

BLUESLINKS PROJECT The Blue Way Hackathon 2025 – Fisheries & Tourism

UPDATE 14.04.2026.

 **Location:** Youth Centre Zadar, **Address:** Ulica Stjepana Radića 11c, 23000 Zadar

On 5–6 May 2026, the **third BLUESLINKS Hackathon** will take place in Zadar, dedicated to the **fishing and tourism sectors, with a focus on fishing tourism**. This challenge aims to promote innovation, sustainability, and resilience in these industries.

On the first day, the event will begin with the Innovation Open Day, during which representatives from Italy and Croatia will provide thematic insights. It will also be a networking and exchange opportunity where SMEs active in the Blue Economy will meet potential candidates interested in job opportunities in the sector.

Information and registration details are available at the link.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScmmCgWIKwcJJwoapHdiCyNH9zsLp91ahw6SzMOgEbHWu6vdw/viewform?usp=header>

Tuesday, May 5th, 2026

THE BLUE WAY HACKATHON FISHERIES AND TOURISM HACKATHON

 8:30 am – 7:00 pm

AGENDA DAY 1 HACKATHON FISHERIES AND TOURISM HACKATHON

 Youth Centre Zadar

8.30 Gathering of participants and registration

- Confirmation of registrations and distribution of materials.
- Networking among participants, tutors and organisers.

9:00 Welcome session

- Welcome speech

09:15 Presentation of the challenge



- Introduction to the challenge objectives.
- Instructions on guidelines, rules and evaluation criteria.
- Introduction of tutors and jury.

10.15 Coffee break

10:30 Session 1: Brainstorming

- Interactive activities to simulate creativity and innovation.
- Analysis of best practices and case studies.
- Team formation based on skills, brainstorming of best ideas.

12:30 Lunch break

13:30 Session 2: Operational work – initial development

- Definition of project scope and concrete objectives.
- Consultations with tutors to validate ideas.
- Planning of subsequent development phases.

15:30 Session 3: Design and prototyping

- Development of ideas into detailed concepts or prototypes
- Feasibility test and validations with expert support
- Initial simulations to validate the project.

17:30 Coffee break

17:45 Session 4: Advanced development

- Continued development of concepts or prototypes.
- Available support from tutors.

19:00 Dinner

End of day 2

Wednesday, May 6th, 2026

THE BLUE WAY HACKATHON FISHERIES AND TOURISM HACKATHON AND YOUNG AREA

 09:00 am – 14:45 pm

AGENDA DAY 2 HACKATHON FISHERIES AND TOURISM HACKATHON AND YOUNG AREA

 Youth Centre Zadar

09:00 Session 5: Finalisation and presentation of the challenge



- Feedback from tutors and possible adjustments.
- Structuring the pitch to effectively present the project.
- Presentation to the jury with a Q&A session with each team.

11:30 Lunch

12:30 Young Area

- School of Economics, bureaucracy and commerce/ Ekonomsko-birotehnička I trgovačka škola Zadar
- CINAZ association
- Additional speakers – to be added

14:30 Coffee break

14:45 Closing ceremony

- Announcement of the winners of Hackathon and awarding the best teams

End of day 3

INTRODUCTION

The Blue Way Hackathon 2026 – Fisheries and Tourism represent a unique opportunity for students, professionals, startups, and SMEs in the nautical sector to collaborate and develop innovative solutions. Organized within the BLUESLINKS project, **the event aims to promote new solution for the innovation, development and sustainability in the fisheries and tourism sector**, fostering the creation of new ideas and project proposal.

The Hackathon is organized by the BLUESLINKS project, coordinated by PP ZADRA NOVA.



During the Hackathon, participants will have 48 hours to tackle real-world challenges by developing innovative solutions aimed at enhancing competitiveness in the tourism and fisheries sectors. The event will serve as an interdisciplinary exchange platform, where technical expertise will merge with problem-solving skills and teamwork to foster innovation and strengthen competitiveness and find solutions in those sectors.

At the end of the event, all participants will receive a participation certificate.

The Blue Way Hackathon 2026 is not just a competition but a laboratory of ideas and innovation, where talent and future vision meet the concrete needs of aquaculture and fisheries sectors.

WHAT IS A HACKATHON?

A Hackathon is an event where experts, graduates, startup founders with diverse experiences and backgrounds come together to ideate, and launch new solutions for concrete challenges in technological, social, and cultural fields. For this event, the focus will be on the **fisheries and tourism sectors**. It is a **marathon of ideas** where participants have approximately 48 hours to propose innovative solutions aligned with the theme and challenges defined by the organizers.

HACKATHON REGULATIONS

1. OBJECTIVES AND TARGET AUDIENCE

The hackathon aims to encourage the adoption of innovative solutions in the fisheries and tourism sector by promoting collaboration between companies, startups, and young graduates. The event is designed to facilitate the meeting of labour demand and supply within the sector, providing an opportunity for professional growth and innovation. Graduates, innovative startups, entrepreneurs, from Italy and Croatia will participate.

During the event, participants will be grouped in small teams with a maximum of 6/7 members each, communicating the team's name and member names to the organizers.

2. HACKATHON FORMAT AND DURATION

On May 5th and 6th, teams formed by registered participants will have about 48 hours, in a dedicated space set up at Youth Centre Zadar (Adress: Ulica Stjepana Radića 11c, 23000 Zadar) to define and refine solutions related to the challenges launched by the organizers. The event will be conducted in Italian and English.

Structure:

- **Welcome Session** – Introduction and networking among participants.
- **Presentation of challenges** – Explanation of problems and opportunities in the fisheries and tourism sector.
- **Team formation** – Groups of about max 6/7 people with complementary skills.
- **Operational work** – Development of solutions with the support of expert mentors.
- **Final pitch** – Project presentations to the jury.
- **Awards Ceremony**

After a welcome and networking session, participants will form teams composed of a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 7 members, selecting the most suitable skills to tackle the proposed challenges, in a mix of young graduates and startup members. Each group will be supported by mentor/s.



During the second day, each team will have the opportunity to present the developed idea, which will be evaluated by the jury, and the idea that best responds to the proposed challenges will win the Hackathon.

The event will be preceded by case study or challenges presentations by experts or partner projects,

On the day of the event, all Hackathon participants must show their identification at the entrance and submit the signed form containing the privacy notice and consent for the recording and dissemination of images and videos.

The Hackathon will conclude with an award ceremony for the best projects. The prize for the best ideas will consist of a Certification of the results of the marathon of ideas.

3. SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

Participants will have access to a fully equipped workspace, with areas dedicated to design, brainstorming, and discussion.

At the location for the development of Hackathon, throughout the day, the following will be available:

- Snack, food, and beverage during lunch or dinner or breakfast
- Ideation and discussion area

*Each participant will receive a **Welcome Kit** that may include: a canvas bag, badge with participant name, notebook and pen or other gadget, printed event program with detailed agenda, location map and useful logistical information, promotional materials from the BLUESLINKS project, privacy notice and documents to fill out (if not already submitted), and Wi-Fi access codes - In course of definition*

Every participant must bring a personal computer, as well as any other tools useful for design (whiteboards, sheets, graphic tools, etc.).

4. JURY AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

A jury of experts and representatives of small and medium-sized enterprises from the fisheries and tourism sector will select the best projects developed by the working teams during the Hackathon.

The jury's evaluation will be based on the following criteria:

- Relevance to the challenges of the Italy-Croatia Programme
- Consistency with the innovative purpose and context of the Blueslinks project
- Innovativeness of the proposed idea
- Technical and economic feasibility
- Quality, sustainability and effectiveness of the presentation method
- Potential impact of the project idea on the fisheries and tourism sector and its long-term sustainability

5. THEME AND CHALLENGES OF THE HACKATHON

The project targets graduates and startup founders of Italian and Croatian nationality. Participants will be called to develop innovative solutions for the fisheries and tourism sectors, to design solutions addressing real challenges in beforementioned sectors, tackle climate change, and enhance the competitiveness of businesses in the industry.

The objective is to stimulate the creation of tools and strategies to make the sector more innovative, resilient, competitiveness and the productions sustainable and able to of responding to global challenges.



Themes of the Blue Way Hackathon

1 Digital blue experiences

 Digitalisation and user experience in fishery tourism

 **Challenge:** Design digital solutions that connect tourists with authentic fishery experiences and improve visibility accessibility and engagement.

2 Green & low – impact tourism

 Environmental sustainability and low carbon solutions.

 **Challenge:** Develop innovative solutions to reduce the environmental footprint of fishery tourism operations.

3 Transparent & smart sea food

 Focus, traceability, trust and quality in seafood tourism.

 **Challenge:** Create systems that ensure transparency in seafood origin, sustainability and quality for tourists.

4 Resilient coastal communities

 Economic resilience, heritage and community inclusion.

 **Challenge:** Develop solutions that strengthen local communities, diversify income sources and preserve maritime heritage.

6. REGISTRATION PROCESS AND EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

Participation in the Hackathon is reserved for individuals over 18 years old. Registration and participation do not involve any additional costs.

Travel and accommodation costs are the responsibility of the participants.

Registration takes place by responding to the Expression of Interest

Available spots will be assigned based on the order of registration and the candidates' profiles for the first 45 participants.

Cross-border participation of registrants from both sides of the Adriatic will be ensured from the territories of project partners proportional to the number of Italian and Croatian partners involved in the project.

7. EVALUATION AND FINAL OUTPUT

Each team must produce a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate the developed project effectively present the idea. The project idea must be original, unpublished, and designed to meet the real needs of the fisheries and tourism sector. Projects must adhere to principles of innovation, competitiveness, sustainable, avoiding offensive content or intellectual property rights violations. Organizers reserve the right to exclude works that do not comply with these criteria.

The jury will evaluate the results according to the following criteria, awarding a total of up to 100 points:

- Presentation of the idea, product, or service: max 40 points
- Pitch quality (max 20 points)
- Q&A: clear and comprehensive answers (max 20 points)
- Content of the idea, product, or service: max 60 points



- Consistency with the challenge (max 20 points)
- Level of innovation (max 20 points)
- Business model: technical feasibility and economic sustainability (max 20 points)

At the end of the evaluation, a ranking will be drawn up based on the scores obtained. The jury's decision is final and not subject to appeal; participants agree not to contest the composition or decisions of the jury. In case of a tie, the choice will be made at the sole discretion of the jury president.

8. EXPERTS AND MENTORS

A group of professionals and operators in the fields of blue economy, aquaculture, fisheries, nautical, business development, and communication will support the teams during the Hackathon, aiming to assist in idea development and provide insights on the topics under discussion.

The representatives of SMEs and/or experts and/ or partners from the fisheries and tourism sector will act as mentors during the Hackathon, providing their technical and practical expertise to support the development of innovative solutions and project ideas.

Their role will be to share real business challenges, offer feedback on the feasibility of the proposed ideas, and guide participants in aligning their projects with the actual needs of the market.

9. PRIZES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The top three teams will receive a certificate of their ranking achieved as a result of the evaluation of their idea during the closing ceremony of the Hackathon.

10. TEAMS AND ORGANIZATION

The internal organization of the team, distribution of roles, tasks, responsibilities, as well as the attribution and/or recognition of any intellectual and/or industrial property rights on the work and/or documentation among the members will be the exclusive competence of the team itself and/or, based on the decision taken, by the team and/or its team leader. No responsibility in this regard can be attributed to the organization.

11. RESPONSIBILITY

Each participant in the Hackathon is responsible for their own documentation, IT equipment, or other personal belongings; therefore, each participant agrees to hold the organization harmless from any claim, including for damages, that may arise in relation to participation in the event. The organization cannot be held responsible in case of theft, loss, or damage to equipment and/or personal belongings. Throughout the Hackathon, each participant is required to take all appropriate measures to protect their data and/or software stored on their own equipment.

12. OBLIGATIONS

Participation in the Hackathon implies full and unconditional acceptance by the participant of the terms and conditions set out in this regulation.

By registering, each participant:

- guarantees that the proposed project idea is original and does not infringe in any way on third-party intellectual or industrial property rights, holding the organizers harmless from any liability, claims for damages, and/or compensation from third parties;



- releases the organizers from any liability in case of use and/or misuse of the idea and/or any development of the same by anyone who has become aware of it, waiving any claim for damages and/or compensation against the organizers for any reason and/or cause;
- individually or as a team is responsible for the content of their project and guarantees ownership and possession of all original usage rights. The organizers are not responsible to third parties for the content of the projects. The team/individual participant undertakes to hold the organizers harmless from any liability, including for damages, or claims from third parties in relation to the project.

13. CODE OF CONDUCT

The organizers ask participants to comply with the following code of conduct at all stages of the Hackathon. In particular, participants are required to:

- respect the Regulations, schedule, procedures, and accept the decisions made by the organization and/or the jury;
- respect other participants, staff, and other members and/or delegates of the organization and/or the hosting facility.

Any violation of the Regulations and/or the code of conduct or any behaviour that may imply or suggest illegal conduct, even covert, and/or constitutes a breach of this Regulation, as well as any irregularities committed before or during the event, will result, depending on the case and at the sole discretion of the organization, in disqualification, expulsion, or withdrawal of any awarded prize and the removal of any submitted or published materials and/or content.

14. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Participants retain, under current regulations, ownership and full availability of their projects and related documentation, including ownership of any intellectual and/or industrial property rights on any elements of which they are composed and/or that contribute to forming them, such as, but not limited to, the idea, business model, format, developed concepts, proposals, and solutions presented and/or the results achieved, produced by the teams during the Hackathon. Each participant remains fully responsible for the protection of any innovative and/or original elements identifiable in their projects. Participants authorize the BLUESLINKS project to disseminate the description of their ideas through the BLUESLINKS website and other platform related to the project.

15. CONTACTS AND INFORMATION

For further information, please contact mia.juricic@zadra.hr. The Blueslinks project website and the official event website will provide all necessary updates on the event and participation procedures.

16. PERSONAL DATA

By participating in the Hackathon, participants expressly declare that they have read the Regulation and the Privacy Notice provided pursuant to Article 13 of Regulation (EU) 2016, thus being fully aware of the purposes and methods of communication and dissemination of processed personal data.

