and honesty, professional conduct, sustainable practices, and cultural respect and awareness.

It is argued that recent changes to professionalisation have transformed the term into a discursive tool of discipline, performance, and control, having negative connotations for the sector, employees, and environmental sustainability. Professor Kelliher argued that increasing professionalisation in the sector will result in the following four positive outcomes for blue tourism, and the associated benefits for coastal communities: Environmental stewardship involves protecting maritime and coastal environments by minimizing ecological footprints. Economic sustainability

● **Felicity Kelliher.** Professor of Management Practice, academic lead, BRIM-RIKON Research Centre, South East Technological University.



Copper Coast, Waterford. Photo: SEALabHaus.

supports local jobs and businesses connected to marine conservation and the responsible use of ocean resources. Coastal wellbeing promotes positive relationships between tourists and communities, respects cultural heritage, and fosters shared tourism that benefits everyone equitably. Additionally, sustainable practices encourage innovative solutions, such as renewable energy, to ensure long-term environmental and economic health.

The lecture concluded by reflecting on local good-practice examples that have incorporated professionalisation and training into their service offering before finishing with the attributes of a professional mindset in the tourism sector. Some of these examples include a consistent display of ethical behaviour, responsibility, and respect for one's role or field; high standards of conduct, communication, and competence; and the necessity for professionals to be accountable and committed to doing what is right, even in challenging circumstances.

Urban Renewal, heritage, culture and professionalism in the Viking Triangle.

Dr Eamonn McEnaney explored urban transformation through an interdisciplinary approach that relied on community networks, local municipalities, and a professional ethos that empowered local activism to achieve its stated goals for the city of Waterford.

● **Dr. Eamonn McEnaney.** Director at Waterford Treasures Museum.

The Viking Triangle is part of the cultural heritage area in Waterford city. It is so called because of the 1,000-year-old Viking walls which once surrounded it. The eminent building in the Viking Triangle is Reginald's Tower, the oldest urban civic building in Ireland. Dr McEneaney has played a key role in preserving Waterford's heritage and ensuring Viking relics remain available to tourists visiting the area. His approach has been typified by an ethos of professionalisation to ensure sustainability for future generations. Early interventions and a professional approach ensured protocols were followed when Viking remnants were found underneath St Peter's Church. The culmination of this effort over many years led to the opening of Waterford Treasures Museum in 1999, which houses the treasures from city centre excavations. The efforts also led to the publication of the book *Late Viking Age and Medieval Waterford* (1997), ensuring that the information was available to all. Every effort was made during regeneration activities to act sustainably, repurposing old buildings, providing training for groups of volunteers to repurpose rather than buy new materials, and ensuring that new architectural structures were consistent with local heritage and ethical considerations. The restoration of the Viking Triangle, led by Dr McEneaney, emphasised the value of re-energising a cultural quarter using sustainable contemporary practices that engage local communities and embrace an ethos of heritage and tradition.

The Continuing Evolution of Waterford Greenway

A dominant theme throughout the theoretical sessions was collaboration among various stakeholder groups and their cooperation to work towards a common good for local communities.

The Waterford Greenway, opened in 2017, provides 46 kilometres of car-free pathway stretching from Waterford City to the seaside town of Dungarvan. Greenways have grown in popularity as a sustainable means of coastal tourism, but can often but they can often be contro-

● **Johnny Brunnock.**
Trails officer, Waterford City and County Council.

versial initially, as landowners complain about the loss of land. Johnny Brunnock's lecture outlined the cooperation among local municipalities, landowners, and various stakeholders that ultimately led to a successful tale of rural regeneration, injecting much-needed investment and opportunity into a previously quiet stretch of the southeast. The multi-actor partnership has strengthened the modernisation and professionalisation of enterprises along the pathway, revitalising coastal communities. A professional approach to the Greenway's development included strategic alignment at the local government level, followed by public community consultation sessions, charters for structured engagement with landowners, and hosted learning journeys and community inclusion in the development of new amenities and initiatives. The exchange throughout the development process has facilitated knowledge transfer, technical training, and the opening of new business opportunities. Networks such as the Waterford Rural Tourism Network provide structured opportunities for community volunteers and continue to grow with initiatives, including the creation of public awareness campaigns such as Leave no Trace, the facilitation of experience development training, and the hosting of network-wide events, all with a network mission to promote Waterford as a world-class tourism destination.

● **Dr. Senan Cooke.**
Social Enterprise Champion.

Rural Regeneration in Coastal Communities

Dr Senan Cooke has dedicated his career to championing social enterprise to the betterment of the coastal communities of Waterford and the entire south-east region of Ireland. His lecture addresses the core ethos of social enterprise as one that aims to achieve social and environmental impact, rather than maximising profit for its owners or shareholders. It pursues its objectives by trading on an ongoing basis through the provision of goods and/or services and by reinvesting surpluses fully or primarily to achieve social objectives. The lecture outlined how this ethos has been applied in the creation of the Dunhill, Fenor, Boatstrand, and Annestown Community Enterprises (DFBA). This community-based organization is an umbrella social enterprise whose mission is to encourage, promote, and support regeneration initiatives in the Dunhill-Fenor coastal region, as well as to develop the community socially, economically, and culturally by harnessing the talents of people and resources available. Dr Cooke outlined how this



Kilmurrin Beach, Waterford. Photo: SEALabHaus.

Transnational Forum. Topics and Participants			
● Professionalism in coastal and marine Tourism	Felicity Kelliher	Professor	SETU
● Urban renewal, heritage, culture, and professionalism in the Viking Triangle. A case study	Dr. Eamonn McEneaney	Director (retired)	Waterford Treasures Museum
● The continuing evolution of Waterford Greenway	Johnny Brunnock	Trails officer	Waterford City and County Council
● Rural regeneration in coastal communities. A case study	Dr. Senan Cooke	Social Enterprise Champion	
● Vitamin Sea Festival: a local organisation for a local destination	Ray Cullen	Director and chairman of Taste Tramore	Vitamin Sea Festival
● Training for change: building creative capacity for climate action	Nollaig Healy	Cultural Project Manager	ACT Waterford

mission ultimately led to the creation of the Dunhill Ecopark Master Plan in 2008, bringing together participants from the areas of business, farming, professionals, education, environment, tourism, and heritage in a research and innovation centre that bolstered the local coastal community. Young/elderly, native/migrant, employed/unemployed, people with disabilities, and many with diverse experiences and perspectives came together in an inclusive space to receive training, volunteer in local initiatives, pilot new start-ups, or participate in regional, national, EU, and worldwide programmes.

Many initiatives of multilateral collaboration have arisen from the DFBA—including the Comhar Comaraigh Network, which brings together 23 villages, 33 social enterprises, and 30 clubs of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)—into one organisation with a centralised coordinator and a three-year pilot programme. Another key outcome is the Anne Valley walkway, a local amenity developed by local landowners and the community. The walk winds through the scenic Anne Valley wetland and woodland, connecting Dunhill with the seaside village of Annestown. The walk is fully inclusive, accessible to those with reduced mobility or in wheelchairs, and has provided a source of sustainable, low-impact tourism to these seaside communities, where it did not previously exist. The ecopark has also provided facilities to support local businesses and increase local people's participation in developing a sense of community, which is increasingly recognised as essential for maintaining a healthy community and society.

Vitamin Sea Festival: A Local Organisation for a Local Destination

Ray Cullen explored the emergence of a small interdisciplinary organisation that emerged in 2019 in the seaside town of Tramore. The organisation's aim was to support local hospitality outlets and encourage collaboration among businesses that had operated in silos. This led to the establishment of the Vitamin Sea Festival, an annual major event focused on wellbeing, with strong sustainability credentials: green supply chains, a low carbon footprint, plastic elimination, and a focus on local producers.

● **Ray Cullen.** Director and chair of Taste Tramore/Vitamin Sea Festival.

In addition to providing a cultural resource for the local community, it was recognised that, to attract much-needed sustainable tourism, the town of Tramore would depend on transformations in individual behaviour, planning, and social ethics to preserve both natural and cultural resources and ensure viable, just tourism. This transformation led to huge buy-in from the local community, with professionalisation of the Vitamin Sea Festival as a key priority for organisers. Tramore ambassadors received structured training in order to harness local knowledge and introduce new systems and technologies. This event quickly grew to 30 businesses and provided an umbrella under which local businesses and organisations could come together while retaining their independence. As Tramore aims to consolidate its position as a key coastal destination, the area's history and cultural heritage are also brought to life through practices such as the Molly Doll ritual journey to sea, keeping local traditions alive.

Local businesses, municipalities, and tourism bodies have played a vital role in ensuring the festival gives back to the community by eliminating membership fees, introducing voucher systems, and keeping local costs down. In doing so, the festival's continuity is guaranteed, allowing it to flourish and innovate into the future.

Training for Change: Building Creative Capacity for Climate Action

ACT Waterford is a project designed to encourage action on climate change in this region. It is an interdisciplinary project that brings together Waterford City and County Council (WCCC) and SETU, and it is financed by the Creative Ireland Climate Action Fund. Local communities

are the focus of the project, and they work with creative professionals to explore how individuals and society can take meaningful action in response to climate change.

The local municipality's ambitious plans to decarbonise by 2030 require action from industry, business, and local government, but individuals will also be called on to play a part. In this project, five topics will look at a key theme of climate action: transport, domestic energy use, greening the city, rural conservation, and consumption. Experts, scientists, engineers, and other professionals from SETU and the local municipality will help communities understand the issues and necessary actions. At the same time, communities will work with creatives to explore solutions and communicate messages to a wider audience across the region. The legacy of these projects' first rollouts has been tangible in Waterford city and local coastal communities.

Some projects focused upon in the lecture included the creation of Seaweed Girl, an artistic expression of biodiversity that harnessed artistic, community, scientific, and media resources to heighten awareness of the *in between* coastal zone. This creative project bridges landscape and sea, showing the versatility of seaweed as visual inspiration and as a material within the textile industry. Similarly, the mosaic-based community Crockery Mountain explored the theme of responsible consumption. This project was conceived as an ambitious experiment in public art, in which a local environmental artist worked closely with the local community to bring the vision to life. Donated crockery pieces incorporated into a large mural ensured that each fragment of china contributed not just to the visual tapestry, but to the collective narrative of the broader community itself.

3. PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES

Learning Design in Practice. SEALabHaus Training Programme

A central focus of the V Transnational Forum was participation: not only sharing information with partners but also intentionally designing activities that enabled dialogue, reflection, contribution, and collective sense-making. On the afternoon of November 19, the participatory activity was organised around two distinct but complementary elements. The first element took the form of a structured presentation. It introduced the beta version of the SEAL-

abHaus online learning course and situated it within established educational design theory and evidence-based practice. The second element was a facilitated participatory workshop, planned by the team and led by Emmett Cullinane, which employed a deliberate blend of analogue and digital approaches to surface ideas, reducing barriers to participation, and offering everyone in the room a voice. Together, these elements demonstrated an intentional learning design approach, moving from theory and shared understanding into active participation, reflection, and co-creation.

● **Emmett Cullinane.** Learning designer.

Element One: Presentation on Learning Design and Course Introduction. The first element was a joint presentation delivered by Neill Wylie and Emmett Cullinane, focusing on the launch of version one of the SEALabHaus on-demand learning module. The session introduced project partners to the structure, layout, and content of the new online course and outlined how it is intended to support flexible, self-directed learning across the partnership. Wylie led the design and development of the online course using Articulate Rise 360 software, translating learning design principles and subject matter expertise into a structured, accessible digital learning experience.

● **Neill Wylie and Emmett Cullinane.** Centre for Academic Practice.



While delivered in a traditional presentation format, this session was intentionally framed to invite reflection, curiosity, and shared understanding rather than passive consumption. Participants were provided with direct access to the course via a QR code, enabling them to explore the content at their own pace either during or after the forum. This reinforced the project's emphasis on learning on demand and self-directed engagement.

A core component of the presentation was an accessible exploration of learning theory and learning design frameworks. Concepts such as pedagogy, behaviourism, cognitivism, and constructivism were introduced and discussed, not only as abstract academic ideas but as practical lenses that inform real-world design decisions. In addition, the presenters referenced established evidence-based models and frameworks.

The discussion emphasised that effective learning design is not about aesthetics alone, nor about simply transferring information into digital formats. Instead, it is about intentional design: making informed decisions based on how people learn, how cognitive load operates, and how working memory is limited. Key concepts such as cognitive load, Miller's Law, and the constraints of working memory were highlighted to explain why design choices matter. Participants were encouraged to reflect on how poor design—such as text-heavy slides or unstructured content—can overwhelm learners, while intentional, evidence-based design can significantly enhance comprehension, retention, and application.

A recurring theme throughout the afternoon activity was the intersection between learning theory and practical development. The presenters highlighted that understanding theory alone or possessing technical authoring skills alone is insufficient. Instead, value is created through their combination. A useful way to frame this intersection between theory and practice is through the analogy of an architect and a builder. One designs the blueprint; the other brings the structure to life. Both roles are essential, and neither is sufficient on its own. In the context of the SEALabHaus course, this analogy reflects the combined expertise involved in both learning design and online course development. Understanding learning theory provides the foundation for effective design decisions, while proficiency with authoring tools enables those decisions to be realised in practice.



Element Two: Participatory Workshop Using Analogue and Digital Methods. The second major element of the activity was an interactive participatory workshop, formally titled the Participatory Activity, designed by the team and facilitated by Cullinane. The rationale for this approach was rooted in the belief that the room is often more knowledgeable than any individual within it, and that meaningful insights emerge when participants are given the tools, space, and structure to contribute.



Significant preparation took place in advance of the Forum. A key focus during this phase was the careful design of the questions. Each question was written, reviewed, and rewritten to ensure clarity, accessibility, and relevance. This intentional wording was critical in supporting engagement and reducing ambiguity, particularly in a multilingual context. Based on the agreed questions, a bespoke A0 printed worksheet was designed and professionally printed. Each sheet contained all workshop questions, with clearly defined spaces for participants to record their thoughts using Post-it notes.

The workshop aimed to shift the energy in the room from passive listening to active participation. Participants were divided into small groups and seated around tables, each equipped with an A0 worksheet, pens, and Post-it notes. The facilitation process followed a cycle in which the facilitator, Emmett Cullinane, introduced a question verbally while moving around the room to remain engaged and present. Participants read the question on the A0 sheet and reflected both individually and collectively. They then wrote their ideas on Post-it notes and added them to the relevant sections of the worksheet. Subsequently, participants shared key ideas digitally via the web application Vevox on their personal devices, with responses appearing live on a large screen in formats such as word clouds and polls.

This cycle was repeated for multiple questions, creating a rhythm that supported reflection, discussion, and contribution. An icebreaker question was used at the beginning of the session to ensure everyone could access Vevox, resolve any technical issues, and build confidence with the tool. This step was critical in reducing technical friction and enabling full participation. The intentional blending of analogue and digital methods offered several advantages: cognitive scaffolding by writing ideas by hand before digital submission supported deeper reflection; inclusivity, as participants could contribute without needing to speak publicly; language support, since time to write and reflect reduced pressure for non-native English speakers; and visibility, with ideas moving from individual thought to shared artefacts, both physical and digital.

The participatory workshop successfully met its intended goals. Engagement levels were high, participation was broad, and ideas surfaced organically across groups. Importantly, the activity's design ensured that all participants had a voice, reinforcing principles of inclusion and collective intelligence. The workshop's success further demonstrated the value of intentional activity design and facilitation. By investing time in advance planning, question design, and resource preparation, the facilitation team created an environment where meaningful participation could occur.

In conclusion, the participatory activity at the SEALabHaus Transnational Forum illustrated the impact of intentional, evidence-based learning design in practice. Through a structured presentation grounded in learning theory and a carefully facilitated participatory workshop, the forum moved beyond information sharing to genuine engagement and co-creation. Together, these two elements reinforced the project's commitment to designing learning experiences that are inclusive, reflective, and grounded in how people learn—principles that will continue to inform the development of SEALabHaus as it progresses toward future phases.

4. GOOD PRACTICES VISITS

The field day sought to bring to life the lectures from the Forum as participants traversed the south east of Ireland, observing sustainable practices, visiting landmarks that had been referenced in the theoretical sessions, and engaging with local stakeholders whose innovations can serve as inspiration for others to live the values of the NEB in their own regional attractions.

The journey began in the centre of Waterford and involved a drive along the coast. It was accompanied by an absorbing narrative from local historian Olivia Freyne, who guided the group toward the seaside town of Tramore, the site of the Vitamin Sea Festival, outlined by Ray Cullen. The town of Tramore has made great strides towards establishing low-impact, inclusive blue tourism, and the beautiful winter sunshine showcased the town, including the Metal Man and Guillamene structures in all their glory.

From Tramore, the tour continued to the Copper Coast UNESCO Global Geopark, with Freyne sharing stories of the area's geology, history, and culture, creating an engaging and immersive experience of the coastline.



Kilmurrin Beach, Waterford. Photo: Rory McCall.

The Copper Coast is acclaimed for its natural beauty and is very undisturbed. It is often referred to as *Ireland's secret.* As such, the attractions along the route face the challenge of finding the right balance between a natural, unspoilt ecosystem and regional attractions that will support people's livelihoods. One example of this is environmental artist Sean Corcoran, who led the group through a short sand art activity to highlight the transience of his art, which responds to the beat of nature. Following the activity, the group visited Corcoran's artist studio, The Art Hand, a sustainable abode nestled in the cliff face over the Atlantic. The studio is the epitome of a cottage industry in an idyllic setting. Here, artists host workshops, events, and exhibit their latest artworks. Corcoran accompanied the bus to the seaside town of Dungarvan, where the group visited Crookery Mountain as described by Nollaig Healy during the first day of the Forum. Unveiled in August 2025 to great acclaim, this striking artwork was created by 150 local volunteers under Corcoran's guidance, using thousands of donated pieces of crockery. More than just a visual spectacle, it is designed to spark conversations about overconsumption and challenge us to think about why we accumulate so many things, with the hope of inspiring real behaviour change. From a tourism perspective, Crockery Mountain offers a truly unique cultural attraction that goes beyond typical sightseeing. Its powerful environmental message and community roots add depth to the visitor experience, appealing to those interested in art, sustainability, and coastal community stories. This kind of distinctive, place-based attraction encourages visitors to slow down, stay longer, and support local businesses. It also helps establish the Copper Coast and Dungarvan as destinations committed to responsible and meaningful tourism, matching the growing demand for authentic, sustainable travel experiences.

Following a busy morning, lunch was back in Waterford City at the Grow It Yourself (GIY), which is not just a regular restaurant but a farm, café, school, and movement with a mission to "inspire a global movement of food growers, one GIYer at a time". In 2014, GIY founder Mick Kelly coined the phrase *food empathy* to describe the huge behavioural changes that happen when people grow some of their own food. If they only grow 1% or 5% of the food they eat, the knowledge they gain from the act of food growing can change the other 95% of what they eat. Food

Good Practices Visits

● Guided bus trip to Tramore and Copper Coast, UNESCO Global Geopark		Waterford	52.142401, -7.364812
● Kilmurrin Beach, Copper Coast Participatory sand art visit with Sean Corcoran, environmental artist.		Waterford	52.138592, -7.319045
● Visit to the Art Hand Gallery		Bunmahon, Waterford	52.138031, -7.333813
● Crockery Mountain		Dungarvan, Waterford	52.090861, -7.622385
● Bus trip to the Viking Triangle		Waterford	52.260549, -7.105406
● Visit Waterford Treasures Museum		Waterford	52.260109, -7.106756

empathy behaviours—such as loving living soil, eating more plants, supporting local food producers, reducing food pollution, and eating seasonally—drive the ethos of the business.

Returning to the city, the afternoon involved a bespoke tour of Waterford Treasures Medieval Museum, the only dedicated Museum Quarter on the island of Ireland. Eamonn McEneaney treated the group to private viewings with unlimited access to Bishop's Palace, the Irish Silver Museum, and the Irish Museum of Time. McEneaney has played a key role in preserving and promoting Waterford's heritage for many years. He highlighted that one of the key themes of the visits was the role professionalisation has played in the development of the multi-award-winning museums, telling the 1,100-year-old story of Waterford from its foundation in 914 AD by Viking sea pirates. McEneaney led multidisciplinary teams, including professionals, local historians, and volunteers, who adhered to structured policies and guidelines on recruitment, selection, induction, and training. The principles of the NEB shine through in the beauty of the Medieval Museum, which has become an architectural feature of Waterford and where visitors can experience the greatest treasures of medieval Ireland, including the Great Charter Roll, viewed by King Charles III and the Queen Consort, and the magnificent 15th-century cloth-of-gold church vestments. A private preview of an upcoming exhibition at the refurbished-style church, home to Ireland's National Horological Museum, marked the end of the day's visits.

The good practice visits took the group from the Atlantic Coast, where they engaged in sand art, to the museums of Waterford, where the influence of the Vikings continues to shape the city's cultural identity. Here, and in seaside towns along the way, SEALabHaus partners engaged with local stakeholders who have drawn on the Atlantic for their inspiration and, in many cases, their livelihoods. Positioning attractions and enterprises in such locations, far from the larger municipal centres, can represent a challenge and require discipline in terms of local co-operation and professionalisation. Once this is achieved, however, the successful practices on display demonstrate that the Atlantic offers opportunities for future development, particularly for those pursuing a more sustainable output and way of life.

5. CONCLUSIONS

During the forum, experts gathered at Southeast Technological University's West Campus to provide their lived experience of the role professionalism can play in sustainable coastal and marine tourism. Its influence on the development of viable coastal communities, urban renewal, heritage, and culture was also illustrated. Community resilience and inclusiveness emerged as a central theme throughout the theoretical sessions, promoting the growth of many coastal communities in recent years. This theme aligns with the project's overall values and the inclusive principles of the New European Bauhaus. The power of community, along with structured frameworks for success, was evident in the success of a local sustainable sea festival, while *Building Creative Capacity for Climate Action* showed how individuals and communities can use art and creativity as a meaningful action in response to climate change. Exploring version one of the SEALab Online Training Academy provided the basis for the participatory activity, which was contextualised by the presentation of learning design in practice, followed by a collaborative workshop that allowed participants to engage with the course and offer opinions and suggestions on topics ranging from course agent identification to dissemination opportunities.

The good practice visits reinforced the professionalisation and training themes explored in the theoretical sessions, and, through engagement with local stakeholders, delegates saw how local initiatives can succeed with the right ingredients: inclusive local cooperation, a professional approach, and a dedication to a founding ethos of environmental stewardship. In summation, the Forum highlighted the role of professionalisation in the development of blue culture in the Atlantic Area regions and how, with the right structures and tools, communities can come together to support innovative, sustainable, and inclusive projects.

Xunta de Galicia
Autonomous Government of Galicia

SEALab: A Digital Gateway to the Laboratory

Iago Fernández Penedo. Independent researcher. Architect. Member of the SEALabHaus team Xunta de Galicia.
María de los Ángeles Vázquez Suárez. Director General for Fisheries Development. Regional Ministry of the Sea, Xunta de Galicia.

The consolidation of the New Bauhaus Laboratory of the Atlantic Area has been accompanied by the emergence of a pioneering virtual platform. Led by the Xunta de Galicia, the SEALab platform is the main visible result of the SEALabHaus project. Designed as a digital laboratory for coastal innovation, it brings together the best practices, technical tools, and examples of sustainable projects to support local action across the Atlantic area. With a clear transnational focus and long-term usability, the platform supports coastal communities, institutions, and practitioners by providing adaptable models and a space to share and showcase good practice. By doing so, it fosters inclusive and sustainable innovation, bridging the gap between technical knowledge, public policy, and local action.

Gateway to Innovation

The virtual platform is the central hub of the SEALabHaus ecosystem, connecting the laboratory's five thematic areas. Through this digital gateway, users can access a variety of resources, such as case studies, digital tools, training materials, and thematic debates, all of which encourage the co-creation of new solutions for coastal regions.

Collaborative Community

SEALab is an open meeting point for a wide range of stakeholders, including regional authorities, academic institutions, the cultural and creative industries, private businesses, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and local communities. Participants can exchange knowledge and insights and contribute to cross-regional strategies. In line with the principles of the New European Bauhaus, the platform fosters collective problem-solving and collaboration.

Interactive Learning and Entrepreneurial Support

A key feature of SEALab is its comprehensive training ecosystem. Tourism professionals and community members can access personalised learning itineraries that meet their individual needs and ensure they acquire the skills required to drive sustainable initiatives.

Entrepreneurs looking to develop projects in the blue economy can benefit from mentoring, networking opportunities, and digital tools to support the implementation of innovative initiatives in the sustainable tourism and cultural sectors.

Seamless Accessibility and Global Reach
Designed for universal accessibility, the SEALab provides a seamless entry point for users worldwide. The interface supports multiple languages and is optimised for desktop and mobile use, ensuring that geographical or technological barriers do not prevent participation.

Cultivating a Culture of Sustainability
The platform's ultimate goal is to foster a global culture that embraces the core principles of the SEALabHaus project. As institutions and regions that contributed to its development participate, the platform becomes a repository of collective wisdom and a launchpad for future innovations. Its interactive features and resources support the continual evolution of practices that are both locally relevant and globally significant.



Óscar Fuertes Dopico
Principal investigator SEALabHaus

Final Considerations: A Compass Towards Shared Futures

Óscar Fuertes Dopico. Architect. PhD. Assistant professor School of Architecture, University of A Coruña. Principal investigator SEALabHaus. Director of the Plan for Galician Maritime Heritage.

An Atlantic Laboratory takes an integrated approach to studying Atlantic coastal territories. This perspective considers the intertwining of maritime heritage, community life, and tourism, and uses architecture as a critical lens for understanding spatial identity and constructive practices.

This publication brings together contributions from a variety of authors who share a coherent vision of the sea as both a living ecosystem and a social territory, shaped by deeply rooted practices. It is based on shared experiences through transnational forums in which stakeholders reflected on the cultural, spatial, environmental, and economic dimensions of coastal challenges. Participants have visited and understood restored traditional shipyards and seafood nurseries in Galicia; maritime communities and innovative surfing experiences in Portugal; revitalised submarine bases and port citadels in France; traditional salt flats and modern marinas in the Canary Islands; and geoparks and community-based artistic practices in Ireland. A clear and recurring message emerges from this: coastal heritage is presented as a living resource, not only as a static legacy. And all these contributions are brought together by a common methodological approach: the Atlantic Laboratory.

Structures associated with fishing, ports, shipbuilding, and maritime production can be restored through adaptive reuse, supporting new functions while preserving their material and symbolic value. At the same time, sustainability is not approached as an abstract principle. Rather, it is understood as ecological responsibility grounded in long-term territorial balance, requiring the preservation of dunes, estuaries, and marine habitats, as well as governance frameworks, monitoring strategies, and community stewardship.

Similarly, blue tourism is most meaningful when it is regenerative rather than extractive. The risks of over-commercialisation, gentrification, and the *museumification* of living practices are highlighted. These risks can only be addressed through inclusive decision-making processes, infrastructure planning that aligns with local priorities, and tourism models that respect ecological limits and community rhythms. Consequently, blue tourism is understood not merely as an economic alternative, but also as a governance and cultural challenge.

At the same time, art and culture are presented as key mediators between heritage and the future. When creative practices are grounded in reciprocity and deep engagement, they can activate narratives, reveal hidden aspects of maritime work, and sustain cultural memory without rendering it static. Finally, professionalisation and training are identified as essential capacities for the future of coastal areas. These practices preserve traditional crafts and facilitate the transmission of knowledge, while also enabling new skills and pathways for innovation in the blue economy.

Taken together, the contributions converge on a shared conclusion: the most effective experiences remain locally rooted while engaging in transnational learning. They operate on a modest scale with local leadership, through interdisciplinary collaboration and with clear responsibility towards both land and sea. In this sense, the Laboratory does not provide a single, replicable model, but rather a set of transferable principles: how to listen to maritime knowledge, how to design for adaptation, how to govern tourism and sustainability through transparency and participation, and how to build capacity for future generations.

Therefore, although each chapter is independent, a shared spirit runs throughout the publication. All contributions are guided by a common desire to address the issues facing Atlantic coastal regions, translating the values of beauty, sustainability, and togetherness into research practices that actively engage with communities. In this way, the Laboratory fosters collective reflection on living maritime heritage as a compass pointing towards shared futures for the Atlantic coast regions.



Shellfish hatchery laboratory operated by the Noia Fishermen's Guild.
Photo: María Cereijo.

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