NEWSLETTER 4

U·MAR
Enhancing underwater archaeology

Enhancing underwater archeology
to make it an innovative tool for developing
sustainable & creative tourism

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U-MAR INNOVATIVE TRAINING COURSE

An exciting course to enhance the beauty of underwater archaeology

U-Mar Project proudly announces the launch of its innovative training course, designed to empower cultural and tourist operators with enhanced skills and expertise in underwater archaeology. This initiative aims to promote the valorization of our submerged cultural heritage, heightening its visibility and accessibility to develop a dynamic, sustainable tourism ecosystem.

The genesis of U-Mar lies in our commitment to unravelling the mystery of underwater archaeology by cultivating a team of professionals with knowledge and vision. We aspire to bring this unseen world closer to the surface, creating engaging tourism experiences around these underwater wonders and safeguarding their untouched environment.

U-Mar training course serves a multitude of purposes:

1) Cultivating Professional Expertise: The core of our initiative is to sculpt proficient figures with explicit competencies in underwater archaeology, its valorization, and management.

2) Promoting Sustainable Tourism: With a focus on sustainability and environmental stewardship, we intend to refine and expand the tourist-cultural offer.

3) Developing Enhancing Strategies: U-Mar's blueprint includes provision of comprehensive guidelines to organizations interested in amplifying the visibility of underwater archaeological heritage.

4) Augmenting Knowledge and Awareness: The course will extend beyond mere professional training, aiming to nurture a broader understanding of underwater archaeological heritage among youth and local communities.

In essence, U-Mar sets the stage for a vibrant confluence of the past and the present, the seen and the unseen, the local and the global. It marks a bold stride in the direction of connecting people with the submerged chapters of our shared human narrative. By fostering the knowledge, valorization, and accessibility of underwater archaeological heritage, we aim to transform these submerged sites into prominent landmarks on the global tourism map.

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COURSE STRUCTURE

The innovative course is the first important result of the U-Mar project

The training course consists of both written and audio/video materials and will also be uploaded onto the e-learning platform set up within the project.

It is in English, in order to be transferred to all European countries, and is divided into 7 different Learning Units:

1. Underwater archaeology, its documentation techniques, and the importance of in situ protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage

2. Communicative Interpretation, valorisation, and dissemination of underwater heritage

3. Shared management strategies

4. Assessment of the impact of tourist activities on the marine environment, with a focus on the natural environment and cultural heritage

5. Creation of cultural underwater itineraries

6. Digital transition of cultural activities

7. Legislation for protection, musealization, tourism and recreational diving.

LEARNING UNIT 1

Underwater archaeology, its documentation techniques, and the importance of in situ protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage

Underwater archaeology aims to study the relationship of societies of the past with the sea or with fluvial or lake dweller spaces through the material evidence that are witnesses of our ancestors.

In order to document, research and interpret the underwater cultural heritage with respect and in scientific manner, certain knowledge, methodological approaches, and skills need to be learned and perfected by the specialists dedicated to the protection and valorisation of underwater cultural heritage.

Since some underwater cultural heritage remains undisturbed and in a good state of preservation, the in-situ approach is primarily taken into consideration for its dissemination or distribution to the public.

These terms and notions form the basis of this learning unit and a starting point of the course.

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LEARNING UNIT 2

Communicative Interpretation, valorisation, and dissemination of underwater heritage

Interpretation is a key part of the dissemination process and can only be carried out by professionals and experts with knowledge of the underwater cultural heritage.

Using a myriad of available materials, techniques and ever-rising technologies, the information of the shared underwater cultural heritage can be disseminated to the public adequately and respectfully, while keeping the educational experience interactive and captivating to the audience.

In order to do so, certain channels of interpretive communication and the required approaches are established so that the audience can truly understand and continue the valorisation of underwater cultural heritage.

The importance of the communicative interpretation aspect in the dissemination process forms the core of this learning unit.

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LEARNING UNIT 3

Shared management strategies

The management principles used in shared management strategies are the focus of this learning unit.

In order to establish a collaborative production of usage and services that are shared between the great majority of people and various regions, destinations or organisation, these principles are highlighted as playing an important role in a sharing economy.

Preservation, conservation, and presentation of underwater cultural heritage require sustainable and affordable solutions which requires implementation of interdisciplinary knowledge from related scientific fields.

Working on these challenges can implement tourism-based economies in coastal areas which can include sustainable activities directed on underwater cultural heritage.

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LEARNING UNIT 4

Assessment of the impact of tourist activities on the marine environment, with a focus on the natural environment and cultural heritage

Underwater cultural heritage can have significant benefits from cultural tourism, where submerged sites can be an attractive option. Although not all sites can be accessed in situ to the public, a considerable number of them could be made approachable to the average tourist without threatening their state of preservation.

With the increase of man deriving activities, such as SCUBA diving, pleasure boating and commercial industrial activities, the very delicate marine environment has been under continuous threat of damage and destruction.

The contents of this learning unit serve as an introduction to the possible future means and approaches of disseminating the underwater cultural heritage while emphasising the importance and means of protection of the underwater environment.

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LEARNING UNIT 5

Creation of cultural underwater itineraries

The exponential rise of diving community tourism activities and accessibility of underwater cultural resources to the mentioned sites has raised questions on logistical issues concerning their protection during the visits of the broader audiences.

Heritage tourism, especially on underwater cultural sites, presents itself as one of the fastest-growing segments of the tourism industry. Visitors appreciate the opportunity to experience firsthand authentic sites and artefacts to connect to their past.

Underwater cultural itineraries, parks and museums are good model for dissemination and education of underwater cultural heritage sites to the diving community but may still remain remote and mysterious to non-divers.

This learning unit presents the case studies from project partners that are exemplary in creating underwater cultural itineraries.

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LEARNING UNIT 6

Digital transition of cultural activities

For maritime cultural heritage, and in particular underwater cultural heritage, virtual reality has a special significance when it comes to disseminating research results of a heritage that is not as accessible to the public due to the nature of the surrounding environment and the skills one has to possess just to visit the site, let alone research on it.

Underwater photogrammetry, real-time video recording or broadcasting, virtual reconstruction, 3D model printing, augmented reality and virtual diving are just some of the methods offered by evolving technology and used to present the underwater cultural heritage to a wider public.

However, a balance between entertainment, emotional involvement, historical accuracy and learning must be achieved and respected. Technologies are means and not an end in themselves.

As in the previous learning unit, this learning unit provides examples of good practice in the digital transition of cultural activities that disseminate cultural heritage.

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Legislation for protection, musealization, tourism and recreational diving

As much as archaeological documentation is indispensable to the research of cultural heritage, so is the legal authorization and strict regulation concerning the access, knowledge, and enhancement of cultural heritage.

Protection of underwater cultural heritage requires competence and qualification through detailed recoding, reporting and documentation before, during and after archaeological activities.

This learning unit serves as an introduction to the most valuable legal international act on protection of the underwater cultural heritage – the UNESCO 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.

In this last learning unit, a brief overview of the state of project partner countries in regard to the UNESCO 2001 convention and their respective laws regarding the legal protection of underwater cultural heritage on their national territories is presented.

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GENERAL INFORMATIONS

U-Mar aims at developing the knowledge and the valorization of heritage related to underwater archaeology, through four specific objectives:

- Training professional figures with specific skills in underwater archaeology by setting up an ad hoc innovative training course;
- Developing sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism around underwater archaeology;
- Provide guidelines for those organizations that want to develop strategies for enhancing the underwater archaeological heritage;
- Increase knowledge of the underwater archaeological heritage and the importance of its conservation and enhancement.

Project Partners

La Rotta dei Fenici, Italy
Itinerario Culturale del Consiglio d'Europa

Regione Sicilia, Italy
Soprintendenza del Mare

ICUA, Croatia
International Centre for Underwater Archaeology in Zadar

CEIMAR, Spain
International Campus of Excellence in Marine Sciences

Pafos Regional Board of Tourism, Cyprus

ACIF-CCIM, Portugal
Industrial and Commercial Association of Funchal Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Madeira

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