



Blue Economy Initiative

Blue Economy Youth Ambassadors

Final Report

August 2026



Stone Soup Leadership Institute

www.stonesoupleadership.org
www.BlueEconomyGeneration.org/Portugal

The Stone Soup Leadership Institute's

Blue Economy Initiative

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Executive Summary

Portugal stands at a defining moment as it aspires to be a global leader in the Blue Economy. With its maritime history, a deep cultural connection with the ocean, its proud sailing community and its vast coastline, Portugal has the resources needed to succeed. In fact, Portugal is well-positioned to benefit from the €8.7 billion pledged over 5 years by over 100 countries at the 2025 UNOC3 in Nice, France.

- Portugal's business leaders are building blue economy start-ups.
- Portugal's education leaders developed a world renown ocean literacy program.

The Challenge: The blue skills gap requires major investment to align education programs with blue economy careers – to develop the people who will drive this future. Now is the time to build bridges between business and education and develop the people who will drive the Blue Economy Generation.

At the Stone Soup Leadership Institute's **Global Blue Job Shadow Day™** in February 2026, business, education and government leaders issued a clear **Call to Action** – for the need to develop a Blue Economy workforce by empowering Portugal's youth with the tools, training, and mentors they need.

The Institute's **Blue Economy Initiative** was designed as a response to this Call to Action – championed by the **Blue Economy Youth Ambassadors**. From April to July 2026, eight Portuguese university students served as interns working closely with the Institute's team with leadership trainings, coaching and mentoring. They conducted in-depth research on their pathway; interviewed Blue Economy sector leaders; produced videos and developed a comprehensive report on the **Blue Economy Career Pathways** in key sectors: Aquaculture, Blue Biotechnology, Blue Finance, Blue Ocean Technology, Blue Renewable Energy, Blue Shipping, Blue Tourism, and Clean Water Management.

They interviewed 25 with Blue Economy leaders from organisations including GoParity, Águas do Algarve, ERSAR, SEAentia, BlueBio Alliance, CIIMAR, and WavEC in the key sectors: Aquaculture, Blue Biotechnology, Blue Finance, Blue Ocean Technology, Blue Renewable Energy, Blue Shipping, Blue Tourism, and Clean Water Management. Their impressive presentations demonstrated that Portugal's young people are ready to help shape the future of Portugal's Blue Economy.

For **World Ocean Day** the Institute's Ambassadors presented their findings and recommendations to Portugal's leaders including Secretary of State of Fisheries & Maritime Affairs Salvador Malheiro, DGPM Marisa da Silva and Maria Ferriera, and Ana Noronha, Ciencia Viva [video](#)

A consistent picture emerged: while the Blue Economy is growing in every sector, the people power needed to sustain that growth is not keeping pace to scale their ventures. Leaders pointed to the same structural gaps: academic curricula disconnected from industry needs, a shortage of practical and vocational training, young people unaware of careers available to them, and a persistent brain drain pulling qualified professionals toward better-paid positions elsewhere in Europe.

The report also highlights two important issues: the need to develop **Portugals' future leaders and involvement in decision-making and support for women in leadership positions**. Addressing these gaps is essential for innovation, resilience, equity and long-term competitiveness. Portugal's blue economy strategy focuses heavily on investment, infrastructure, innovation and technology. An investment in workforce development is required so it is a central pillar of its Blue Economy strategy.

Competition is accelerating: Norway, Japan, Canada, Spain, U.S. and other nations are seeking the talent needed to compete in the rapidly expanding global Blue Economy.

Portugal now faces a choice: Lead the transformation or risk watching opportunities and talent move elsewhere. By placing people and workforce development at the heart of its Blue Economy strategy, Portugal can turn its maritime heritage into a Blue Economy Generation of opportunity, innovation and global leadership. Time is of the essence.



Thank you all for being here, at the headquarters of the Government of the Portuguese Republic, to present such an interesting project—especially one presented by such bright, young people (which is a very strong sign) and by highly competent people across the many dimensions of the Blue Economy. I believe this platform has tremendous potential, if only because it offers a transparent and open way of showcasing successful professionals, employment needs and funding opportunities.

This is exactly the kind of thing we have wanted to see happen. You can count on us completely, because your goals fit perfectly with this Government's strategy.

I encourage you to keep being creative, so that together we can turn all these good ideas into reality. We are humble enough to welcome ideas, especially from young people, because very often it is precisely these out-of-the-box ideas that allow us to do things differently.

Salvador Malheiro
Secretary of State for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs
June 2, 2026

About Stone Soup Leadership Institute

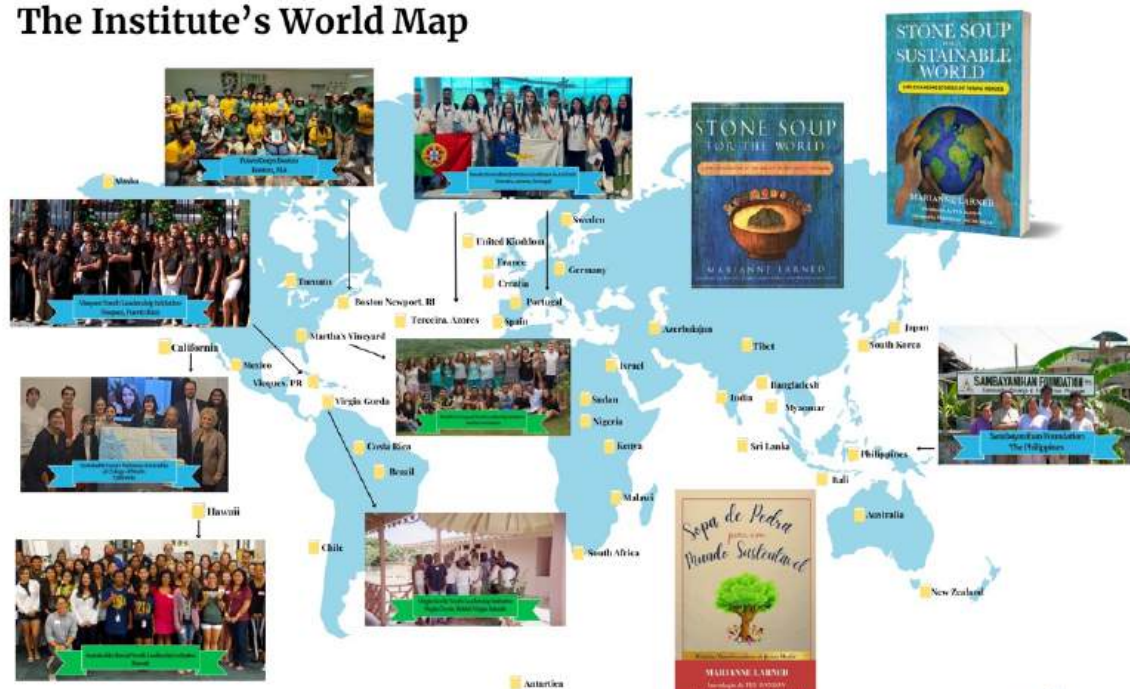
The Stone Soup Leadership Institute is a CSR-driven, sustainability, leadership, and workforce development nonprofit organization that partners with leaders in business, education, and government. For 30 years, we have worked with educators, business mentors and organizations to empower young people from ocean communities and islands in the Azores, Asia, Caribbean and U.S. from Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, Newport, RI to inner-cities of Boston, Baltimore, Cincinnati and Oakland.

The Institute's mission is to engage everyone to share their gifts, resources to empower young people with the tools, training, and networks to become leaders in their lives and in their communities. For eight years, the Institute has designed the **Blue Economy Career Pathways Platform** with local job projections, education requirements, and salaries that creates a roadmap for decision-makers and to help educators guide students toward meaningful, well-paid blue economy jobs.

The Institute's work in Portugal began in 2019, with a delegation of teachers and students from **Terceira, Azores to the 19th Sustainability Summit in the U.S.** The Institute's **Global Blue Job Shadow Day™** in 2026 brought together Blue Economy leaders from business, education and government including Secretary of State for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs Salvador Malheiro with US partners in California and Newport, RI. Their **Call to Action to invest in blue economy workforce development by empowering Portugal's youth—led directly to the Institute's Blue Economy Initiative, championed by the Blue Economy Youth Ambassadors.**

The Stone Soup fable is aligned with the Portuguese legend **Sopa da Pedra**, a culturally significant folk tale showing the power of sharing and community. The Institute's book and curriculum ***Sopade Pedra para um Mundo Sustentável: Histórias Transformadoras de Jovens Heróis*** has been gifted to Portugal's teachers and students as well as decision-makers in business, education and government.

The Institute's World Map



Case Studies:

- Public-private partnerships developed with local business, government, communities high schools & community colleges that empower young people to become leaders of a more just, equitable and sustainable world.
- Stone Soup for the World: 100 stories of heroes from 29 countries
- Stone Soup for a Sustainable World: 100 stories of young heroes from 38 countries
- Curriculum: Lesson Plans bring stories to life with Language Arts & STEM Activities, Service Learning, Sustainable Career Pathways



The Blue Economy Initiative

Background and Purpose

The Institute's **Blue Economy Initiative** was designed as a response to the **Call to Action** at the Institute's Global Blue Job Shadow Day™ 2026. Portugal's blue economy is booming: investment soared from €47 million in 2020 to €1.6 billion in 2025. Major funds are flowing, offshore wind projects are progressing, and research institutions are producing top-tier marine science. But one critical question remains: who will do the work? Up until now, discussions rarely address workforce development—the need for skilled, motivated young professionals to operate, innovate, and lead these sectors.

At the Stone Soup Leadership Institute's **Global Blue Job Shadow Day™** in February 2026, business, education and government leaders issued a clear **Call to Action** – for the need to develop a Blue Economy workforce by empowering Portugal's youth with the tools, training, and mentors they need.

Who Was Involved: The Blue Economy Young Ambassadors

The Institute's Blue Economy Initiative was championed by the **Blue Economy Youth Ambassadors** -- eight Portuguese university students who served as interns from April – July 2026. They engaged directly with business, education and government leaders about the future of jobs, skills, and careers in Portugal's blue economy sectors: **Aquaculture, Blue Biotechnology, Blue Finance, Blue Ocean Technology, Blue Renewable Energy, Blue Shipping, Blue Tourism, and Clean Water Management**. Ambassadors worked with the Institute's global team with weekly leadership trainings and coaching. They conducted in-depth research on each pathway; interviewed Blue Economy sector leaders; produced videos and developed a comprehensive report on the Blue Economy Career Pathways.

Programme Goals

- Conduct original, evidence-based research through research and interviews with sector leaders.
- Develop professional skills of Portuguese university students: research, communication, digital media, and public presentations
- Map career and education pathways across eight blue economy sectors in Portugal
- Create publicly available resources: reports and videos for schools, universities, and policymakers
- Represent the Blue Economy Generation at Portugal's Blue Economy conferences and events.



Blue Economy Leaders Interviews



Blue Economy Initiative Advisory Council

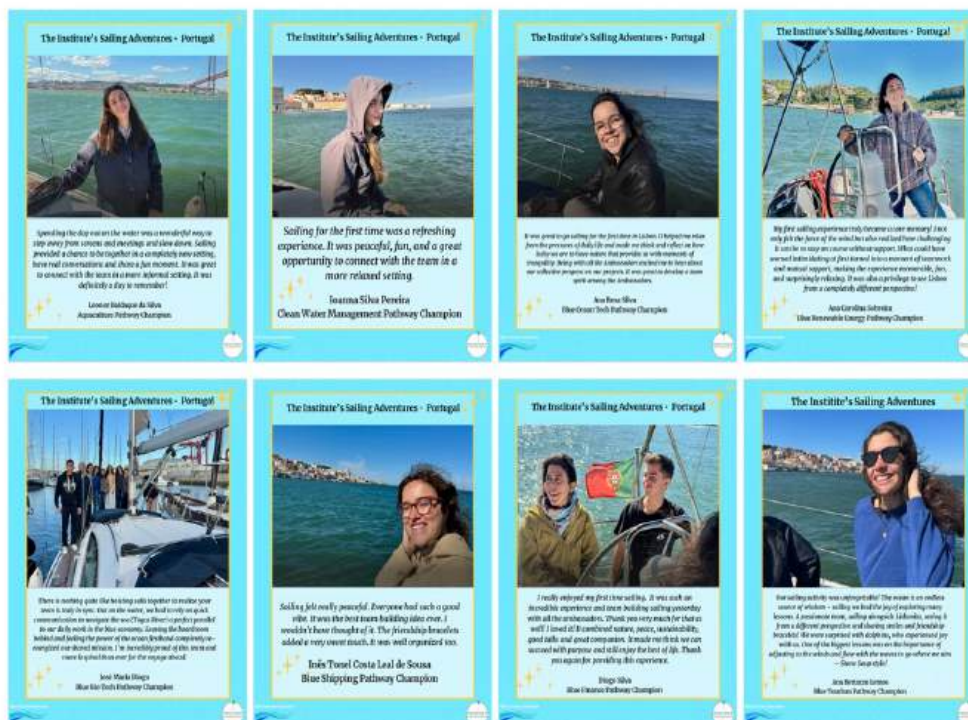


Programme Timeline: April-June 2026

The Blue Economy Youth Ambassadors was held from April to June 2026, with a commitment of 30 hours per student. It combined in-person leadership training sessions including a sailing adventure, weekly Zoom calls, professional skills training with the Institute's global team, and a culminating public event.

Each student received a certificate from the Stone Soup Leadership Institute and a €500 stipend upon completion. The programme also opened future options including media opportunities, speaking engagements, and the possibility of continuing as a paid intern from September 2026.

The Institute's Sailing Adventures



18 April	In-person	Orientation: research guidelines, interview training, team building
23 April	Zoom	Conduct interview 1 & record findings; progress report
30 April	Zoom	Conduct interview 2 & record findings; progress report
7 May	Zoom	Conduct interview 3 & record findings; progress report
14 May	Zoom	Conduct interview 4; prepare draft report
16 May	In-person	Communication training; peer practice presentations
21 May	Zoom	Report writing training; peer presentation review
28 May	Zoom	Near-final draft review; social media & video training
1 June	Zoom	Record video; submit final report & video
4 June	Zoom	Final presentation practice; LinkedIn & media training
2 June	In-person	Public presentation to Secretary Salvador Malheiro
28 July	In-person	Debrief dinner; celebration & future opportunities

Major Findings, Challenges and Highlights

These workforce challenges appear in all sectors as widespread problems across Portugal's Blue Economy.

- **Mismatch Between Education and Industry**
Employers in aquaculture, shipping, renewable energy, water management, and ocean tech say graduates have strong theory but lack practical skills. Education must adapt to address this gap.
- **Undervalued Vocational Pathways**
Technical and vocational training is needed but seriously undervalued. Industry leaders in shipping, renewable energy, aquaculture, and water management need skilled workers and technicians as much as university graduates. Too often these careers are overlooked in education and public discussion.
- **Need for Increasing Awareness /Communication**
From blue biotech to clean water management, a consistent finding is that young people have little or no awareness of the careers in the Blue Economy. Without deliberate, early outreach — ideally at secondary school level — the talent pipeline for every blue economy pathway will be inadequate.
- **Need for Sector-Specific Academic Programmes**
In blue finance there is no dedicated postgraduate programme in Portugal combining finance with marine science and environmental law. In blue renewable energy, postgraduate provision exists but is thin. New curricula are needed that meet industry where it is, not where it was a decade ago.
- **Brain Drain and Talent Retention**
All sectors are losing skilled professionals to other EU countries, especially Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Scandinavia. Higher salaries abroad attract engineers, researchers, maritime officers, and technology specialists just as they are reaching their peak contribution.

Structural Patterns in Portugal: We uncovered deeper issues in the envisioning and developing Portugal's blue economy that are often missing from official reports as they affect all sectors, not just one.

- **The Urgent Need for Leadership Training:** There is essentially no developed leadership training to build the next generation of leaders in Portugal. Young people are almost entirely missing from decision-making in Portugal's blue economy. In every sector, they have little to no presence in policy groups, research teams, or advisory boards that affect their future.
- **The Blue Economy Young Ambassadors Initiative** is a rare exception. By giving eight young people a seat at the table with senior leaders, they were empowered to envision a future that includes them – and that we can all be proud of. This level of youth involvement should be standard. Up until now Portugal's strategy lacks ways to include youth perspectives in governance.
- **Women are underrepresented in senior decision-making and leadership positions** across Portugal and blue economy sectors: shipping, maritime management, offshore technology, aquaculture, and blue finance. In fields like shipping and offshore renewable energy, too few women enter at junior or mid-level positions to ensure gender-balanced leadership in the future. Deliberate efforts, such as targeted recruitment, role models, mentoring and best practices from other countries and are urgently needed in every sector.
- **Portugal's Blue Economy is Limited in its Thinking** - usually described in terms of technology, investment, and GDP growth—both in Portugal and across the EU. Workforce development or building the talent – and pipeline - behind these advances, is often overlooked. This focus determines what gets funded, measured, and discussed at major events and in policies.
- **Bridge the Blue Skills Gap: the Blue Economy Goal & Energy at the Grassroots Level** and the slow pace of institutions. Companies, startups, and research centres in Portugal's blue economy are vibrant and innovative. But when it comes to addressing skill shortages, updating curricula, and improving wages, institutions and policymakers are slow to respond—widening the gap between sector needs and what institutions provide.

Conclusions: Why Invest in Blue Economy Workforce Development

Portugal's ambitions for the blue economy are serious and well-founded. The country has the geographic assets, the research infrastructure, the EU policy support, and the investment momentum to become a Southern European leader in the sustainable ocean economy. The evidence assembled by eight young ambassadors, through more than 20 interviews across eight distinct sectors, raises a question that national strategy has yet to answer adequately: is the human capital to realise those ambitions being built at the same pace?

Across Portugal's blue economy strategies, workforce development is consistently treated as a downstream consequence of sector growth rather than as a prerequisite for it. The assumption is that if investment arrives and technology is developed, the workers will follow. The evidence from eight pathways suggests this assumption is wrong. Talented professionals are leaving for better wages elsewhere in Europe. Graduates are arriving without practical skills. Young people are finishing secondary school without knowing these careers exist.

Workforce Development as the Foundation for Portugal's Success

This report calls on all stakeholders in Portugal's blue economy — government, educational institutions, sector associations, industry leaders, and funders — to make workforce development a standing agenda item in every major strategic conversation. A core pillar.

Specifically, this means: **every blue economy policy document should include a workforce development chapter; every major sector investment should include a human capital component; every conference on the blue economy should feature dedicated sessions on education, skills, youth engagement, and gender equity; and every national strategy should set measurable targets for blue economy workforce growth, not just investment volumes or technological outputs.**

The Blue Economy Young Ambassadors Initiative is proof of what is possible when young people are given the resources and the mandate to contribute. Eight students, working approximately 30 hours each, produced research that is substantive enough to inform policy, credible enough to be presented to the Secretary of State, and compelling enough to inspire their peers. Imagine what a sustained, properly resourced, national-scale programme could achieve.



Recommendations for Portugal's Decision-Makers

These recommendations are addressed to each stakeholder groups, directly from the 8 pathway reports.

For Government and Policymakers

- Include a dedicated workforce development chapter in all national blue economy strategy documents.
- Engage the Economy Secretary: strategy to scale Blue Economy start ups
- Create a formalised, government-backed internship and fellowship programme connecting students with blue economy funds, development finance institutions, public bodies, and industry partners.
- Address wage non-competitiveness in maritime sectors through targeted tax incentives for seafarers and offshore energy workers, modelled on successful frameworks in France and Denmark.
- Ensure that vocational training routes into blue economy careers are recognised, funded, and promoted as equally valid as university pathways.
- Recognise Blue Economy Leaders: social media, podcasts, awards
- Create a Blue Economy Workforce Commission: Economy, Education, Seas

For Educational Institutions

- Develop new, industry-co-designed programmes in blue finance, ocean technology, and marine biotechnology at postgraduate level.
- Expand practical training across all blue economy pathways: internships, site visits, treatment plant placements, vessel time, laboratory access, and applied research partnerships.
- Introduce blue economy career awareness at secondary school level — making ocean literacy and career pathways part of the curriculum, particularly in coastal communities and the islands.
- Support the transition of FCT-funded researchers onto permanent employment contracts, and improve salary competitiveness to reduce brain drain from research institutions.

For Industry and Sector Associations

- Create a Blue Economy Business Network: invest in workforce development
- Partner with universities and polytechnics to co-design curricula that reflect real industry needs, particularly around digitalisation, decarbonisation, and practical technical skills.
- Offer paid internship pathways — including onboard placements in shipping, site-based placements in offshore energy, and laboratory placements in biotech — structured as genuine career entry points.
- Prioritise gender equity in recruitment and leadership development across all blue economy subsectors, with particular urgency in shipping, offshore technology, and maritime management.
- Develop standardised ocean health impact metrics in partnership with academia and government, to build investor confidence and attract private capital into blue finance.

For Civil Society, Philanthropists and Funders

- Rekindle the spirit of Expo'98 World Fair: Ocean literacy
- Fund programmes that put young people's voices into blue economy governance — advisory roles, youth councils, research commissions, and speaking platforms at major events.
- Support the scaling of the Blue Economy Young Ambassadors model: this pilot demonstrated that a relatively modest investment produces research of genuine policy value and transforms the professional trajectories of participating students.
- Invest in communications and awareness campaigns that make blue economy careers visible to young people, particularly in underserved coastal and island communities
- Nurture civic engagement: can do spirit, entrepreneurs, start ups
- Attract new funders: Portugal's sailing community, US expats, Brazilian investors, Portuguese diaspora
- Cultivate a culture of giving back and philanthropy in Portugal.

Explore Blue Career Pathways

Structured, real-world career pathways connecting students and educators to Portugal's growing blue economy



Blue Aquaculture

Aquaculture is the farming of fish, shellfish, algae, and other aquatic organisms to provide sustainabl...

3 Entry-Level 8 Mid-Level 5 Advanced

[View Pathway](#)

[Save Pathway](#)



Blue BioTech

Blue BioTech uses marine bioresources such as algae, microorganisms, and marine compounds to...

4 Entry-Level 4 Mid-Level 4 Advanced

[View Pathway](#)

[Save Pathway](#)



Blue Finance

Portugal is emerging as an important Southern European hub for Blue Finance due to its strong...

3 Entry-Level 3 Mid-Level 2 Advanced

[View Pathway](#)

[Save Pathway](#)



Blue Ocean Technologies

Blue Ocean Technologies is the technological, digital, and innovation branch of the Blue...

1 Entry-Level 2 Mid-Level 1 Advanced

[View Pathway](#)

[Save Pathway](#)



Blue Renewable Energy

Blue Renewable Energy harnesses the power of the ocean to generate sustainable energy through...

3 Entry-Level 3 Mid-Level 3 Advanced

[View Pathway](#)

[Save Pathway](#)



Blue Shipping

Blue Shipping is a vital part of Portugal's Blue Economy, supporting international trade, maritim...

4 Entry-Level 4 Mid-Level 4 Advanced

[View Pathway](#)

[Save Pathway](#)



Blue Tourism

Blue Tourism connects people with coastal and marine environments through sustainable travel...

6 Entry-Level 4 Mid-Level 3 Advanced

[View Pathway](#)

[Save Pathway](#)



Clean Water Management

Clean Water Management focuses on the systems, infrastructure, and professionals responsible for...

3 Entry-Level 3 Mid-Level 3 Advanced

[View Pathway](#)

[Save Pathway](#)

The Blue Economy Career Pathways

Each Ambassador chose/was assigned one pathway and asked to:

- Conduct desk research on sector size, job projections, policies, and investments;
- Interview four leaders from business, education, and organisations active in their pathway;
- Analyse and synthesise findings into a structured report;
- Produce a 2-minute video; and (5) present publicly to Secretary Salvador Malheiro.

The following summaries draw on their findings.

Aquaculture – Ambassador Leonor Baldaque da Silva

Aquaculture is one of Portugal's most established blue economy sectors, with production growing 19% between 2022 and 2023. Portugal is receiving €392.6 million through the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF), creating strong demand for professionals across all levels — from hatchery assistants to aquaculture policy and licensing consultants. Key opportunities lie in sustainable fish farming, shellfish production, and integrated multi-trophic aquaculture systems. The main challenge identified is the complexity of licensing and regulatory processes, which creates bottlenecks for expansion and specialist demand. The sector needs professionals who combine biological knowledge with regulatory expertise and business development skills.



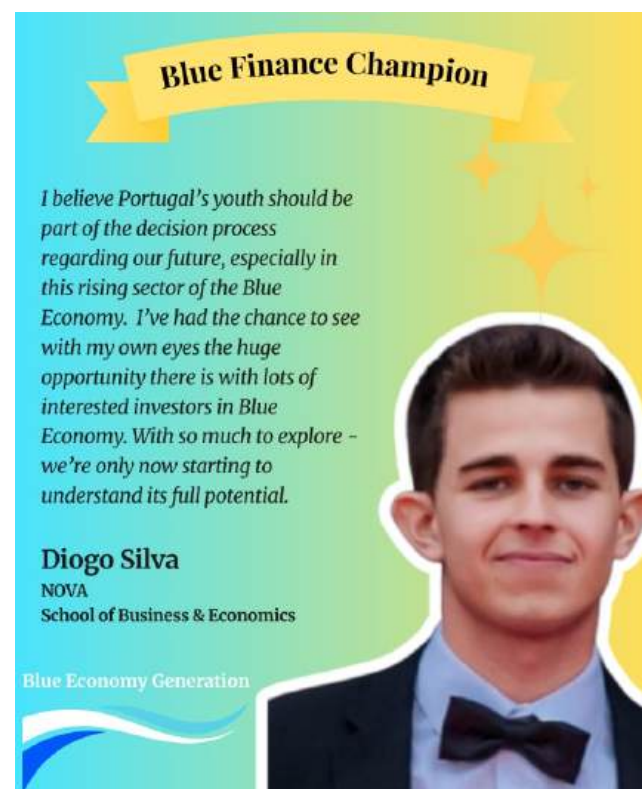
Blue Biotechnology – Ambassador José Maria Diogo

Portugal's Blue Biotech sector is underpinned by the €133 million Blue Bioeconomy Pact — a flagship PRR investment mobilising 83 organisations across 7 industrial verticals. The country holds the 5th-largest EEZ in the EU, giving it extraordinary marine biodiversity resources. Interviews with Elisabete da Costa (BlueBio Alliance), Pedro Leão (CIIMAR) and Luz Paramio (Universidade dos Açores) revealed world-class scientific training but a structural talent retention crisis: Portuguese researchers earn on average €1,580–€2,334/month, compared to €5,000–€7,500 in Germany and the Netherlands. Job growth is projected at over 15% by 2030. The sector urgently needs early outreach to secondary school students, who currently have virtually no awareness of blue biotech careers.



Blue Finance – Ambassador Diogo Silva

Blue finance — raising and directing capital toward protecting marine ecosystems and developing the sustainable ocean economy — is growing rapidly, driven by EU ESG regulation and momentum from UNOC3 (Nice, June 2025), where over €8.7 billion in ocean finance pledges were made. Portugal has two active blue funds (Faber Blue Pioneers I and Growth Blue I, a €28M first-of-its-kind InvestEU instrument). Yet there is no dedicated academic pathway for blue finance in Portugal, creating a significant bottleneck. Interviewees Nuno Brito Jorge (GoParity) and José Gamito Pires (IFC) both stressed the need for blended finance structures, standardised ocean impact metrics, and a stronger human capital pipeline.



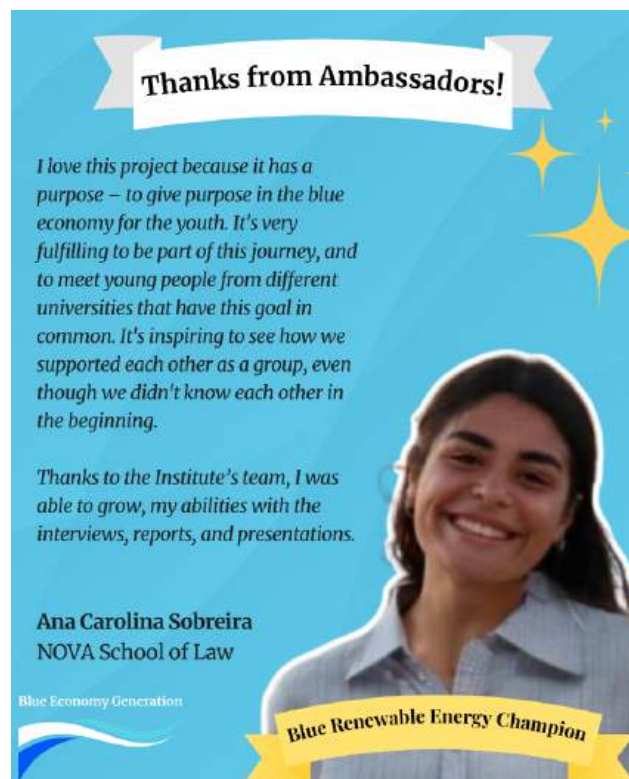
Blue Ocean Technology – Ambassador Ana Rosa Silva

Blue Ocean Tech investment in Portugal grew 34-fold between 2020 and 2025. The sector spans AI, underwater robotics, autonomous vessels, ocean sensors, and maritime digitalisation. Highlights include the PETRA underwater robot (developed by INESC TEC, operational to 6,000 metres depth) and GMV's Vessel Traffic Systems now active in the ports of Sines, Aveiro, and Figueira da Foz. Interview with José Neves (GMV, President of AED Cluster Portugal) highlighted Portugal's internationally competitive companies and research centres, while pointing to the challenge of public procurement models that prioritise lowest cost over innovation. The most demanded skills are AI, machine learning, cybersecurity, robotics, and naval engineering.



Blue Renewable Energy – Ambassador Ana Carolina Sobreira

Portugal is planning €9 billion in investment in floating offshore wind, targeting 2 GW of installed capacity by 2030. Employment in renewables is projected to grow from 50,000 to 214,000 by 2030 (Deloitte/APREN). CorPower Ocean has secured €40 million from the EU Innovation Fund for the VianaWave wave energy project in northern Portugal. Interviews with Diogo Moreira (IPVC) and Inês Machado (WavEC) revealed that both vocational and master's-level pathways are needed — the industry cannot be built on academic graduates alone. The critical challenge is brain drain: talented Portuguese engineers are relocating to higher-wage countries, and policy inconsistency around offshore licensing has slowed sector development.



Blue Shipping – Ambassador Inês Tonel Costa

Portugal's International Shipping Register of Madeira (MAR) is one of Europe's top international registers by tonnage. Yet the sector faces a severe human capital crisis. Interviews with Pedro Pimenta (SEC) revealed that while the land-based management team is stable, floating workforce deployment is technically and contractually complex. The core problem: senior Portuguese maritime officers earn a fraction of their French counterparts (where tax exemptions for seafarers on international voyages make the sector highly attractive). The result is a two-directional brain drain — to international flags and to land-based jobs. At the same time, the industry is undergoing a twin transition toward decarbonisation and digitalisation, demanding new skills in LNG/methanol fuel systems, dual-fuel engine electronics, and shipboard automation that current curricula do not yet provide.



Blue Tourism - Ambassador Ana Bertazzo Lemos

Portugal attracts over 300,000 dedicated surf tourists annually, and its nautical and coastal tourism sector is expanding — with marina development underway in Cascais, Vilamoura, Sines, and the Azores. Career opportunities span boat crew and skippers, surf and sailing instructors, ecotourism coordinators, marina managers, and sustainability directors. The sector offers accessible entry points (many positions require vocational rather than degree-level qualifications) but is highly seasonal in most regions. A notable finding: women are underrepresented in leadership roles across all tourism subsectors, particularly in nautical, maritime, and marine management positions. Portugal's 2030 Sustainable Tourism Strategy explicitly targets nature and adventure tourism — creating a growing pipeline of coordinator and director-level roles.



Clean Water Management – Ambassador Ioanna Silva Pereira

Clean Water Management is the least visible of the eight pathways but one of the most essential. It encompasses drinking water supply, wastewater treatment, desalination, water reuse, and digital monitoring. The flagship project is the Algarve Desalination Plant — the first on mainland Portugal — promoted by Águas do Algarve in response to increasing drought and water scarcity. Interviews with Teresa Fernandes (Águas do Algarve), Luís Simas (ERSAR), and Rui Caetano (SMAS Sintra) revealed strong demand for civil and mechanical engineers, data specialists, laboratory technicians, and regulatory professionals — but significant difficulty recruiting them. Practical training is the biggest gap: young people learn theory but have no experience with treatment systems, pipe networks, or real-world operations.



Final Messages from Blue Economy Youth Ambassadors

Portugal Blue tourism contributes over 70% to the €60 billion added annually to GDP by tourism. We need to invest in professional training and sustainability standards, as blue tourism is a strategic opportunity for the country. We need to make ESG literacy and sustainability more present and non-negotiable at schools and for young people, since is the opportunity for Portugal to be a leader in this field.

Ana Bertazzo Lemos
Blue Tourism Ambassador

Water investments are expected to create more than 7.4k jobs in Portugal. Clean Water Management is not only about protecting water as a resource, but it's also about creating career pathways for people who build, operate, maintain and protect the system that keeps water safe. We really need to bring awareness to the 'professions of water', partnering with communities, companies and universities.

Ioanna Perriera
Clean Water Management Champion

The blue shipping industry has peak salaries around €125k annually. Our education strategy must shift from theory to practice. Universities and academy must become true industry partners, to ensure graduates are ready to the next generation of vessels.

Inês Tonel Sousa
Blue Shipping Ambassador

By 2030, the ocean will add \$3 trillion to the global economy. Therefore, the creation of a Master's in Blue Finance isn't just an academic milestone – it's a strategic investment in the people that will drive this sector forward.

Diogo Silva
Blue Finance Ambassador

It's expected that blue biotechnology jobs increase 30% until 2030. We must seize this opportunity and stand at the forefront of this boom. We must seize this opportunity and stand at the forefront of this blue biotechnology boom.

José Maria Diogo, BlueBio Tech Champion

Portugal has the potential to be a leader in Blue Tech. It is important that higher education in Portugal offers specialization in the emerging area of Blue Tech.

Ana Rosa Silva
Blue Ocean Tech Ambassador

Portugal imports two thirds of the fish it consumes, showcasing the huge potential for the €200 million industry to grow. In order to succeed, aquaculture requires cross-interdisciplinary training that bridges biology, engineering and business.

Leonor Silva
Aquaculture Ambassador

There is a €9 billion investment being made in Blue Renewable Energy in Portugal. Portuguese diverse academic system, including Higher Professional Technical Courses, already gives some roots to open pathways into this sector.

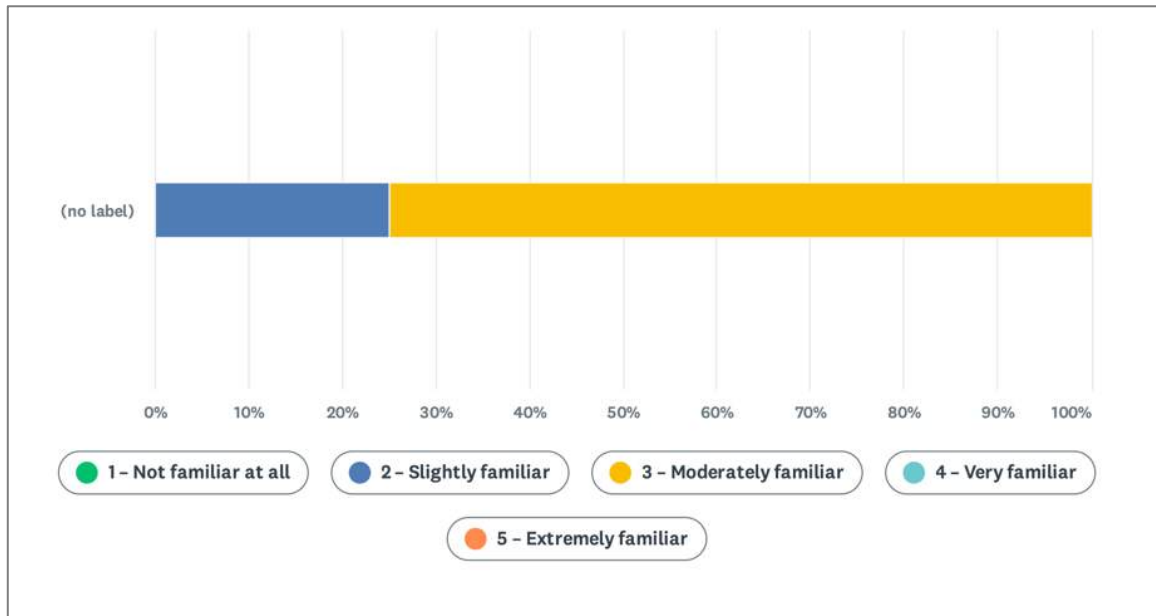
Ana Carolina Sobreira
Blue Renewable Energy Ambassador

Impact of the Youth Ambassadors Programme

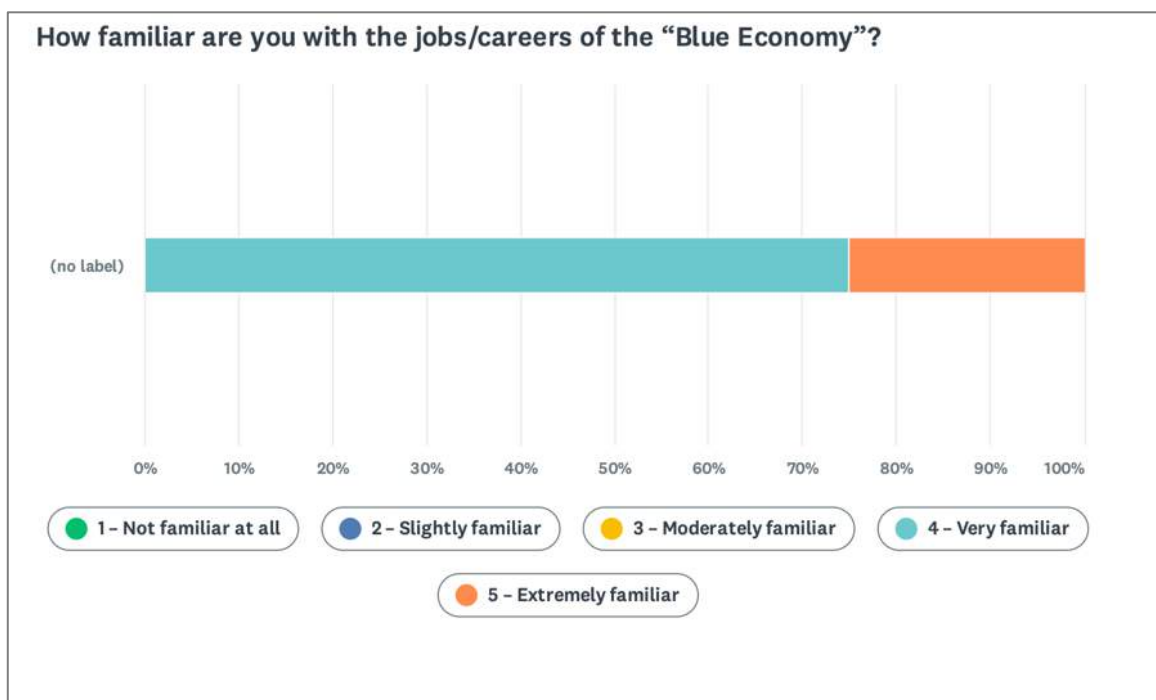
The Blue Economy Youth Ambassadors completed the Institute's Sustainability Survey (pre and post)

How Familiar Are You With The Jobs/Careers of the Blue Economy?

Pre-Program Responses

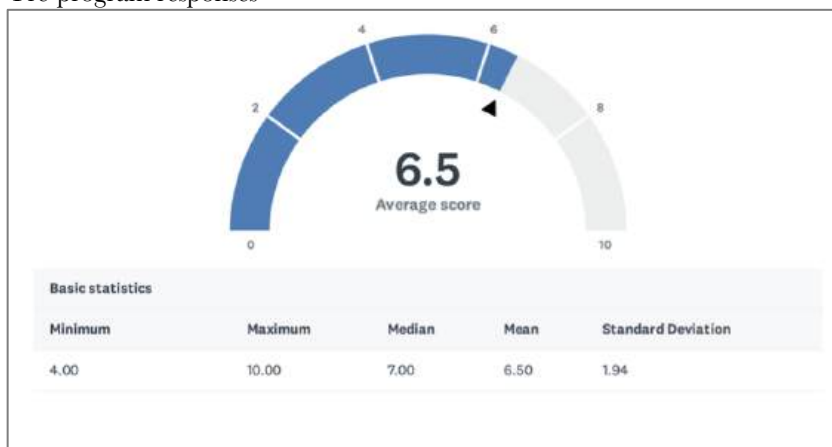


Post-program responses

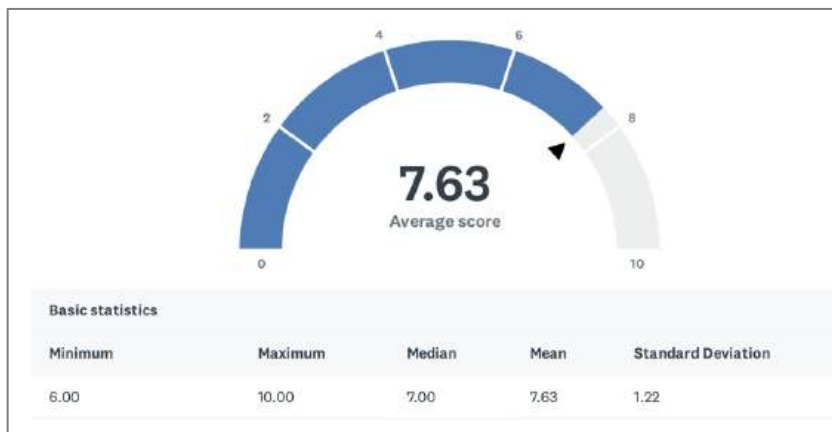


How Interested Are You In Pursuing a Blue Economy Career Pathway?

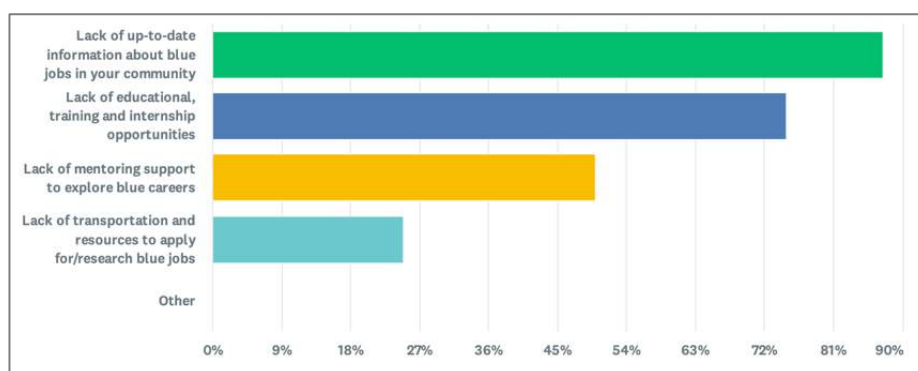
Pre-program responses



Post-program responses



What are the Biggest Challenges Facing Young Adults Applying for Blue & Green Jobs?



In the post-program survey, in response to the question “What Resources Are Most Important to you to pursue your ideal Career Pathway?”, participants ranked the following as the most important: Internships, Networking, and Blue Job Training Opportunities. In the post-program survey, in response to the question “What would help you most to reach your desired career?”, participants ranked the following as the most important: Experiential/Hands-on learning.

The Institute's Accomplishments: 2022-2026

The Blue Economy + Our Youth = A Vision for Our Future

Events

- **Presentation to Secretary of State: June 2026** • [Watch video](#)
- **Global Blue Job Shadow Day™ February 2026** • [Read more](#)
The Institute's signature event with business, education and government leaders:
 - Portugal: Peniche and Lisbon • U.S.: Newport, Rhode Island and California
 - **Call to Action:** We need to develop a Blue Economy workforce by empowering Portugal's youth with the tools, training, and networks to be innovators and leaders of a Blue Economy.
- **Conducted Event Cascais City Hall: September 2025**
Featured Blue Economy leaders from Portugal and Sausalito, California
- **The Institute's Portugal Initiative:** [Case Study: Terceira, Azores](#) **2022-2023**

Press

- **Blue Economy News. Earth:** [Read More](#)
In Portugal, Stone Soup Leadership Institute is Building Blue Economy Education Pathways
- **The Portugal News** [Read more](#)
Portugal and the Strength of the Blue Economy: An Inspiring Meeting in Cascais

Programme

Blue Economy Initiative: 2026 [Read more](#)

- Conducted Blue Economy Youth Ambassadors Internship & Sailing Adventure
- Created Blue Economy Advisory Council & Developed Portugal Management Team
- Engaged Blue Economy Leaders: Business, Education, Organizations
- Customized Surveys & Interview Research Guidelines
- Custom-designed Blue Economy Career Pathways Platform

Portugal's Blue Economy Conferences: 2025-2026: [Read reports](#)

- The Economist's World Ocean Summit Europe
- Fórum Oceano's Business2Sea Conference: Matosinhos
- Ciencia Viva's National Ocean Literacy Conference
- BlueBio Alliance's 10th Anniversary
- C2SEA's Blue Careers Job Fair & Conference
- Lisbon Ocean Professionals Network: Blue Carbon & Natural Capital of the Ocean

Presented the Institute's book to 200 teachers and leaders in business, education and government
- ***Sopade Pedra para um Mundo Sustentável: Histórias Transformadoras de Jovens Heróis***
(Stone Soup for a Sustainable World: Life-Changing Stories of Young Heroes)

Read more: [Overview](#) • [Em português](#)

Partnership Opportunities

The Blue Economy Initiative was a pilot designed to demonstrate a model, produce evidence, and build a cohort of young advocates. It has done all three. The question now is scale. The Institute is ready to develop partnerships with business, education, government and the sailing community.

- **Blue Economy Education Exhibit** is a digital resource for teachers to explore the Blue Economy Career Pathways with their students. It features the Ambassador presentations, the Blue Economy leaders' videos and educational tools for teachers and students. Once it's fully funded and developed this could become freely available career guidance tool for Portugal's schools and universities to guide students to join the Blue Economy Generation.
- **Leadership Development: Blue Economy Youth**
Young people are invited to be trained as representatives and champions of each pathway. They will serve as the Institute's representatives and speakers at webinars to educators, schools, universities and Blue Economy conferences on the Blue Economy Initiative.
- **Blue Economy Speaker Bureau:** The sailing community could be an important strategic partner to engage to realize Portugal's goal of being a global leader in the Blue Economy. These one-hour events will showcase Portugal's Blue Economy leaders, their company's work, impact, outlook on future workforce needs as well as opportunities for potential investors.
- **Blue Schools Teacher Webinar: November 2026:** We will conduct a webinar for high school teachers in the Blue Economy to discover how they can empower their students with the Blue Economy Career Pathways. Teachers will receive the Institute's book and curriculum: Portuguese version of *Stone Soup for a Sustainable World: Life-Changing Stories of Young Heroes* – ***Sopa de Pedra para um Mundo Sustentável: Histórias Transformadoras de Jovens Heróis.***
- **Schools Pilot Program: Blue Economy Career Pathways: Nov. 2026-Feb.2027**
At the Blue Schools Webinar, teachers are invited to participate in a pilot programme to explore the Blue Economy Career Pathways with their students. They will have the opportunity to work with the Institute's global team, meet Portugal's Blue Economy leaders as well our network of Blue Economy practitioners. Together – teachers, students and Blue Economy practitioners - will share their experiences at the Institute's **Global Blue Job Shadow Day™ 2027.**
- **Blue Economy Business & Education: The Global Blue Job Shadow Day™ Feb. 2027**
The Institute's signature event returns in February 2027. Designed as a CSR event, it builds bridges with leaders in Portugal's Blue Economy - from business, education, and government – and young people who are exploring the Institute's Blue Economy Career Pathways. The event will feature the teachers, students and business mentors as well as the Blue Economy Ambassadors — young people who have moved from audience to stage in the space of just one year.
- **The Institute's Blue Economy Career Pathways Platform** has been custom designed for Portugal incorporating the Ambassador's research with local job projections, salary ranges, education requirements, and resources in key sectors: Aquaculture, Blue Biotechnology, Blue Finance, Blue Ocean Technology, Blue Renewable Energy, Blue Shipping, Blue Tourism, and Clean Water Management. Each pathway is designed to help teachers understand the growing demand for these careers, so they can better prepare students for meaningful, well-paying jobs in Portugal's Blue Economy. Once it is fully funded and developed it could be a valuable tool made freely available for Portuguese schools and universities to help build the Blue Economy.
- **Public Awareness Campaign:** We can educate people by writing columns for *Blue Economy News*; produce video content; develop LinkedIn Blue Economy Workforce group to engage business practitioners as mentors in the Global Blue Job Shadow Day™2027

The Stone Soup Leadership Institute's Team



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www.StoneSoupLeadership.org
www.BlueEconomyGeneration.org/Portugal