Deliverable 4.2

Searchable Interactive Open-Source Portal

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Abstract	BlueBioMatch, created by BlueBioClusters, is a platform that fosters collaboration among stakeholders in the blue bioeconomy, facilitating the exchange of information and technology. The platform emphasizes sustainable blue bioresource development and bridges theoretical concepts with practical applications, promoting global innovation and growth.
Keywords	Bluebioclusters, blue bioeconomy, platform, community, sustainability, business development, startups, matchmaking, workshop, knowledge transfer, technology

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
Version	Publication date	Changes
1.0	30.08.2023	Initial version

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Acronyms

BBC	BlueBioClusters
BBM	BlueBioMatch – The Blue Bioeconomy Hub

Executive Summary

BlueBioClusters' Searchable Interactive Open-Source Portal, **BlueBioMatch – The Blue Bioeconomy Hub**, emerges as a novel platform designed to propel progress within the blue bioeconomy domain. This innovative platform is a convergence point for diverse stakeholders, ranging from startups and SMEs to researchers, policymakers, and funders. Its purpose is to facilitate the exchange of vital information, technologies, and opportunities while fostering collaborative initiatives that promote the sustainable development of blue bioresources. BlueBioClusters' central aim is to bolster advancements in blue innovations by equipping startups, companies, and policymakers with advanced business tools and methodologies. The project seeks to stimulate cooperation and cultivate a shared vision for sustainable blue growth across nine distinct European regions by actively engaging with regional actors. BlueBioMatch is an interactive nexus, bridging the gap between theoretical concepts and practical application within the blue bioeconomy sector. By facilitating stakeholder interactions, the platform encourages mentorship, direct collaboration, and the exchange of technology insights. It allows participants to leverage collective expertise and resources, fostering the innovative application of blue bioresources. With a multidimensional approach, BlueBioMatch transcends geographical boundaries, supporting interactions that hold the potential to advance the blue bioeconomy's trajectory and leverage innovation through collaboration.

1 About BlueBioMatch

1.2 A platform for the BlueBioClusters project

BlueBioMatch - The Blue Bioeconomy Hub serves to achieve the project's main objective to support and increase the uptake of sustainable blue bioeconomy business opportunities by European (coastal) regions, companies, and citizens to contribute to regional development and the EU Green Deal by improving the services of blue bioeconomy clusters throughout Europe to both public as well as private actors. In addition, it is the platform for targeted promotion, dissemination, and exploitation of project results during the project lifetime and beyond.

More specifically, it is a suitable environment to showcase integrated and circular value chains within the Blue Bioeconomy. It supports work package 3's objective to help businesses and regions integrate […] novel ecologic-driven business models. In addition, it serves as a platform to achieve objective 3 to provide regional blue bio companies and actors access to the technologies they require to realise their transition to blue bio-based regions. With a growing community, the objective of work package 5 is to stimulate and accelerate the development of an innovative, inclusive blue bioeconomy in the participating regions [and beyond] by enabling entrepreneurs/citizens to realise their sustainable, eco-friendly business ideas. Once established within the blue bioeconomy sector, BlueBioMatch will target policymakers' and regulatory bodies' participation to foster blue bioeconomy actions in regional development plans and their political/societal uptake. (BlueBioClusters' objective 5)

Furthermore, BlueBioMatch serves BlueBioClusters' purpose to identify and gather stakeholders in need of new technology and connect them with those offering technology solutions, but also with other blue economy experts, who can support them in getting in touch with other stakeholders, thus creating a networking effect. Technology providers will be invited to showcase their technology on BlueBioMatch, which will be visible to other platform users. Through its "Events" function, BlueBioMatch will support the organisation of matchmaking events in collaboration with work packages 5-6-7 to stimulate further matchmaking between technology providers and users and inspire new or support existing value chains. Through its interactive feed, working groups and mentoring feature, BlueBioMatch will not only serve as a repository for technologies but also explicitly function as an opportunity/networking platform for finding and realising new developments in collaborative research or business projects – not necessarily connecting only suppliers with users and vice versa; but also, suppliers and other experts to encourage co-creation and to stimulate the creation of synergies.

Finally, BlueBioMatch – the BlueBioeconomy Hub is dedicated to building a diverse blue bioeconomy community, bringing together voices from different sectors, such as researchers, entrepreneurs, policymakers, aquaculture experts, and marine biotechnologists. The overall mission of knowledge sharing, matchmaking and promotion of the blue bioeconomy fosters the sustainable use and preservation of marine and aquatic resources. The platform offers different services to blue bioeconomy stakeholders, its key target audience. Furthermore, BlueBioMatch allows stakeholders from sectors tangent to the blue bioeconomy to join the community and exchange. This includes green bioeconomy players and other blue economy sectors, such as renewable marine energy or fisheries that offer solutions that can support the blue bioeconomy, for example, marine multi-use combining offshore renewable energy and sustainable aquaculture.

1.1 Objectives

The main objectives of BlueBioMatch are presented below:

1. **Facilitation of Interactions and Collaboration**: Our platform prioritises connecting users from various sectors of the blue bioeconomy, streamlining communications, and fostering seamless collaboration. This interconnectivity ensures a robust network where members can connect, share resources, and advance mutual goals.

2. **Provision of Value**: BlueBioMatch strives to offer significant value to its users. We do this through curated resources, insights, and tools that empower members to thrive in the blue bioeconomy sector. By focusing on our community's specific needs and aspirations, the platform ensures that every interaction on our platform adds tangible value.

3. **Sustainable Growth**: The future of the blue bioeconomy lies in sustainability. As such, our hub emphasises sustainable practices. This relates to the users

joining the platform and its development, which will be geared towards resilient community growth and longevity well beyond the duration of the BBC project.

By pursuing these objectives, BlueBioMatch aspires to become the one-stop shop for the blue bioeconomy sector.

1.3 A Multi-project Platform

To ensure synergies, cost efficiency and long-term development, the BBC Consortium has decided to join forces with like-minded EU-funded projects to support the development of BlueBioMach. By joining forces with the EU Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters project AlgaeProBANOS and the ERDF co-funded Interregional Innovation Investments Instrument (I3) of the European Commission project Baltic MUPPETS, a diverse set of blue bioeconomy topics and stakeholders have been involved and considered in the Platform's creation phase.

AlgaeProBANOS will build acceleration networks and digital solutions to support algae businesses, while running six business pilots across the Baltic and North Sea region, making use of both micro- and macroalgae for applications in food, feed, nutraceuticals, textiles, cosmetics, and plant biostimulants. The project will bring eight innovative algae-based products to market, helping to meet the growing demand for ecologically friendly, high-quality, circular bio-based goods.

The main objective of Baltic MUPPETS is to develop new value chains for small mussels (1-3 cm) from the Baltic Sea for pet food and to develop innovative technologies for farming, harvesting, and processing mussels. The project will enable a new circular economy in the Baltic Sea Region and provide support to mussel farmers across Europe to develop, diversify, and scale their existing businesses.

Furthermore, BlueBioClusters' sister project, BlueREV, was invited to join the platform and invite its project partners and stakeholders to join, creating a strong blue bioeconomy community right from the beginning.

Once the platform is launched, further synergies with projects, initiatives and organisations offering opportunities for the blue bioeconomy community will be sought to make BlueBioMatch the tool to bring together the blue bioeconomy community and boost growth and the development of a sustainable blue bioeconomy.

3 BlueBioMatch – The Blue Bioeconomy Hub

3.1 Target Users

The target users of the BlueBioMatch - The Blue Bioeconomy Hub are stakeholders active in all blue bioeconomy sectors – and those stakeholders active in other sectors, e.g., the green bioeconomy, that can support innovation. The platform connects academia and industry, companies and entrepreneurs, blue farmers and

aquaculturists, technology providers, business support organizations, NGOs, public authorities, policymakers, and regulatory bodies.

3.2 Components and Use

BlueBioMatch - The Blue Bioeconomy Hub is accessible under the following links:

- www.bluebiomatch.eu
- www.bluebioeconomyhub.eu

The user communication is carried out through direct messaging on the platform or by email with the following two email addresses:

- contact[at]bluebiomatch.eu
- news[at]bluebiomatch.eu

BlueBioMatch's central administration is executed by SUBMARINER Network EEIG, the coordinator of the BlueBioClusters project. Furthermore, BBM is powered by two other projects, AlgaeProBANOS and Baltic MUPPETS, responsible for creating thematic content and administrating thematic groups on algae and mussels.

3.2.1 Landing Page

BlueBioMatch will be accessible through a landing page, which will display the overall mission of the platform and the services offered to motivate users to register and access the platform's full functionalities. Events created on the platform and thematic working groups will be displayed on the homepage but will only be accessible after registering as a member. The registration process will be launched by clicking the BlueBioMatch's Registration button. After registering (registration process described in 3.2.2 Registration) and being accepted as a member (admin will review registration requests to ensure only reliable users get access), users will land on the My Activities page (described in section 3.2.3 My Activity).

Access to the landing page for non-members is possible under www.bluebiomatch.eu.

Figure 1 Landing Page for non-members

3.2.2 Registration and Login

Applicants must fill out the required fields in the signup form to register. After completing the form, the platform admins receive a notification and accept or reject the user. In both cases, an email will be sent to the applicant. Accepted users will receive a confirmation email, including an activation form. This form serves as a call to action to complete the user profile with key information to benefit from the platform entirely. Logging in is possible through other account credentials such as Google, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Once the activation is completed, users receive full access to the platform services (see section 3.2.3 My Activity).

Figure 2 Signup Form

Figure 3 Activation Form

3.2.3 My Activity

The My Activity page is the landing page for community members. It comprises the following information:

Section 1: Profile completeness in per cent, quick access to update the user profile and profile content upload.

Section 2: Quick access to display user's recent activities, such as recent posts or event attendance.

Section 3: The slider grid in this section briefly explains the offered tools and services on the platform. In addition, it provides a quick access option to be redirected to specific sections such as FAQs.

Section 4: The slider with all BBM events provides quick access to explore events.

Section 5: In this section, all existing working groups are displayed to highlight the topic-specific subcommunities, including a call to action.
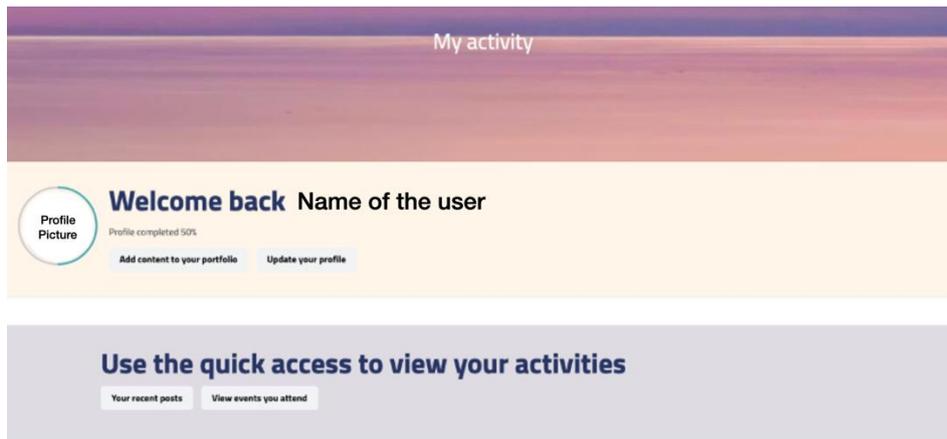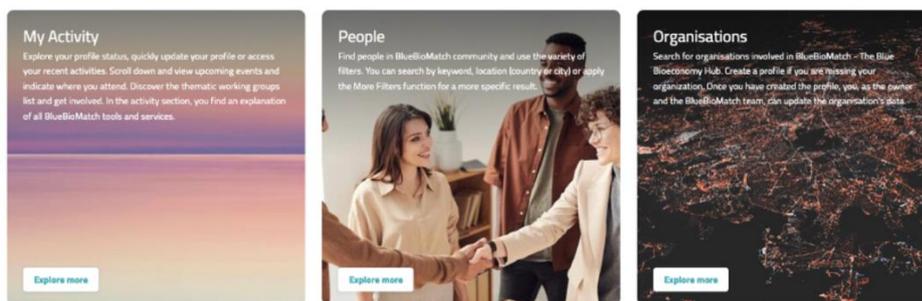
Figure 4 My Activity Section

3.2.4 People

In the People section, users start a targeted search for members in the BlueBioMatch community by using various filters, such as keyword, location (country or city) or applying the "more filters" function for a more tailored result (e.g., blue bioeconomy sector, etc.). In addition, a map with user location gives a geographical overview of BBM community members.
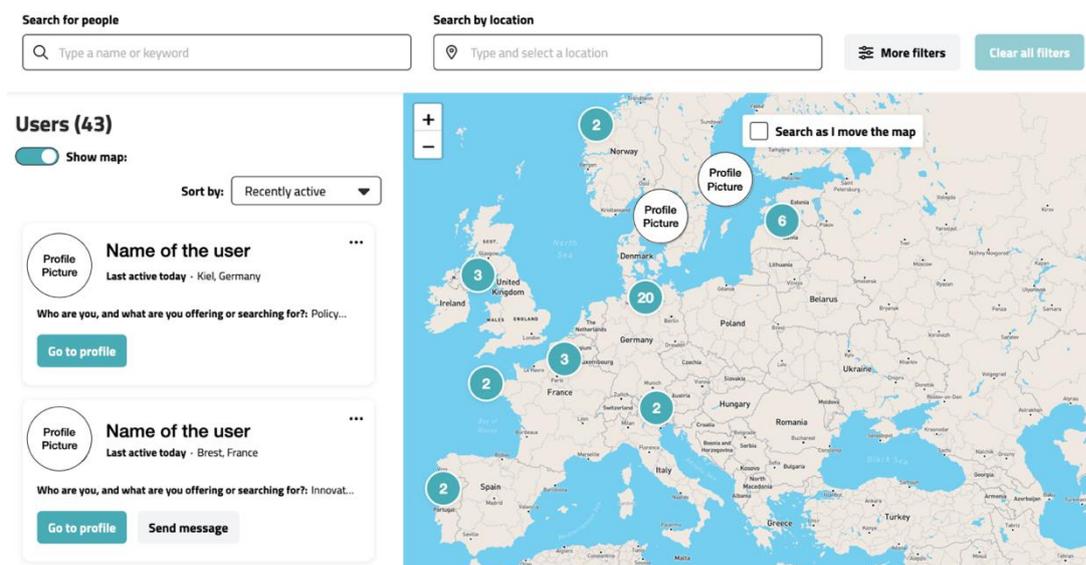

Figure 5 People Section

3.2.5 Organisations

This section lists the organisations for which community members work. Either during the registration process or after the successful registration, each member can create a profile for their organisation, which will be visible to all users. The creator owns the profile and can update or add members to it. This can also be requested from the admin team. Once an organisation exists, new users can choose it from a dropdown menu when they register so that all users working for a given organisation will be listed on its page.
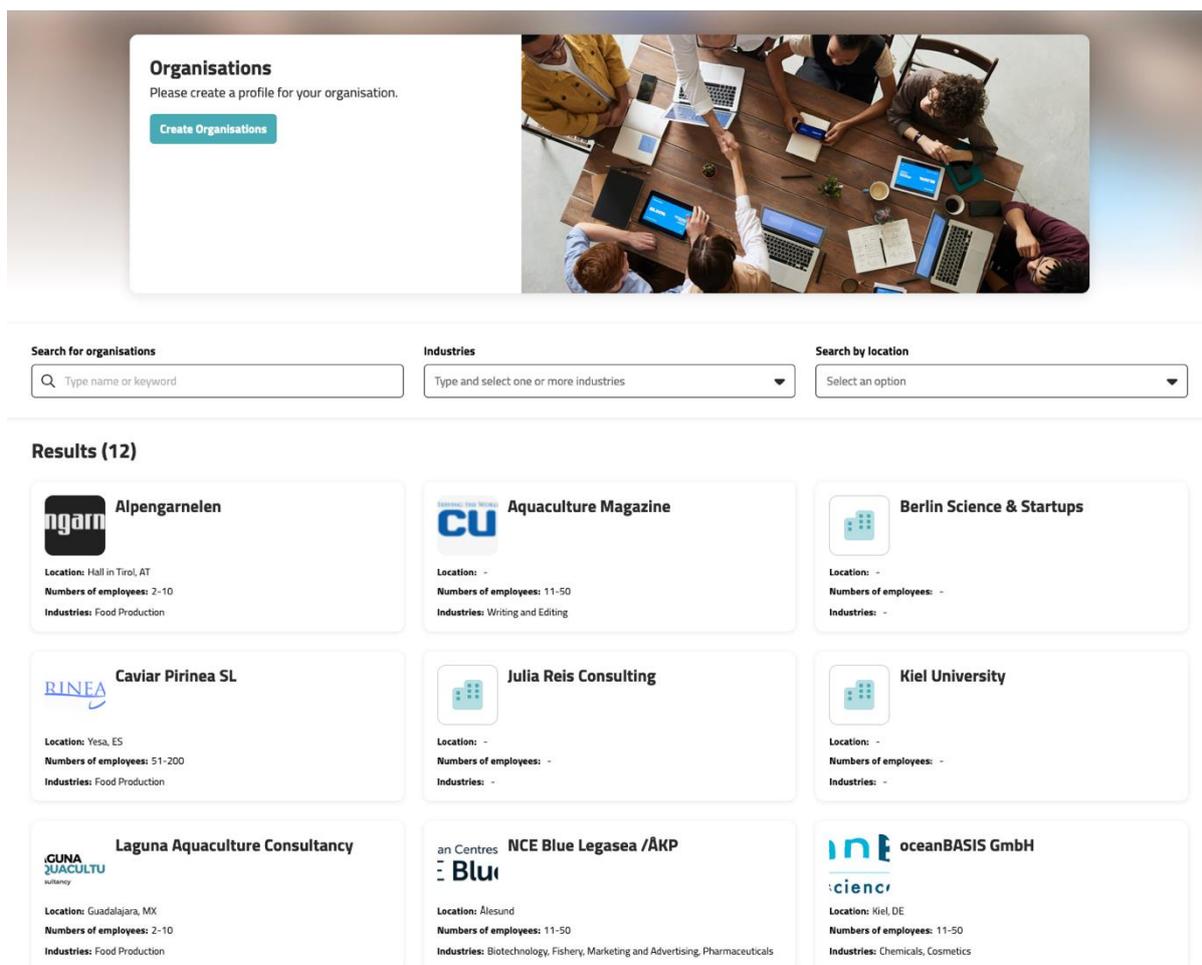

Figure 6 Organisations' Page

3.2.6 Working Groups

BlueBioMatch members can join thematic working groups connecting experts in a given field. The number of working groups will evolve as the platform grows. A request to create a new working group can be sent to the admin team and will be discussed with the applicants.

Furthermore, the admin team has created and will manage the Blue Products Sharing group, which will be the space where users can showcase the products (including technologies), which will also be displayed in the BlueBioMatch Products Showcase (described in section 3.2.11 Products Showcase).

The admin team has prepared guidelines for users to make the best of the platform's functions. Below is an example giving instructions to users on how to showcase their products.

Guidelines for Members:

1. Go to your profile (Link) and open "my portfolio" (Link)

2. Create a folder with the following title: Product category/your company name. Example: Cosmetic Products/Oceanwell). If you have more product categories, create more folders with the respective folder title.

3. Open the folder and create/upload one or more files by choosing an external link, article, or document where you link your product information to showcase your products.

4. After completing the data upload, click the "share folder" button, select the specific live feed, open the dropdown, and choose the "Blue Products Sharing" group. In addition, you could inform particular people by clicking "notify people". In the last step, please click the "publish button".

Once the product is published in the "Blue Products Sharing" group, the BlueBioMatch team will add your product to the "Products Showcase", the visual product catalogue for the BlueBioMatch community.

If you have any questions, check out the FAQ section or contact the BlueBioMatch Team | contact[at]bluebiomatch.eu.

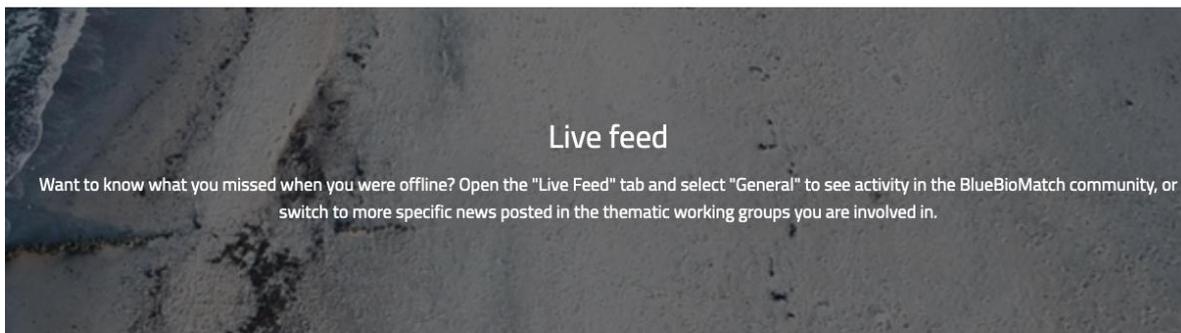
Figure 7 Working Groups Section

3.2.7 Live Feed

The live feed shows BBM users what they missed when they were offline. They can open the "Live Feed" tab and select "General" (global live feed) to see the activities of other BBM members in the BlueBioMatch community or switch to more specific news and activities posted in the thematic working groups where they are involved. Furthermore, this section offers the following functions:

Check in: BBM users can create a so-called "check-in post", which shows where the person is currently located. In addition, users can notify people by using the notify function. This post will be published in the global live feed and serve as a facilitation method for meeting people in person when, e.g., users attend an in-person conference or event.

Trip: The trip function is very similar to the latter described above. In addition, users can notify people by using the notify function. It allows users to inform other community members about their travel and meet other users based in that location.

Event: Here, users can create upcoming events and indicate if they will attend this event. The events created by users will be displayed in the events section described in section 3.2.8 Events.

Figure 8 Live Feed Section

3.2.8 Events

Users can discover upcoming events for and from the BlueBioMatch Community in the events section. They can add exciting events and indicate which events they will attend. Furthermore, the tagging function is also available to link community members who might be interested.
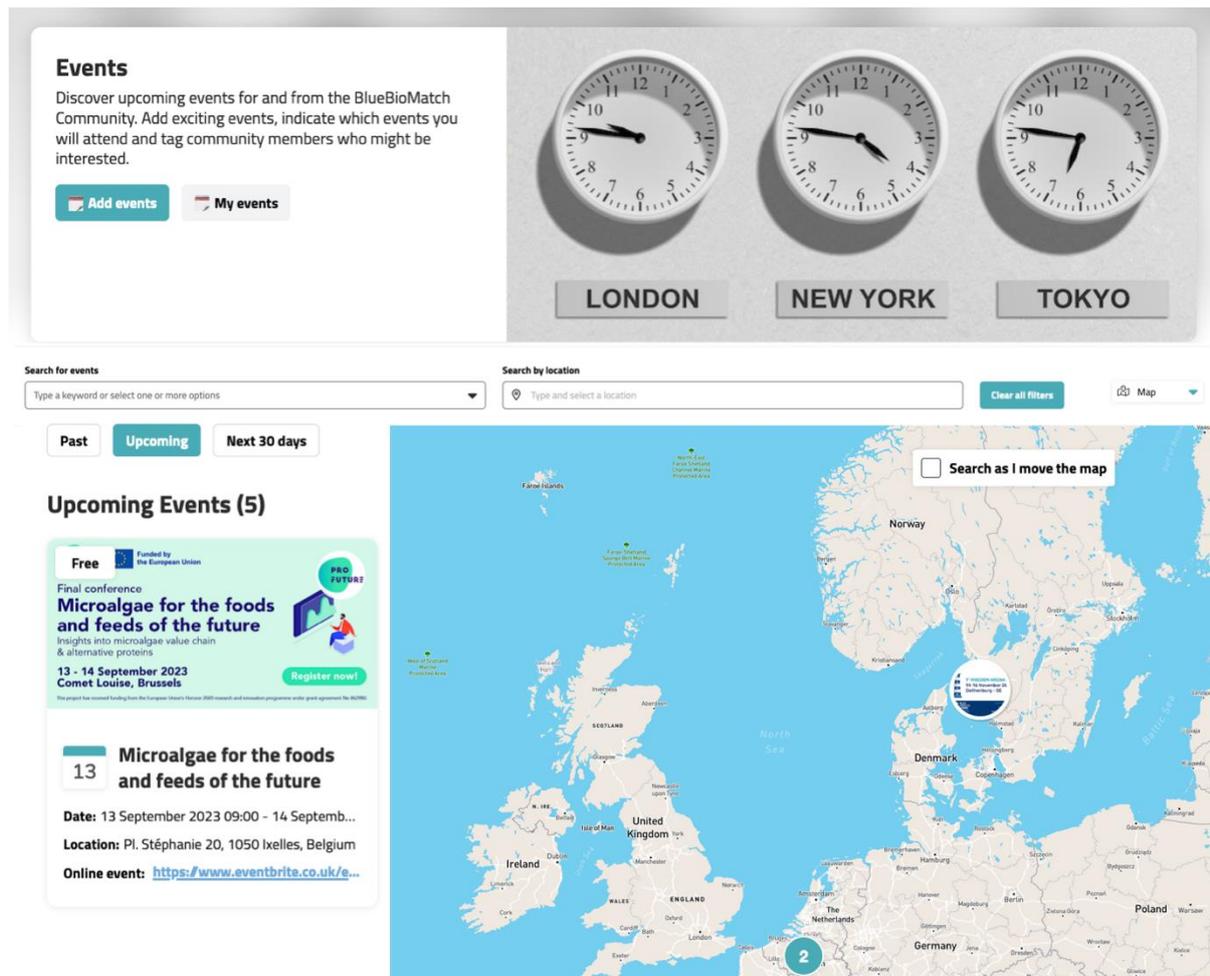

Figure 9 Events Section

3.2.9 Projects

In this section, members can discover and search for projects posted by BlueBioMatch community members.
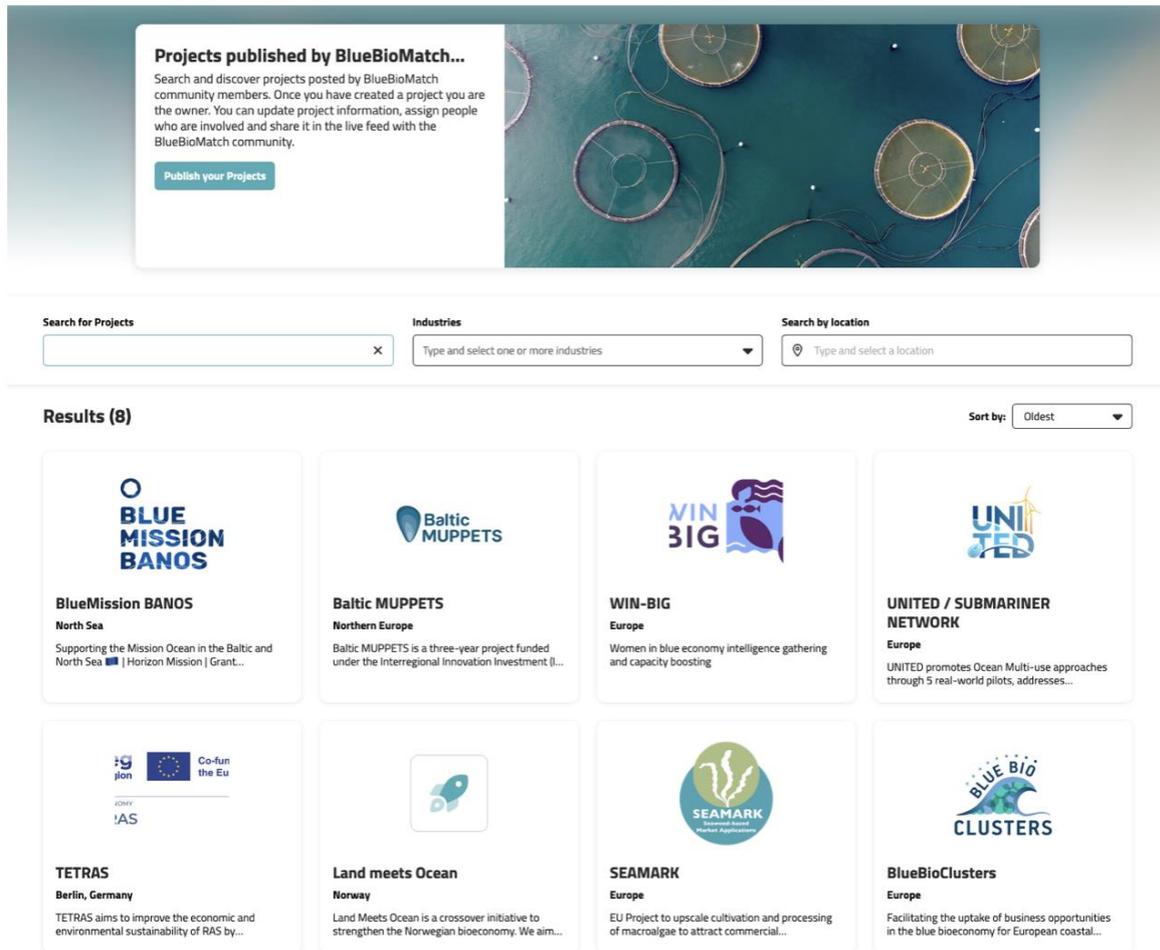

Figure 10 Projects Section

3.2.10 BlueBioMatch Forum

Community members can start a public conversation in the BlueBioMatch Forum to share insights and discuss questions on various topics with the community. They can explore the forum by searching for their specific case of interest, adding folders or external links, and tagging community members to involve them. Topics on which discussions were started will be later searchable, and results remain available to other users.
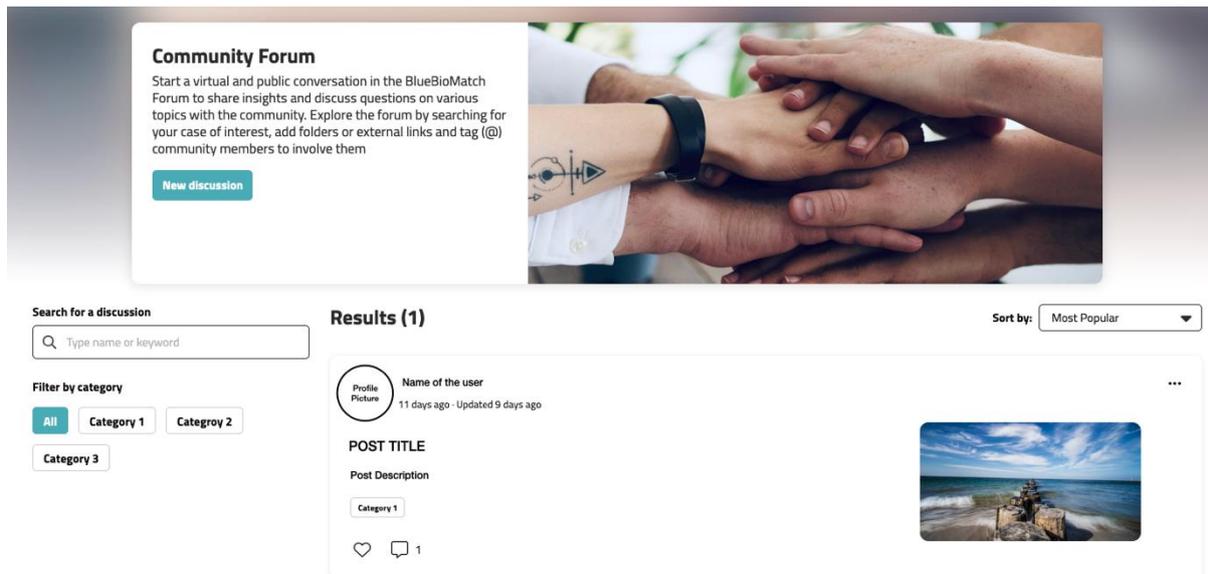
Figure 11 BlueBioMatch Forum Section

3.2.11 Products Showcase

The BlueBioMatch Product Showcase is the virtual catalogue for products (including technologies) for and from the BlueBioMatch community. It is closely connected to the Blue Products Sharing group, the working space where users can highlight products to showcase them in the BlueBioMatch Products Showcase. The group is the communication tool for BlueBioMatch administrators and product owners interested in targeted sharing. Once product/technology owners indicate they want to showcase their product in the catalogue, admins will add it to the BlueBioMatch Product Showcase. This page will redirect to the user profile, where they can create their own product portfolio.

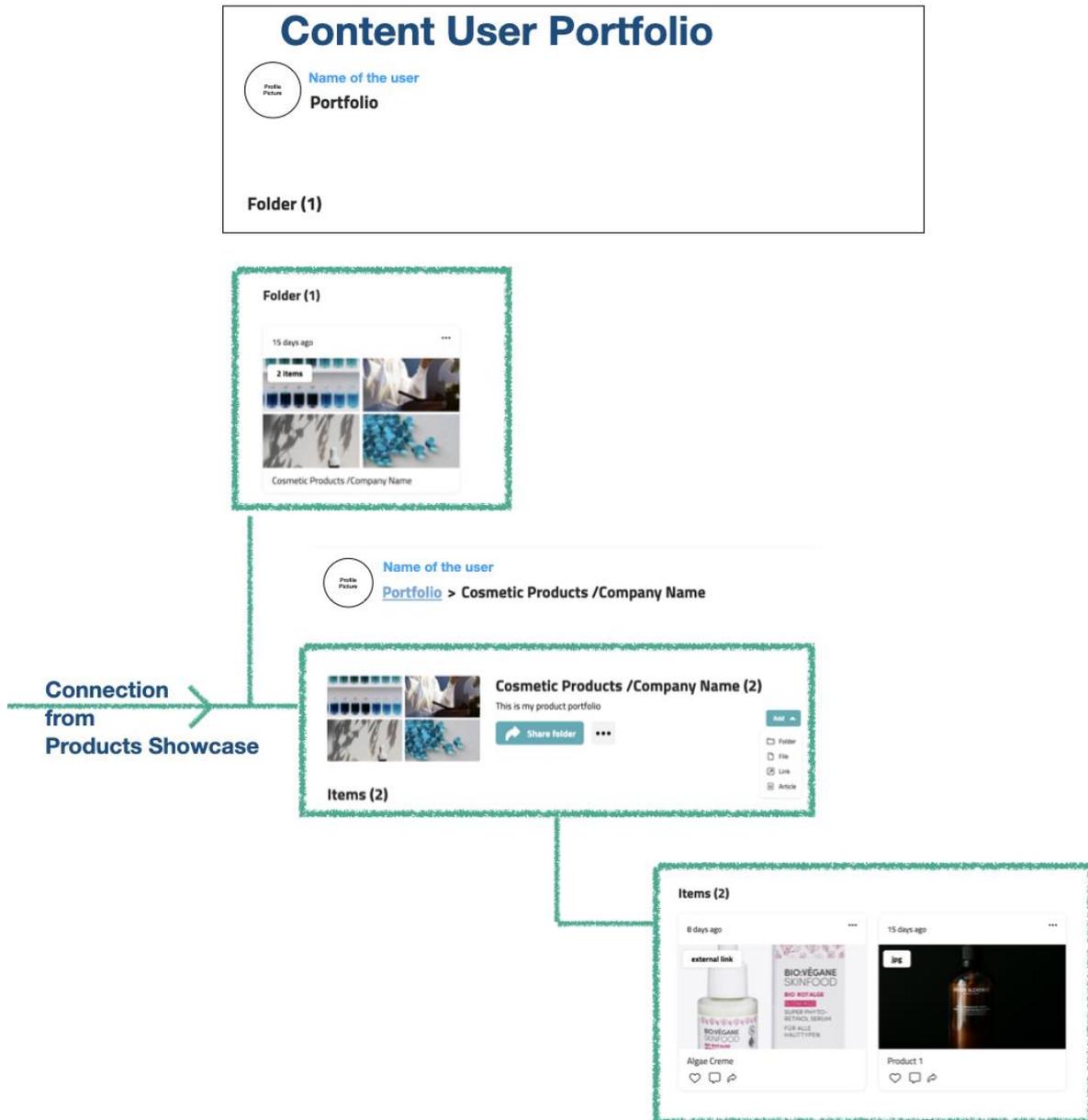*Figure 12 Products in Product Showcase*

Figure 13 Products in User Portfolio

3.2.12 Mentorship

The Mentorship function lists all community members open to giving advice, guidance, and support to other platform members. Users can create a mentoring profile by clicking "apply to be a mentor". The BlueBioMatch team will evaluate the request and send a confirmation or rejection email. When members are BlueBioMatch-approved mentors, users can find their profiles and apply as mentees. Users can ask for advice and support on a given topic based on the mentor's skills. The My Mentoring section will display the status and mentor profile (Figure 15 Mentoring Space for Mentors and Mentees).
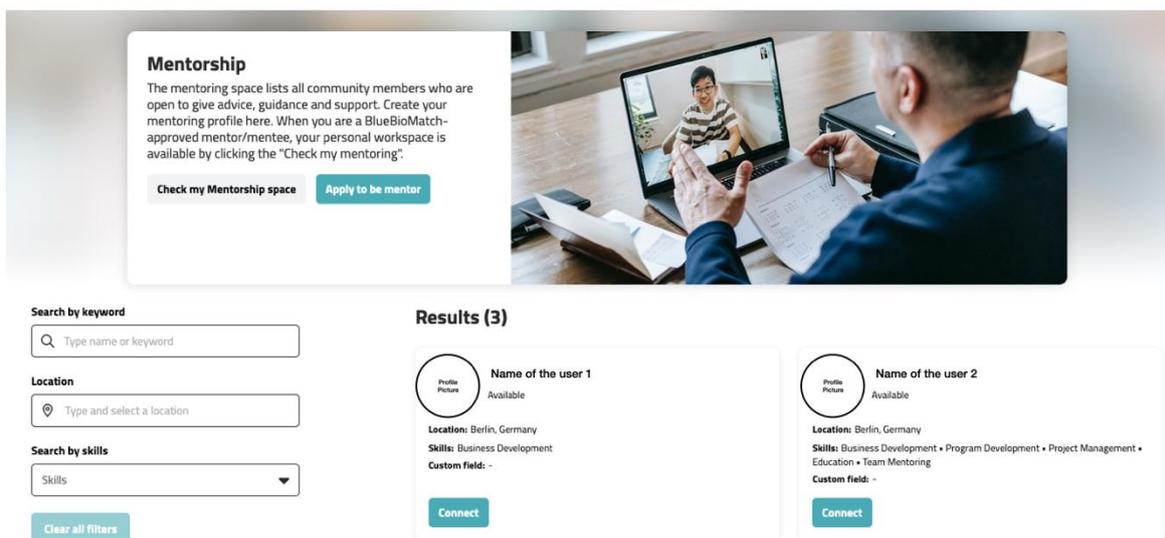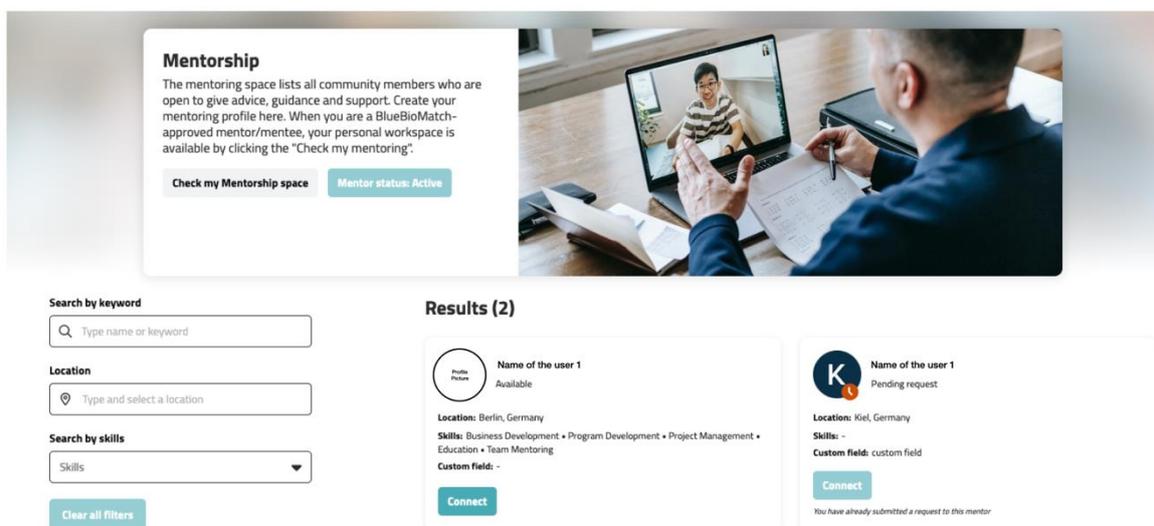
Figure 14 Mentorship Section

Figure 15 Mentoring Space for Mentors and Mentees

3.2.13 Opportunities

BlueBioMatch's members can publish opportunities for matchmaking, funding, and career development on the platform. In this section, users can also post and search for job offers, funding calls or other opportunities in the blue bioeconomy sectors. A targeted search is possible by applying filters.

Figure 16 Opportunities Section

4 Launch and Promotion Campaign

The launch date of the BlueBioMatch platform is planned for the 18th of September, 2023. The launch will be accompanied by a promotion campaign to:

Raise awareness about BlueBioMatch and its role in fostering a sustainable blue bioeconomy.

Engage a targeted audience of researchers, industry, entrepreneurs, and startups active in the blue bioeconomy sectors.

Achieve a constantly growing number of registrations on the platform within the campaign duration and beyond.

The following channels will be used to promote the platform:

Social Media Channels: The Social Media channel from BlueBioClusters, AlgaeProBANOS, Baltic MUPPETS and all project partners will be used to share captivating posts. Once success stories from community members exist, they will be shared on the platform and the mentioned social media channels to promote the

community's success. Hashtags like #BlueBioMatch, #BlueBioEconomy, and #Community will be utilised.

Email Marketing: In partner and project newsletters, news items will be created to reach relevant audiences and tease upcoming features and benefits of joining the BlueBioMatch community.

Events: BlueBioMatch will be promoted during events organised or attended by BBC partners and other users.

Multimedia Content: A teaser video will showcase the platform's features and create an incentive to join the platform.

5 Conclusions

When developing a Searchable Interactive Open-Source Portal to connect technology searchers, providers and suppliers, the BlueBioClusters Consortium went one step further, creating a platform, the BlueBioMatch – Blue Bioeconomy Hub, which will allow the creation of a broad and active multistakeholder community to support the development of innovative blue bioeconomy applications in the BBC regions and beyond. The BlueBioMatch's functionalities will empower users to seek support actively, offer their technology, skills and mentorship, and favour information exchange. Furthermore, being a scalable, ever-growing community, it will facilitate organising project (matchmaking) events and boot camps. The platform will also become a precious information centre for key blue bioeconomy applications, such as algae and mussels, thanks to collaboration with other projects. It will incorporate funding opportunities from network members having the potential to become a one-stop shop for the blue bioeconomy in Europe and beyond.