

Press Release: 4 September 2019



## Open Sea Lab sets sail in Ghent!

What do the Ocean and hackers have in common? From the 4-6 September, in the stimulating Zebrastraat venue in Ghent, STEM takes centre stage as international teams of scientists, programmers and communicators compete to create new ideas for goods and services built on Ocean data. Over 100 competitors from 18 countries registered to compete in the Open Sea Lab hackathon, but this is no ordinary hackathon!

Europe collects a plethora of data about the Ocean, and these data have value. Since 2009, the European Marine Data Network (EMODnet), a collaboration of over 150 organisations throughout Europe, has been gathering and sharing diverse Ocean data via its portal [www.emodnet.eu](http://www.emodnet.eu). It provides information on sea water temperature, salinity, wave height and speed, water depth, pollution, biodiversity, seabed habitats, geology and maritime activities.

These resources hold great potential to create new business opportunities; to increase ocean knowledge and understanding of our marine and coastal environments; and to underpin better management and protection of Europe's precious marine resources. But how can this potential be realised and how do we demonstrate it to users? Open Sea Lab was conceived from a desire to increase the awareness and use of EMODnet data.

The idea of an EMODnet hackathon was proposed at the first EMODnet Open Conference in Oostende in 2015. A collaboration between EMODnet, Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ) and imec, supported by the European Commission's Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), led to the launch of EMODnet's first 'Open Sea Lab' in November 2017 in Antwerp, Belgium.

Open Sea lab brings together three of the European giants in marine data management. EMODnet are combining forces with the COPERNICUS marine service (CMEMS) and with ICES, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. But Open Sea Lab is no ordinary hackathon. Guided by imec living labs, the teams of would be hackers are coached to take a user-centric approach in developing their ideas to ensure that what they develop has real application. Marine@UGent, the University of Ghent's marine research department have also joined forces to support and raise awareness of this unique opportunity.

This the second Open Sea Lab, builds on the success of the first. The extended collaboration means more open data resources, more technical expertise and more coaching is available to the participants. Open Sea Lab is much more than a hackathon, it is an expert-led, deep dive into the world of marine Open Data. It is an opportunity to learn, to teach, to network and to create. We are excited by the expertise and diversity among this year's participants.

Great new marine data stories are ready to be told. Dive in!

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Link [www.opensealab.eu](http://www.opensealab.eu)

Watch the Opening and Closing sessions here: <http://www.opensealab.eu/stream>

**The Concept:** During three days, in the vibrant and historical city of Ghent (Belgium), teams will compete and bring their expertise to develop novel marine and maritime applications using [EMODnet](#), [ICES](#) and [Copernicus Marine's](#) wealth of marine data and services.

**The organisers:** Open Sea Lab is organised by the EMODnet Secretariat, in collaboration with VLIZ, Copernicus Marine and ICES, and with the contribution of imec and Marine@UGent. Supported by the European Commission and VLIZ.

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**Twitter:** @OpenSeaLab #OpenSeaLab @EMODnet

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*EMODnet is a gateway to marine data in Europe with free, open access to data, data products and metadata from more than 150 organisations. Explore data and maps of bathymetry, geology, physics, chemistry, biology, seabed habitats and human activities on [www.emodnet.eu](http://www.emodnet.eu)*



Open Sea Lab is proud to work with:

