

Milestone 4 – Completion of data collection for ecosystems' needs and gaps

Milestone 4 was accomplished through a **comprehensive, inclusive, and participatory process** designed to map the current landscape of the Western Slovenian maritime innovation ecosystem, while identifying key gaps, challenges, and opportunities for advancement. This process was spearheaded by the **Business Support Centre Kranj (BSC)** within **Work Package 2 – Cross-border Joint R&I Strategy**, under **Task 2.2 – Gap Analysis**.

To ensure a broad and representative perspective, **two full-day stakeholder workshops** were held at the **University of Ljubljana** in August 2023. These workshops convened **26 participants** representing a wide range of sectors, including academia, industry, public administration, start-ups, and technology developers. The events created an open environment for active dialogue, where participants shared their insights on the main challenges, emerging needs, and innovation potential of the Slovenian maritime sector.

Data collection was structured and rigorous. Insights were gathered through **focused group discussions**, meticulously transcribed, coded, and systematically analyzed. This methodical approach enabled the identification of recurring themes and priority areas, revealing several critical systemic issues. These included fragmented communication channels among ecosystem stakeholders, restricted access to practical funding opportunities, an urgent need for enhanced digitalization, and fostering a stronger culture of open innovation.

The outcomes of these workshops were consolidated into a **comprehensive analytical report**, which now serves as a **foundation for the forthcoming cross-border Research & Innovation strategy**. This milestone not only enriched the collective understanding of the Western Slovenian maritime ecosystem but also set a solid groundwork for future initiatives that will advance the **digital and green transformation** of the Adriatic maritime sector.

Through this milestone, INNO2MARE has strengthened stakeholder engagement and positioned the project to effectively address existing gaps while seizing innovation opportunities for a sustainable maritime future.