

The Stone Soup Leadership Institute's Blue Economy Initiative



Blue Finance Pathway

Blue Finance Champion



Diogo Silva

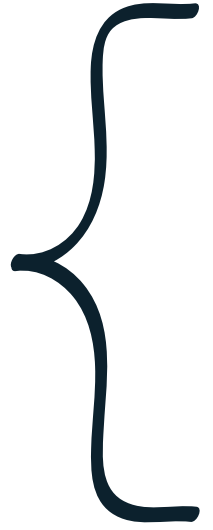
NOVA

School of Business & Economics

Overview

1. By 2030, **the ocean economy** will double from 2010 levels, adding **\$3 trillion** to the global economy
2. **Portugal's BE sectors** directly employ **295,600 people** and generate **€7.8 billion** in Gross Value Added

Blue Capital Innovation

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1. **Builds** Portuguese businesses
 2. **Serves** our youth
 3. **Preserves** natural heritage



‘Around 1 in each 5 investors are now actively considering blue finance’

*BNP Paribas report:
Blue Horizons: the rise of blue bonds in sustainable investment

- Between 2018–2023, **blue economy investments exceeded €13 billion**
- **Blue bonds** are becoming mainstream sustainable finance instruments
- Other emerging financial instruments, like **crowd lending or crowd equity**, are gaining relevance in Portugal



Portugal Taking the Lead

➤ Portugal launched the **Growth Blue I Fund (€28M)** — the first InvestEU Blue Economy instrument in Southern Europe.

➤ **Portugal Blue (€50M)**, through Banco Português do Fomento and Fundo Azul, are helping crowd in private capital into ocean-related SMEs and startups.

➤ Investment in 3 main sectors in Portugal: **offshore renewable energy, aquaculture and sustainable shipping** (decarbonisation)



Blue Finance remains significantly small for Portugal's goals

Challenges:

- **High Dependence on Public Capital** is still a big obstacle: limited, high risk perception and creates fragility
- **Not enough investors trained in designing/evaluating ocean projects** → Underinvestment



Interviewees



**José Gamito
Pires**



**António
Castel-Branco**



**Nuno Brito
Jorge**



Building the Blue Economy Workforce

Emerging roles

- ESG / Blue Finance Analyst
- Ocean Risk Analyst
- Blue Bond Structuring Specialist
- Blue Carbon Credit Analyst
- Blue Economy Project Manager
- BE Policy advisor

Salary range

- **Entry:**
€14,000–20,000/year
- **Mid:**
€36,000–60,000/year
- **Senior/Advanced:**
€70,000–100,000+/year

Potential Employers

Traditional financial institutions:

- BNP Paribas Sustainable Center Portugal
- Banco Português de Fomento
- IFC

Other private companies:

- Indico Capital
- Faber

Building the Blue Economy Workforce

The skills gap

No dedicated academic or VET (Vocational Education and Training) pathway for Blue Finance exists in Portugal

Workforce development

- 1. Blue jobs** require technical expertise, digital skills, and multidisciplinary experience
- 2. Key institutions** present but **disconnected**
- 3. Coordinated industry-academia pipeline** needed

Our Recommendations to Strengthen Portugal Blue Finance Capacity through Portuguese youth

- Invest in Portuguese **Start-Ups in Blue Economy**
- Invest in Education & Skills: **Interdisciplinary studies and courses**
- Launching a **Master's in Blue Finance** to build the next generation of ocean finance professionals



A CALL TO ACTION

Blue Finance Pathway

The global ocean economy is valued at \$2.5 trillion annually - and an €8 billion industry in Portugal. We need to attract new funders and bridge funding gaps: from research to marketplace & scale startups