



## Intergenerational Ocean Hackathon AAORIA in Brazil 13-14 April 2026

Challenge Coordinator: GEO Blue Planet, supported by EU4OceanObs, implemented by Mercator Ocean International

Challenge Partner: IOCaribe

### Challenge Abstract – rationale and main objective

**Challenge n°5 focuses on improving how information on large-scale *Sargassum* blooms is communicated, disseminated, and used by decision-makers and coastal stakeholders.** While *Sargassum* plays an important ecological role in the ocean, its increasing presence near shore has become a persistent environmental, economic, and societal concern for many regions and coastal communities. Earth Observation data, particularly through the Copernicus Marine Service (implemented by Mercator Ocean International) now provides real-time monitoring of *Sargassum* (since November 2025) but this information can be difficult for non-technical users to access, interpret, and translate into action.

The **Sargassum Information Hub (SIH)**, managed by the GEO Blue Planet Secretariat including the communications team, already demonstrates strong user interest and engagement. In 2025, the Hub reached over **40,000 unique visitors**, attracted strategic partnerships, and became a key reference point for a growing user community. Webpages dedicated to **monitoring and regional content (notably Jamaica, Barbados, and Mexico) are among the most visited**. Additionally, across all thematic use cases produced within EU4OceanObs project, the **Sargassum case study generated the highest number of uploads**, underlining both demand and relevance.

This growing traffic clearly shows the need to **prioritise digital communication and dissemination efforts on *Sargassum***, with a particular focus on improving content clarity, navigation, and data accessibility, especially at the regional level. Users are seeking **quickly understandable, visually engaging, and actionable information** to support tangible decisions. Making complex data usable for action is therefore central to this challenge.

The objective is to **co-create new, visually driven webpages on the SIH** that better engage end-users and stakeholders in the Caribbean, Central and South America, Africa. These webpages will be designed to answer the most pressing questions raised by coastal and marine managers, blue economy professionals, and other practitioners. They will combine background context with real-time data from Copernicus Marine Service new released product on *Sargassum* detection, presented in a clear and intuitive way, to directly support workplans, policy development and decision-making processes.



From the beginning, participants will be encouraged to think beyond data production and focus on **dissemination strategies and popularisation of technical information**. The challenge explicitly aims to bridge the gap between ocean science and policy by rethinking how information is prioritised, structured, visualised, and editorialised. Layouts, visual storytelling, information hierarchy, and language choices will all be examined to ensure content is accessible to non-experts and tailored to user needs.

A key first step will be **mapping different user profiles** and identifying their specific information needs. This user-centred approach will help increase engagement while also improving the visibility and relevance of subregional data. Coaches and preparatory sessions will allow to provide guidance, and share lessons learned from past projects to ensure the resulting tools respond to real challenges faced by communities.

ECOPs, supported by coaches, will select a specific Caribbean subregion and **co-design a dedicated regional section of the SIH**. This section will serve as a prototype that can later be replicated for other regions. Participants are encouraged to build upon existing regional pages from the Hub where content is already available but needs to be re-organized and presented in a new innovative way.

Each new regional section will integrate a **decision-support tool designed for non-technical users, named the dashboard**, already coded and developed by Mercator Ocean International. Participants will define which indicators are most relevant to display (for example *Sargassum* abundance in national waters, winds and currents, marine protected areas, etc.) and determine the most effective visual formats (maps, time series, simplified charts, histograms, etc.).

Finally, the long-term value of the challenge lies in its **replicability and visibility** as it aims to have long-lasting impacts. The outcomes will be deployed directly on the Sargassum Information Hub and supported by targeted communication campaigns and dissemination activities. As such, the challenge will act as a showcase for effective user engagement, strengthening the translation of ocean science into actionable knowledge and supporting better anticipation, understanding, and management of *Sargassum* impacts. From analysing where is located the algae and when are the most prominent blooms to highlighting the benefits of harvest and valorisation, from detection to collection, each aspect of the topic will be covered.