



# BETTER GOVERNANCE FOR A MEDITERRANEAN GREEN DEAL

## STOCKTAKING OF PANORAMED AND THE WAY AHEAD

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*The paper consists of a stocktaking of the actions undertaken during the first three years of implementation of PANORAMED project and proposes ideas and recommendations for the way ahead.*

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# How do we mean better Interreg governance?

- ❖ The concept of better cooperation governance refers both to territorial governance in the programme's geographical area and to policy governance
- ❖ The two dimensions of governance are connected and mutually reinforcing. However, they do not overlap and are addressed with different instruments
- ❖ Improvements in both strands are conducive to increased territorial impact (i.e. the potential to lead to real change)
- ❖ The whole Interreg MED architecture contributes to better cooperation governance serving the Axis 4 which is specifically devoted to the territorial governance in thematic domains

Good governance is closely connected with the European Cohesion Policy, which is the largest development policy scheme planned and implemented through a truly multilevel shared management. In the policy discourse it refers, on the one hand, to good administrative capacity – the condition for all bodies involved in the policy architecture to be efficient and effective in implementing the policies and/or tasks entrusted to it – and on the other hand, to the framework conditions that help make cohesion policy investments more efficient, boosting their impact. The connection is even closer with the European Territorial Cooperation Goal of the Cohesion Policy, devoted to improving the relationships and dynamics across borders that, ultimately, is mainly a matter of better governance.

Accordingly, “better cooperation governance” is a specific objective of Interreg programmes during the current cycle and the emphasis is reinforced in the proposal of Interreg Regulation for the next programming period. The objective is aimed, in particular but not exclusively, at enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, as well as other territorial strategies. This specific

objective applies to all programmes, underlying the fact that it is not limited to the direct support to the approved European macroregional or sea-basin strategies.

The translation of this objective into concrete action is very diversified among programmes and the linkages between Interreg and governance, although intuitively clear, needs deeper clarification. Given that Interreg programmes have a relatively low financial envelope – in the current period Interreg MED programme budget corresponds to less than 1% of the budget of ERDF programmes in the area – the improvement of institutional capacity and governance in their respective territorial areas is the way forward to lead to real change.

If this is true, in the wake of a new planning cycle, a deeper understanding and discussion on the contribution of Interreg to better governance and institutional building is urgent, also to design a roadmap to further enhance the impact of the Interreg projects and programmes.

The first step in this direction is a clarification of the concept of governance as commonly understood from the Interreg point of view. We distinguish two components:

- **Territorial governance**, referring to the area where the Interreg programme operates (the Regulation refers more specifically to macro-regions and sea basins). Territorial governance is related to the formal and informal arrangements that maximise the capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to face common challenges and to leverage on the growth opportunities going beyond administrative borders. This strand of governance is closely related to the European Territorial Agenda or, in other words, to the third dimension of cohesion – economic, social and territorial – promoted by the European Treaties. Macroregional and sea-basin strategies are codified examples of this kind of governance framework, but more generally in each Programme area there are forms of networking and cooperation that influence or directly shape joint decision making and priority setting;
- **Policy governance** is related to all the formal and informal arrangements that maximise the impact of Interreg within the wider framework of the cohesion policy. The policy governance is related to the institutional capacity, i.e. the capacity of all involved bodies to effectively and efficiently plan and implement the cohesion policy in compliance with all the rules, but with a focus on the strategic dimension, related to the directionality of the policy, result orientation and capacity to impact.

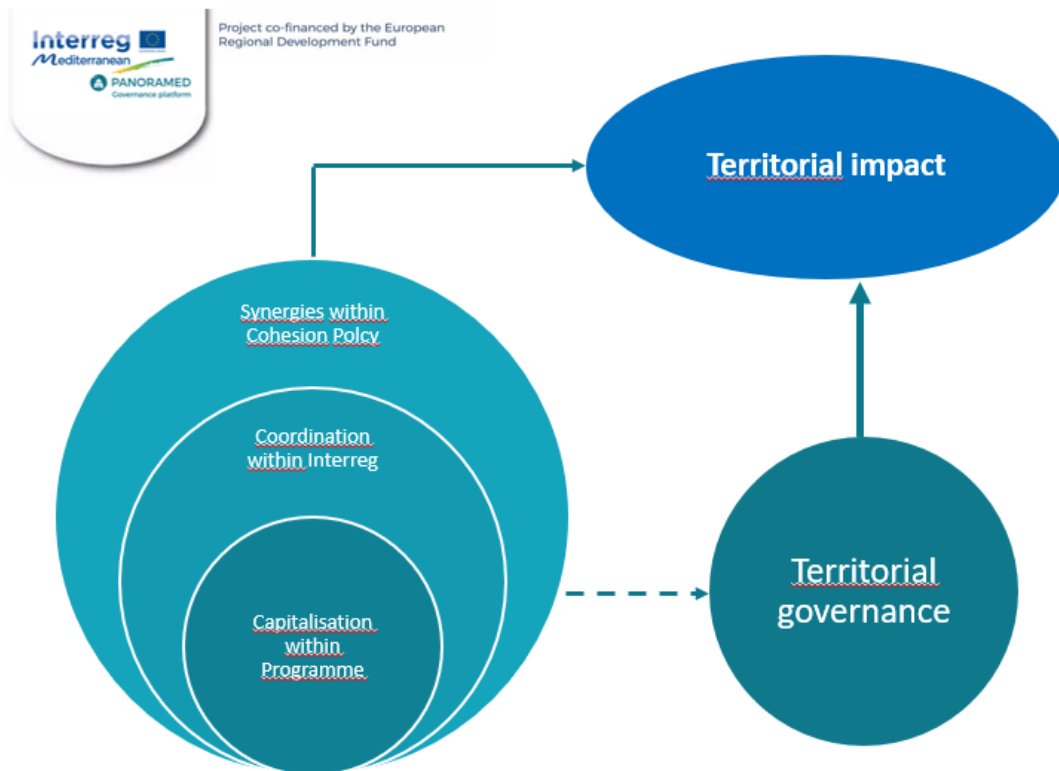
Regarding territorial governance, we find actions funded by Interreg directly aimed at improving cross-country, multilevel and multi-stakeholder dialogue, coordination and decision-making in the area. When Programme areas correspond with an established macro-regional or sea-basin strategy, territorial governance relies on the existing strategies and provides direct support to their bodies. In other areas, like the Euro-Mediterranean, actions need to be defined by establishing an *ad-hoc* working framework. This is particularly challenging for the MED Programme - considering the coexistence of strategies for smaller macro-regions (e.g. EUSAIR, included for the most part under MED) and frameworks for the whole sea basin, including Northern and Southern shores, even beyond the coastal regions and countries. This challenge calls for a smart multi-scalar approach matching thematic and geographical scales in multiple functional areas. Moreover, despite the fact that the Euro-Mediterranean Programme only covers the Northern shore countries, it is not possible to consolidate governance in the long-

term if countries from Southern shore of the Mediterranean are not involved. In this respect, coordination with the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) and multilateral cooperation frameworks is crucial. The proactive role of the Union for Mediterranean (UfM), in terms of both policy and operational processes, has been gaining momentum either through close collaboration with Interreg MED thematic communities (i.e. Green Growth, Blue Growth, Biodiversity Protection) and the Axis 4 (PANORAMED and more recently the Strategic Projects) or through the ‘labeling’ of projects in the sectors falling within its mandate. The goal of ‘labeling’ is to give political support to flagship initiatives and projects that meet the common objectives of Euro-Mediterranean countries and have a potential for further upscaling, as well as to integrate such projects and initiatives in the wider UfM regional agenda. Further progress towards a more integrated Mediterranean governance is advocated also through bottom-up initiatives such as the [Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance](#), promoted by five transnational networks representing regions and cities with a strong potential to ensure cooperation, connectivity, decentralized and multilevel action.

Policy governance also contributes to territorial governance through the capacity to capitalize, align and synchronize actions towards common goals, amplifying the overall impact. Indeed, in a broader perspective all Interreg projects, even if concentrated in their specific thematic area (i.e. the research and innovation ecosystem, environmental protection, tourism, etc.), aim at improving the capacity of involved players to act both on a transnational basis and across borders. This normally happens in a scattered and not predictable way. Therefore, many Programmes design specific governance projects involving Public Authorities, with criteria such as inclusiveness or country representativeness.

In Interreg Programmes, policy governance can be tackled at three different levels:

1. Capitalization of the results of projects financed within each Interreg Programme, with the aim to ensure that the overall impact is greater than the sum of individual projects. Capitalization includes a broad range of activities and supporting tools oriented to communication, transfer or impact evaluation;
2. Coordination among interregional, transnational and cross-border programmes covering the same functional area, with the aim to maximize Interreg impact beyond the impact of the individual programmes;
3. Synergies between Investment for growth and jobs Goal and European territorial cooperation Goal within Cohesion Policy. Since its launch 30 years ago, Interreg – which started as a Community Initiative - has been progressively mainstreamed in the Cohesion Policy as one of the two Goals pursuing social, economic and territorial cohesion along with ‘Investment for Jobs and Growth’ goal. Synergies between both goals are necessary to combine place-based and relational (network) approaches to regional development, leading to greater impact of the whole Cohesion Policy investments.



The current Interreg MED Programme addressed the territorial governance issue through a dedicated Axis under the Thematic Objective 11 - Axis 4 composed by the PANORAMED platform and six “strategic projects” -, and steadily invested to improve the policy governance, with special attention to the first and the third layer. The first layer is mainly covered by the efforts invested in capitalization management through the creation of 8 Thematic Communities managed by Horizontal Projects. Indeed, Thematic Communities support several Modular Projects pursuing the same Programme specific objective in their communication and capitalization activities. The integration of the two goals of the Cohesion Policy is mainly undertaken from the point of view of transferring Interreg project’s outcomes into structural programmes and policies at national and regional level. This is a joint effort of PANORAMED, Horizontal Projects and progressively of strategic projects as they advance in their state of implementation.

# The Interreg MED 2014-20 governance axis: intermediate results

- ❖ PANORAMED has developed an evidence-based policy making approach to identify challenges and priorities for action
- ❖ The activities in the three thematic areas – coastal and maritime tourism, maritime surveillance, innovation – have been performed by transnational working groups of national experts and validated by the country coordinators
- ❖ For each theme, gaps and growth opportunities have been identified. Priorities for strategic projects have been defined and longer-term policy recommendations have been issued
- ❖ Six strategic projects – two per each theme – are currently running to deliver concrete solutions and advancements toward priorities identified by PANORAMED

## PANORAMED design and activities

The Interreg MED Programme approach to reinforcing territorial governance in the Mediterranean basin has been based on an overarching dialogue platform of national authorities, namely the Panoramed project 2017-2022, and six strategic projects, two in each of the three priority selected areas, Coastal and Maritime Tourism, Maritime Surveillance and Innovation for the Blue Bioeconomy, with a double goal:

- horizontal coordination among countries on issues related to common challenges that can be better tackled with joint action

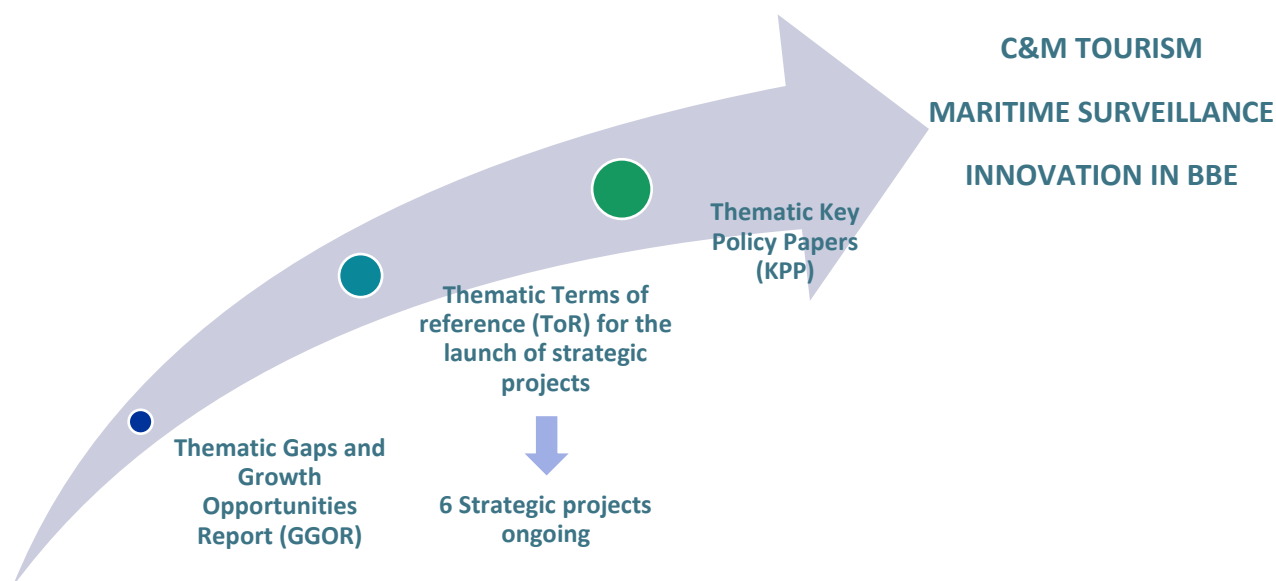


- multilevel (vertical) coordination between transnational strategies, frameworks and initiatives in place or under discussion, and national and regional levels of government for better priorities alignment and embedding.

PANORAMED has been working following an evidence-based approach to policy making articulated in three steps:

1. Analysis of gaps and growth opportunities in the three selected priority areas, building on previous projects outcomes (with a view to capitalization) and on contextual knowledge of national appointed experts gathering in transnational working groups;
2. Selection of short-term priority actions to address identified gaps or opportunities through transnational cooperation projects funded by the MED Programme through restricted calls;
3. Identification of medium and long-term broader priorities which require further common action in the form of recommendations contained in Key Policy Papers.

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The horizontal (cross-country) dialogue and coordination dimension has been largely dominant in the concrete organization and implementation of PANORAMED activities. Although some examples of vertical dialogue and deeper involvement of associated partners in the activities' development already existed, they did not have significant incidence on multilevel coordination with transnational frameworks.

As already indicated, the platform has been working in three thematic areas –coastal and maritime tourism, maritime surveillance and innovation for the blue bioeconomy–, adapting the common approach to preferences of the transnational working groups but delivering the same outputs. As illustrated in the figure, these common outputs for the three thematic areas are: Gaps and Growth Opportunities Reports (GGOR); Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Interreg MED calls for strategic projects and a Key Policy Paper (KPP).

Three transversal principles have informed the work of the three thematic groups and will influence strategic projects' activities:

- Capitalization of previous projects results, imagined as building blocks to be enhanced for more systemic (strategic) actions;
- Liaising with the main relevant players regarding policy governance in the Mediterranean to enhance coherence and synergies between territorial cooperation activities and policy objectives and priorities;
- Mainstreaming of results in structural territorial policies and programmes with a view to expanding projects' impact beyond their scope and duration.

### PANORAMED Europe 2030 Laboratory

In 2019 PANORAMED together with the MED Programme organized a [participatory lab](#) during the European Week of Regions and Cities (EUWRC) in Brussels. The interactive session on the future of the Mediterranean consisted of an informal lively EU debate on maritime coastal tourism, maritime surveillance and innovation, critical topics for the future of the Mediterranean region.

Involving European Commission representatives, Associated Partners and international networks from the MED Horizontal Projects, the event combined a political and a technical session allowing open and constructive dialogue.

## *Thematic work packages*

**Coastal and Maritime Tourism** work package implemented a strong participatory process to promote dialogue and active involvement of different MED countries. Under the leadership of the **Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds of the Republic of Croatia** and co-leadership of **Tuscany Region** (Italy), national experts appointed by the Thematic Working Group (TWG) supported the whole implementation in terms of sharing contents, discussing and selecting relevant issues, validating methodologies and deliverables, etc. Meetings and respective Focus Groups (FGs) have been arranged to select relevant projects during field analysis and to validate the assessment of selected projects' results, as well as to produce the Gaps and Growth Opportunities Report (GGOR), the technical part of the Terms of Reference on Coastal and Maritime Tourism (ToR) for Strategic Projects (SPs) and the Key Policy Paper.

The GGOR, which contains the analysis and evaluation of the results of the projects relevant to the strategic theme of Coastal and Maritime Tourism, is aimed at revealing potential gaps not yet sufficiently tackled by existing policies and previous projects as well as potential growth

# Facts & figures



**29** Nationally  
appointed experts



**234** jointly  
analysed projects

**32** technical  
meetings of  
thematic working  
groups



**7** national  
thematic  
focus groups



**1**  
Innovation Camp



**34**  
questionnaires and  
written contributions  
collected and  
processed



**10**  
organizations  
involved in  
mainstreaming  
experiments

**4** meetings  
with Associated  
Partners



**5** cross-  
contamination  
workshops with  
thematic communities



opportunities in this specific area. Appropriately, the GGOR determined four principles as a basis for the forthcoming activities and the guidance for future tourism development and cooperation, and they are as follows:

- Thematic concentration - Finding a balance between generalization and precision, avoiding overlapping,
- Transnationality - Focus on recommendations that should work on both national and transnational levels,
- Sustainability - Every key issue and recommendation serve to deliver sustainability,
- Capitalization and Applicability - Critical thinking of projects' practices.

With an eye to continuity of the work pipeline, some TWG experts have also been appointed within the Task Force (TF) for the elaboration and support throughout the preparation process of the Key Policy Paper on Coastal and Maritime Tourism (KPP). TF was established in October 2019 (kick-off meeting was held in Athens) with a purpose to facilitate and enhance the preparation process of the Key Policy Paper. Accordingly, national experts were appointed by WP5 leader and co-leader and as well by Spain, Greece, Malta and Cyprus. All national experts engaged provided tangible contributions which significantly fostered the development process of specific recommendations that were ultimately incorporated in respective KPP and as such may be translated into regional and national tourism policies.

### Participatory approach for policy paper development

Each TF member was in charge of arranging its focus group at a national level, as well as collecting relevant inputs through questionnaires and physical or virtual meetings attended by relevant stakeholders. This kind of approach guaranteed a real and participatory process and ultimately enabled concrete feedback that was afterwards used for the preparation of the KPP.

The FGs have been managed by a “facilitator” to guarantee the active participation of each engaged expert and to guide discussions in a way that ensures substantial feedback accompanied by practical information.

In some FGs, in addition to national/regional experts and stakeholders, the representatives of relevant Horizontal Projects (HPs), Strategic Projects (SPs) and PANORAMED Associated Partners (APs) have been actively involved, too.

**Maritime Surveillance** work package, led by the **General Secretariat of the Sea of France (GSS)**, mobilized national experts from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain. These experts contributed to the objective to better understand the Mediterranean context and the needs of Mediterranean stakeholders, through the two following activities:

- Desk and field analysis that consisted of an in-depth analysis of a selection of projects in order to identify, jointly with projects' beneficiaries, main challenges, results achieved and perspectives in the field of Maritime Surveillance
- Gaps and Growth Opportunity Reports (GGOR) that highlighted common transnational challenges and potential opportunities and solutions

Besides TWG experts, these documents have been elaborated with the support of project beneficiaries and, in the case of GGOR, of national authorities.

The GGOR has also been the first instance to identify priorities –allowing each country and stakeholder involved in the process to rise its own concerns and put forward priorities– in parallel with the elaboration of the technical part of the ToR for the strategic projects.

Joint strategic thinking took a further step with the establishment of the task force in charge of coordinating the drafting of Key Policy Paper, further deepened along the lines traced by the GGOR.

The task force was composed of a core group of national experts and country coordinators and led by GSS, who worked together with the Lead Partners of relevant Strategic Projects (SP), Horizontal Projects (HP) and other actors designated by the country coordinators. The group has been involved in working group's meetings and consulted for the drafting of each working document. The KPP released in September 2020 is shared with advisory partners - DG MARE, DG REGIO, DG NEAR, DG RTD, EMSA, WESTMED (involvement of southern countries), Joint Research Centre of the EU (JRC), other PANORAMED associated partners, Italian Navy, and other PANORAMED WP Leaders (Mainstreaming and Liaising).

The **Innovation** work package was only included in PANORAMED by the end of 2018, under the leadership of **Generalitat de Catalunya** and the co-leadership of **Jozef Stefan Institute** and advanced with a fast-track process to catch up with the other already established WPs.

The process of elaboration of the Gaps and Growth Opportunities Report (GGOR) and the Terms of Reference for the Strategic Projects, although concentrated in less than a year, has been very participative and interactive, combining desk activities (projects review and gaps analysis questionnaires, technical reports) and live workshops (two experts' meetings, Innovation camp). In the elaboration of the GGOR, PANORAMED partners, thematic experts designed by partners, horizontal projects and associated partners have participated.

## PANORAMED Innovation Camp

The 2-days Innovation Camp, held Barcelona in October 2019, has been a successful case of multi-stakeholder workshop discussion promoted by PANORAMED to gather experts appointed by countries with horizontal projects representatives and associate partners (68 participants).

The previous experts meetings' results represented an important expert input for the innovation camp where PANORAMED partners, associated partners, experts, and innovation stakeholders debated and made proposals on how PANORAMED can contribute to improving governance to address challenges of blue bioeconomy sustainable development through innovation.

The working groups and the discussions in the innovation camp were integrated in the GGOR and were the basis to prepare the terms of reference for the two Strategic Projects, integrating the perspective from very diverse MED stakeholders.

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Discussions, debates and collaborative work in the framework of Innovation have delivered a mutual understanding about needs, challenges and priorities of action to improve the governance of innovation policies and to unlock the potential of the blue bioeconomy in the MED Area. A very important milestone was the presentation of the Gaps and Growth Opportunities Report (GGOR), focusing on the one hand on the potential of blue biotechnology and on the other on the better governance of innovation policies.

The GGOR, the Terms of Reference for the Strategic Projects –including the respective Strategic Projects approved in July 2020–, as well as the KPP are milestones in a continuous flow of work. Altogether, they are the embodiment of mutual understanding and the consequent priorities for action in the short-term (Strategic Projects), in the medium-term (for the next programming period) and in the long-term.

The quality of the discussions and of the information collected in meetings and through questionnaires were the main inputs to elaborate the Key Policy Paper, together with the discussions with partners, Horizontal Projects and Associate Partners in the joint PANORAMED and Capitalization meeting held in Madrid in February 2020, as well as the discussions and contributions of PANORAMED partners participating in the taskforce.

### *Cross-cutting work packages*

Besides thematic work, as part of the cross-cutting effort to improve Interreg governance, PANORAMED gives specific attention to the process of transferring to public policies and other

EU programmes results and experiences delivered by ETC projects, with a cross-cutting work packaged named **Mainstreaming** led by **Région Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur**. The added value brought by PANORAMED is the elaboration and practical testing of adapted methodologies in this area linked to the attempt to go beyond the generic collection and dissemination of project outcomes, ensuring that these outcomes are effectively used by “receivers” at regional, national and transnational level. The activities include coaching of HPs and SPs on the mainstreaming methodology, to ensure larger ownership and successful implementation beyond PANORAMED. Therefore, they can be divided in two parts:

- Mainstreaming experimentations implemented with 6 Mediterranean partners (2018-2020). In that case, the main partners were institutions willing to “take on board” outputs produced by INTERREG projects (“Takers”).
- Support to the mainstreaming activities of Horizontal and Strategic projects (2020-2022). In this second phase, the main partners are the SPs and the HPs, the latter mainly acting as facilitators, identifying “givers” among the Modular Projects willing to share and spread their own results and identifying “takers” that could use them.

The mainstreaming working process has been conceived as an experimentation tested in different contexts and from different points of view, along three main steps:

- Step 1: identification of potential takers/receivers based on a mapping of competences and priorities;
- Step 2: identification of relevant and valuable project results;
- Step 3: gathering together “givers” and “takers” co-developing an action plan for the transfer process.

Considering the experience gathered during the first mainstreaming phase (experimentation 2018-2020) and the beginning of the second phase (support to Horizontal and Strategic Projects 2020-2022), some key points can be highlighted in the perspective of the next programming period:

- There is a need of information and clear definition of “capitalization”, “mainstreaming” and “transfer” between programmes. All programmes and actors do not have the same approach and understanding of it
- Experience shows that mainstreaming and transfer can have very different content, purpose and perspectives from one programme or one project to another. Mainstreaming or transfer should be supported with concrete means (dedicated finance, human resources, etc.) and flexible methodology (to be considered as a “process”)
- Capitalization, mainstreaming and transfer activities constitutes crucial elements for current ETC programmes; they need strategy, methodology and means to progress in this direction; the drafting of future programmes constitute an opportunity to value existing results
- Capitalization, transfer and mainstreaming should be included in projects’ life cycle (with dedicated financial means)
- Successful transfer and mainstreaming require availability and involvement from the side of the taker (“leadership”). This must be based on a strategic choice

- The synergies between ETC and regional ERDF programmes - and smart specialization strategies - remain a key challenge. ETC programmes could be more involved in the process to develop links with regional authorities.



# Improving MED governance: short-term actions and long-term oriented recommendations

PANORAMED activities described above have been performed to meet a double goal:

- to set the scene for the launch of strategic projects in the three fields covered and accompany their implementation;
- to pave the way for further action in the long-run –with an eye on 2021-27 European programming period– in areas where consensus across countries is identified.

The outputs so far have been mainly specific to the three themes of PANORAMED platform, while the activities in 2021 will be focused on the elaboration of a more systemic view through the MED Positioning Paper.

## Coastal and Maritime Tourism

Building on the in-depth analysis of previous project results dealing with coastal and maritime tourism in the Mediterranean and on the thematic knowledge brought by appointed experts, the TWG clearly defined that the main objective is to increase the competitiveness and attractiveness of the Mediterranean destinations in the global tourism market by addressing main challenges – growing tourism flows, seasonality and insufficient cooperation among main tourism actors. Therefore, the terms of reference for the launch of the strategic projects required them to focus on:

- Improvement of sustainability of tourism activities in the MED area,
- Empowerment of actors in the tourism value chain, including policymakers.

**BEST MED - Beyond European Sustainable Tourism MED Path** and **SMARTMED - Empower Mediterranean for SMART Tourism** are the two complementary Strategic Projects - focusing respectively on sustainability and empowerment and skills development of tourism actors – and aim to improve different aspects of integrated sustainable tourism planning and related policy-making in the Mediterranean, having a concrete impact on tourism practices and public policies. Both of them launch a bridge with the Southern Mediterranean shore, associate partners from Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia.

**BEST MED** proposes a joint approach on “green” planning with a focus on cultural routes, based on (and improving) the outputs produced by other projects such as relevant tourism data indicators (e.g. in MITOMED+, CO-EVOLVE among others) towards a wider model for the

management of routes, linking coastal, maritime and inland destinations. The joint model and the integrated approach –to be further promoted by the **Network of national and regional Tourism Observatories** to be created– should be intended as a strategic tool to support expert planning, more informed decision-making and especially improved multi-level dialogue and coordination for sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean.

The Network of national and regional Tourism Observatories (NTO) is a common infrastructure, supported by States and Regions participating in the MED Programme (and ideally by other key stakeholders, such as EUROSTAT, UfM, etc.). It will be committed to implementing the planning tools (e.g. BEST MED Open Platform) and methodologies (MED S&C Path Model) developed in the framework of the project. It will serve as a coordination body to share and monitor consistent and complete data on sustainable tourism in the MED, facilitating the exchange of expertise and experience for more informed policy-making.

Aiming at empowering public and private actors in the tourism sector in the Mediterranean, **SMARTMED** will particularly support (institutional) capacity building and skills development in the field, and contribute to establish a structured and enhanced cooperation among multi-level stakeholders in view of developing integrated tourism policies and innovative solutions for smart MED destinations. In this sense, cross-sectorial exchange of thematic expertise and know-how, with a focus on public-private partnership, should encourage the adoption of coherent innovative public policies in the tourism sector.

The SMART Tourism business model, supported by a permanent collaborative e-platform for cross-sectorial cooperation and joint actions, will contribute to strengthening capacities of all stakeholders in tourism business and policy-making and thus reinforcing the competitiveness and attractiveness of key areas of MED destinations.

Following the GGOR adoption, during a certain period, WP5 leader and co-leader were engaged in the elaboration of the key policy paper (KPP) **Better governance for smarter tourism**. The KPP is important because it points out the challenges of development common for the sustainable tourism and provides a set of corresponding recommendations which are focused on activities, methods and tools that could resolve or at least minimize the present issues. These recommendations are the following ones:

- Data sharing and harmonization as a basis for knowledge-based decision making,
- Integrated and informed tourism governance for smart and more resilient destinations,
- Enhanced and innovative tourism (business) solutions,
- Greening tourism (reducing pressures) and improving historic, traditional and natural heritage,
- Informing, educating, and engaging stakeholders for changing behaviour.

Seasonality management and weak cooperation among the main tourism actors have been detected as the major development challenges in the large part of the Mediterranean countries and as such were considered for designation of respective recommendations. Anyway, their implementation and subsequent impact would depend on two key factors:

- Appropriate identification of all challenges and difficulties that need to be minimized and/or resolved as well as appropriate recommendations that can stimulate the usage of suitable measures,
- The ability and willingness of policymakers to implement respective recommendations throughout their policy procedures and the capacity of all engaged stakeholders to transform them into practical solutions including the ability to participate, cooperate and disseminate the best practices.

Last in order but not of importance, the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on tourism industry sector and related activities in the Mediterranean (and beyond) confirmed the urgency to rethink tourism governance in all Mediterranean countries, in particular for the sake of the next programming period.

## Maritime Surveillance

The work of the Maritime Surveillance TWG –based on the involvement of national thematic experts that brought valuable information, knowledge and increased decision-making capacities– converged on the importance of strengthening Integrated Multilevel Maritime Surveillance in the Mediterranean Basin through:

- Cooperation within competent authorities addressing maritime surveillance information sharing at national, regional and local levels, promoting integration, interoperability and harmonization, by improving tools and fostering complementarity;
- Cooperation in the Maritime Surveillance domain to address the existing gap in maritime surveillance between EU MED Member States and non-EU countries, namely IPA countries and countries from the southern shore of the Mediterranean

The TWG agreed to guide the design of strategic projects toward the development of multilevel governance; data sharing related to maritime surveillance and the improvement of surveillance capacities and services at local and regional level, and at national level for MED IPA countries. Two strategic projects have been adopted on maritime surveillance:

- MED OSMoSiS aims at strengthening maritime surveillance activities and facilitate information exchanges to tackle safety issues and in support of regional and local developments and exploring the ongoing evolution of the Common information sharing environment (CISE);
- SHAREMED focuses on environmental issues and early warning alert or detection.

**MED OSMoSiS** has been conceived as an opportunity to seek for demands among national authorities carrying out Maritime Surveillance functions in need of operational infrastructure covering marine spatial information obligations which stem from European Directives, initiatives and policies in terms of maritime surveillance and safety. The project objective is the development of a number of modules and applications regarding Maritime Surveillance activities and to facilitate information exchanges to support the further development of a

regional and local smart plug-in capability. It supports interoperable, transnational sectoral systems ensuring their regional, deployable and mobile interface, in order to enhance in-situ Situational Awareness, wherever needed in the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic approaches. It will explore the application of the current guidelines and capabilities of the ongoing evolution of the CISE data exchange model. It will also carry out pilot activities and capitalization actions to test, disseminate and distribute tools and protocols among partners either as being potential users but also as intermediaries to reach no participant entities

To improve governance in the Mediterranean, the project will define cooperation scenarios beyond conventional approaches, while pilot actions are planned to be studied and tested for their effectiveness, especially where neither knowledge (and data) is shared, nor resources, diminishing unnecessary overlapping wherever it exists and focusing on the development of common or interoperable communication tools.

MED OSMoSIS takes advantage of a partnership that gathers several key stakeholders with operational capacity in the sea that rarely participate in Interreg projects, such as National Authorities competent in maritime surveillance with high technical expertise in maritime safety and rescue standards, i.e. Coast Guard Services. This makes it easier to impact territorial governance, demonstrating Maritime Surveillance functions at the heart of “know how” of the operational infrastructure that cover marine spatial information and obligations stemming from European Union Directives and national policies. At the same time, a fundamental role was claimed in the project in order to reinsure a safe roadmap in the bottom up and top down procedures regarding communication among authentic data producers, givers and all data receivers and the general public.

Therefore, the project will develop several modules and applications regarding Maritime Surveillance activities that will facilitate information exchanges to support the further development of a regional and local smart plug-in capability supporting interoperable sectoral systems.

The **Project global report** will diagnose problems, analyse needs, list and provide answers for interoperability issues (regarding data exchange and data analysis), look into the expansion of the capacities for the existing platforms regarding maritime surveillance and provide the groundwork for a guide regarding platform development for countries without one. This in turn will lead at a later stage to a guide for the IPA countries, taking another step toward closing gaps in functionality in the maritime surveillance of the Mediterranean area).

As an answer to the current gaps of maritime surveillance, new functionalities (such as modules and applications) will be developed by several partners and the interoperability and use of these tools will be tested within the scope of the programmed pilot activities.

Besides the upgrade of the GIS portal of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy of Greece that will allow classified users to feed and access geo-information, applications, and reports, new modules applications on partners' platforms will also be developed. These will test (among others) the following functionalities: application of antifouling equipment management; Search and rescue Planning; Activate Geofencing; Operation/patrol tool; application and website to registry, consultation, listing and reporting of small boats

movements and incidents; provision of digital charts portfolio; on-site recording via form and map from mobile devices; navigation warnings; interoperability tools.

The key results expected to achieve are compliant with reliable multilevel governance in maritime surveillance. There is a challenge of an integrated med-maritime surveillance environment and providing standardized and open data information exchange that is currently inefficient within the Mediterranean countries.

**SHAREMED** aims to increase the capability of managing authorities and scientific community to assess and address hazards related to environmental threats. Marine pollution and environmental degradation are paradigmatic examples of threats that propagate in space and time also across political boundaries and need to be addressed by cooperative transitional coordinated actions based on evidence-rooted common understanding.

A successful implementation of those actions required to address a number of challenges. Firstly, there is a scientific and technological challenge of improving our observation and assessment capabilities, with particular reference to operational systems and biological properties. Furthermore, often stakeholders do not need raw data, but meaningful indicators and knowledge which should be obtained by appropriate elaboration and interpretation of data. However, improving the governance components of the implementation of a transnational observing system, a nothing short of demanding task, would require the definition and testing of efficient frameworks for sharing, integration and harmonization of existing information, data, technology, infrastructure and expertise, as well as the enlargement of the ownership and community feeling among a variety of players and stakeholders agents across different regions and institutional levels. The picture is even more complex in transnational areas, where the fragmentation of the governance framework implies that different authorities might have different monitoring programmes and priorities, making more difficult to have an efficient planning of the area.

SHAREMED aims to tackle both sides of the same coin by:

- Providing frameworks for collection, comparison, integration, harmonisation of existing experiences and increasing the possibility to find, access, and use existing information;
- Studying and testing procedures, multilevel agreements, protocols to standardise and produce a shared database and products to be used to assess environmental health status, and environmental hazards;
- Improve observation and assessment capabilities by defining cooperation practices, integration of existing infrastructure in joint transnational system of systems, definition and actual implementation of a relocatable forecast system, incorporation of emerging technologies, with particular reference to operational systems and biological properties.

The added value of the approach is being tested by a demonstration phase in transnational sites in which there is already a high concentration of observation capabilities, and that are representative of different conditions present in the Mediterranean. Different sites follow a common procedure but might focus on different aspects and environmental threats, depending on the site and size specificity.

Three transnational areas representative of different physical conditions present in the Mediterranean are identified as case studies to test and demonstrate SHAREMED potential to enhance evaluation capabilities and support governance framework:

- a) The Northwest Med (Italy, France and Spain)
- b) The North Adriatic (Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro)
- c) The Sicily Channel (Italy, Malta, and North African countries)

The successful implementation of sharing and cooperative frameworks is tested and verified by the multilevel and transnational implementation of joint systems of observing systems including concrete outcomes such as:

- Implementation of common transnational portals for the joint dissemination of harmonized observations;
- Implementation of shared database and jointly produced Atlas;
- Implementation of coastal high-resolution transnational forecast systems.

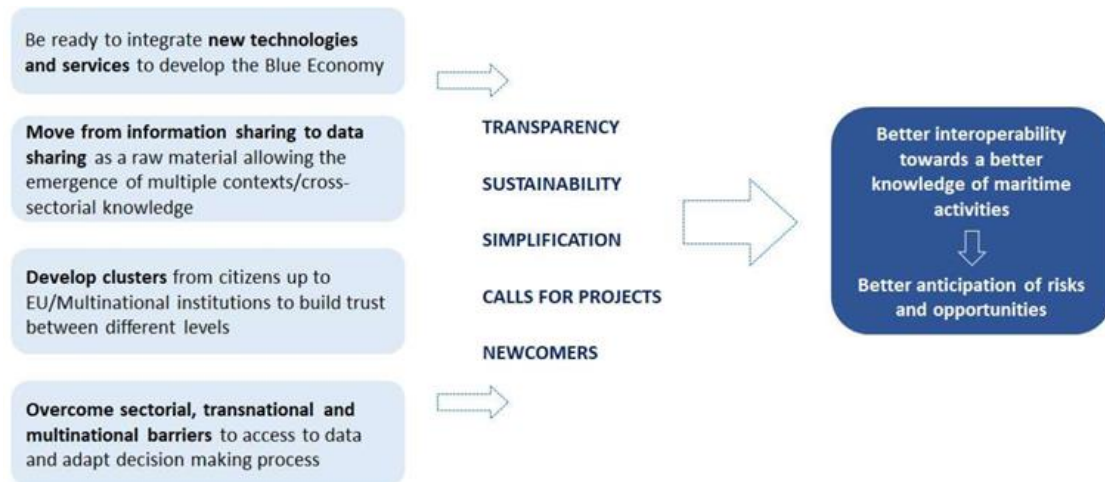
The [Key Policy Paper on Maritime Surveillance](#) highlights:

- Aims and purpose of Maritime Surveillance
- Tools and networks
- Data sharing, information exchange and knowledge management issues
- Preferable approaches such as interoperability, thematic standards and use of CISE / state-of-the-art technologies

The main Mediterranean objectives highlighted by the Key Policy Paper are:

- Increasing the complementarity between actors and systems of Maritime Surveillance
- Increasing connections with regards to environmental issues and blue growth
- Promoting innovation with the support of private stakeholders

The objectives could be reached with the implementation guidelines stated in the following diagram.



Therefore, the KPP emphasizes the necessity to better share information between the different institutional levels (including civilians and military authorities), to open the use of data on the demand and supply side and to develop data management strategies. New technologies will be crucial tools for this matter.

## Innovation

The Key Policy Paper [Better governance for better innovation](#) includes recommendations that are relevant for the current Interreg MED and for the next programming period. The main recommendations for a better governance of innovation policies can be summarized in four points:

- To advance towards a MED common approach to identify and address together MED most pressing challenges.
- To orient R&I competitive calls and projects towards these MED challenges, promoting complementarities among programmes and funds, and promoting multi-stakeholder (quadruple-helix) challenge-driven missions and alliances and transnational clusters.
- To optimize the use of existing MED R&I infrastructures.
- To underline the social value of R&I, by focusing on social needs and by recognizing and enhancing them.

In this framework, in order to unlock the potential of the blue bioeconomy in the MED area, taking into accounts activities developed under existing cooperation framework such as EUSAIR Pillar 1 Blue Growth, West Med and the Bluemed Initiative, many other complementary actions are necessary in the following fields: MED innovation roadmaps; mechanisms and platforms to exchange knowledge and practices; mapping technological capacities and opportunities; open data platforms; smart specialization strategies on blue bioeconomy; new value chains; new

business models; start-ups; new metrics; talent and skills; adequate regulations; consumer awareness; and investment and financing.

Action is needed to contribute to unlock the potential of the blue bioeconomy in MED through the promotion of a better governance of innovation policies at the Mediterranean, national and regional levels. This requires the combination of a horizontal approach aimed at strengthening the coordination and openness of the innovation ecosystem at transnational level, and a vertical approach to raise the innovativeness of Med blue bioeconomy value chains. Therefore, the ToR defined two projects that:

- Promote the use of blue biotechnologies to address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the MED, by promoting new value chains and business opportunities.
- Develop and test new methodologies and tools to address MED challenges with multi-stakeholders approaches and to improve the coherence among multilevel programmes, strategies and initiatives through a better governance.

The two Strategic Projects, approved in July 2020, explore and test some of the recommendations and will also contribute to this debate providing new evidences and methodologies for a better governance of innovation policies, through the exploration and articulation of missions and of new value chains in the blue bioeconomy contributing to address some of the MED most pressing challenges.

**BLUE BIO MED - Mediterranean Innovation Alliance for sustainable blue economy** promotes the transformation of Mediterranean blue bioeconomy field toward sustainable development goals through innovation. It supports better governance of innovation policies bridging the transnational governance frameworks active in the Mediterranean area (i.e. UfM, UNEP-MAP, EUSAIR, WestMed, Bluemed Initiative, etc.) with the territorial –regional and national– policy making, assuming the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the common reference grid. Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialization (RIS3) are considered as the key entry point to understand and orient the innovation trends and priorities across MED regions and to connect transnational cooperation with investments for growth and jobs of the Cohesion Policy.

BLUEBIOMED intends to develop a governance model of innovation policies to tackle complex challenges and will test the innovative approach through policy experiments triggering the cooperation of the quadruple helix stakeholders for interregional innovation investments.

The overall project objective of the **B-BLUE - Building the blue biotechnology community in the Mediterranean** is the aggregation and coordination of the MED Blue Biotechnology (BBt) sector's organizations and stakeholders in a transnational and multi-actor community, built on the quintuple-helix approach, in order to:

- develop a multilateral coordination framework to support the capacity building & the innovation transfer in the sector;
- facilitate design and implementation in the Med area of joint and integrated plans, initiatives, programmes and policies boosting the MED BBt sector.



The project is going to define, design and implement a structured framework (involving from the 1st steps also the MENA countries) which eases the established BBt community to not just catch new business opportunities or multilateral initiatives in terms of coordinated financing requests, but also to orient policy and financing programmes to align national/regional initiatives at Med level in the BBt sector. Moreover, its modular framework aims at building i) horizontal and vertical & ii) local and Med regional multilateral frameworks. This multilayer integrated structures in the BBt sector will be also part of the wider Med Blue Bioeconomy framework addressed by the BLUE BIO MED project. Each layer contributes in itself and self-sufficiently to both the overall project objective and the Programme Specific Objective 4.1, so that the overall integrated framework the project aims to build perfectly support the process of strengthening a multilateral coordination for Med joint responses to common challenges.

The two projects will join forces to promote a bottom-up **MED Innovation Alliance for blue bioeconomy** – that will be launched by the end of 2021 within BLUE BIO MED - to streamline multiple efforts and initiatives around the Mediterranean. The Alliance will be an open platform for an inclusive co-design process with the wider innovation community to boost the Mediterranean leadership in transformative innovation in the blue economy.

# Taking stock of current actions to support new priorities

- ❖ PANORAMED has performed several activities for better cooperation governance such as promoting dialogue, collecting data to foster evidence-based policy, providing thematic expertise or promoting strategic projects
- ❖ Moving from a thematic approach to a challenge-oriented perspective would facilitate a better coordination among MED players and Interreg MED communities
- ❖ The connection with transnational missions to achieve the European Green Deal objectives would contribute to increase the impact of bottom-up projects
- ❖ Along these missions the Interreg MED would bridge Mediterranean governance frameworks with regional and national policies and programmes
- ❖ Looking ahead, effective operational mechanisms should be designed to amplify the impact and the transformative potential of the next Euro-Mediterranean Programme towards the SDGs

The MED Area is facing challenges that require urgent, better coordinated and more effective responses and actions from all MED actors. These societal challenges can also become an opportunity if “good policies” are put in place in the “right manner” and for that, a better governance is key. There is a huge potential to increase the impact of European funds to address the challenges the MED area is facing, through enhancing complementarities and synergies among strategies, programmes and funds and, therefore, their transformative potential.

As we have seen in the previous section, Interreg MED (and PANORAMED within it) has contributed to that in 2014-2020 by experimenting with different kind of mechanisms and

methodologies to generate networks, collaboration and shared-learning among quadruple helix (government, research, business and citizenship) actors in MED.

Interreg MED Governance Axis and the overarching Programme Architecture activities have contributed to a better cooperation governance through:

- Promoting a transnational **dialogue** platform including all countries involved, to agree on the problems and to discuss possible solutions;
- Collecting **data** to foster evidence-based policy decision accounting for previous projects results;
- Providing thematic **expertise** to understand in detail transnational issues, obstacles and processes starting from a contextual knowledge of national contexts and priorities;
- Promoting **strategic projects** to test possible solutions and to make concrete steps towards solving the governance gaps;
- **Exchanging experience** and sharing solutions to increase impact of EU funds, as done with the Mainstreaming activities.

These activities have been reinforced and complemented by the Thematic Communities articulated within the Programme architecture that have been working to analyze, synthesize, evaluate and disseminate projects' results, to organize working groups and workshops to exchange experience, to draft policy papers and other documents with insights and recommendations based on thematic expertise. In addition, they offered trainings and peer reviews to enhance the institutional capacity of project beneficiaries, public authorities and other stakeholders.

PANORAMED activities were organized in three different thematic fields related to blue economy – coastal and maritime tourism, maritime surveillance and innovation for blue bioeconomy – engaging different players and communities. Nevertheless, several common issues related to Mediterranean governance have emerged: sustainability, knowledge and data sharing, innovation, stakeholders' engagement are recurrent priorities with specific shades in each thematic area as summarized in the table below.

These results confirm that there are overarching challenges for the MED Area which are relevant for different players and sectors.

In the 2014-20 Programme thematic communities are organized around the Programme specific objectives while the Governance Axis is articulated around different thematic sectors. This has hampered the collaboration and the alignment of efforts of MED actors. The necessity of cross-collaboration beyond topics has been emerging in the last years and both PANORAMED and the HPs have progressively shifted their focus from thematic topics to systemic challenges related to sustainable development goals.

PRIORITY	CM TOURISM	MARITIME SURVEILLANCE	INNOVATION
SUSTAINABILITY	Greening tourism (reducing pressures); Adaptation to climate change; Transition to sustainable and responsible policies and practices	Increase connections with environmental issues; Maritime surveillance as a support pillar for MSP/ICZM, especially in insular areas	Increase the contribution of R&I to SDGs by focusing on social needs
DATA	Improved data collection and data harmonization; Improved data sharing; Enhanced knowledge networks	mixing compulsory and voluntary data and information exchanges; interoperability; well-defined data management tools and strategies	To develop common tools as multi-user platforms to share information and knowledge; open data platforms
INNOVATION	Enhanced and innovative tourism (business) solutions; Improved destination management	Promote innovation with the support of private stakeholders; Space technologies, digital technologies and autonomous systems	Focus calls for R&I on pre-identified MED priorities and challenges; Optimize the use of MED R&I infrastructures
COOPERATION	Integrated and informed tourism governance; More efficient communication, collaboration, and growth of competencies	Increase complementarity between actors and interoperability of systems; cooperation with pre-accession and neighbour Countries	To advance towards a MED common approach drawing on existing instruments, programmes and funding; Articulate MED mechanisms for transnational clusters
STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT	Informing, educating, and engaging stakeholders for changing behaviour; Enhanced participatory planning	Inform, engage and earn feedback from public and private sector in multilevel governance; Citizens' observations as new source of data	promoting multi-stakeholder (quadruple-helix) challenge-driven missions; Recognize and enhance contributions by local communities to MED challenges

This evolution is in line with the new emphasis added by the European Union to sustainable development with the approval of the EU Green Deal, which requires systemic innovative solutions and cooperation of many different actors from different sectors and disciplines to transform European economy and society towards more sustainable and inclusive pathways. It is recognized that this transformation towards sustainability is an unprecedented governance challenge at all levels, from local to global, and requires combining bottom-up and top-down approaches. It results from the combined effects of the urgency, the scale of the necessary transformations, the complexity, and the interdependence of issues in a context of fragility and unpredictability.

The preliminary proposal about the new Interreg Euro-Mediterranean 2021-27 Programme also goes in this direction, with a more mission-oriented approach to address the most pressing challenges in the MED: the transition towards an innovative circular and climate-neutral society; the protection of natural environment and climate change adaptation; and the promotion of green living areas ensuring a sustainable growth and the well-being of its citizens.

The 2014-20 experience suggests that changes in programmes and in public policies need time to be developed, understood and implemented. Therefore, strategic monitoring focused on strategic learning is essential to translate programmes and strategies into actions and to adapt to new developments and to emerging challenges and opportunities. The 2014-2020 Interreg MED encountered some difficulties in the first years of implementation, especially regarding the coordination of its different governance building blocks. The collaboration among MED players throughout the years contributed to create a strong sense of community and better functioning of the programme. The necessary pieces to build the new architecture for cooperation governance are already in place, but it is necessary to rethink some of the existing mechanisms to increase their directionality and their effectiveness in addressing the MED most pressing challenges.

The Mediterranean governance frameworks have also grown significantly since 2014. The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), whose origin goes back to the launch of the Barcelona Process in 1995, was already the highest political platform for regional dialogue among the 42 Member States and stakeholders and, since 2012 has been evolving toward a more action-driven organization. The WestMED Initiative, approved by the European Commission in 2017, has followed-up on the UfM 2015 Ministerial Declaration on the Blue Economy that invited the participating countries to explore the added value and feasibility of appropriate maritime strategies at sub-regional level, and build on the experience of the 5+5 Dialogue (five EU Member States and five Southern partner countries). As further follow-up in the same field, in 2017 UfM member countries adopted the BLUEMED Initiative, that was launched as a bottom-up initiative in 2015 and jointly developed by nine Member States focusing on research and innovation for blue growth and jobs. In the meanwhile, in 2014 the European Commission adopted the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) as the third among the macro-regional strategies adopted so far - incorporating the pre-existing Maritime Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas – and Thematic Steering Groups met for the first time during spring 2015. In 2016, the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) 2016-2025 developed by the Mediterranean Action Plan of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/MAP) –the regional cooperation platform established in 1975 under the UNEP Regional

Seas Programme– was also approved by Mediterranean countries as an integrative policy framework to translate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean region. The growing maturity of these frameworks –even accounting for their different geographic and thematic scopes– reduces the pressure for cross-country (intergovernmental) coordination, while multilevel (vertical) coordination –alignment of cross-country strategies with territorial policies– gains importance. PANORAMED design encompassed these two dimensions, but the concrete implementation centered on the cross-country dialogue and its structure and working tools have proved not fully adequate for multilevel bridging.

Bridging strategies and priorities agreed at transnational level with territorial (national/regional) policies requires more than dialogue among actors. A clear understanding of the mutual benefits of this coordination process is a prerequisite. There is also a need of operational mechanisms that encourage permanent cooperation along the whole cycle from strategy making until implementation and evaluation.

The new emphasis on better cooperation governance in the proposals of the Regulations for next programming period is in line with this vision of Interreg programmes as **catalyzers of closer linkages between the dynamics in the wider transnational area and structural regional and national policies and programmes**. The confirmation of a (probably compulsory) Interreg specific objective on better cooperation governance should be read together with the proposal of two new cross-cutting priorities for ERDF under the Investment for Jobs and Growth Goal to support capacity building or enhance cooperation with partners both within and outside national borders. Operational programmes should specify the interregional and transnational actions with beneficiaries located in another country, but for the moment it does not seem that this provision is being widely taken into consideration. Nevertheless, through the so-called embedding process, ERDF and Interreg programmes located in a macro region must ensure that they contribute to fund actions and projects arising from the macro regional strategies. Within the MED area this process is being adopted by EUSAIR and WESTMED with the aim to incorporate the EUSAIR priorities in the sectoral and territorial programmes (including the ones co-funded by European structural funds) in the covered countries and regions.

In this still not stabilized frame, there are ongoing reflections at several levels about the coordination between programmes of the two goals of the Cohesion Policy beyond the process of mainstreaming and transferring of ETC projects' results to structural investment policies and programmes. It is the Interreg added value linked to cooperation in territorial functional areas beyond borders that should be “mainstreamed” in the investments for jobs and growth to ensure more effective and smart use of available resources with positive return for both the local and wider area.

This ambitious perspective passes through improved governance and increased directionality within Interreg among different strands of cooperation and different programmes with partially overlapping territorial coverage. This is particularly important in the Mediterranean region where more than 20 territorial cooperation programmes - including Interreg cross-border and transnational cooperation, IPA cross-border cooperation and ENI cross-border cooperation - are active coupled with different macroregional and sea-basin strategies.

# The way forward: better governance for a Mediterranean Green Deal

The current programming period was designed to be coherent with the Europe 2020 strategy and aimed at contributing to smart and sustainable growth. For the next programming period the European Green Deal calls all actors to contribute to “a new growth strategy that aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use”.

Cohesion Policy is called to support the green and digital transition contributing to the Green Deal objectives, as well as the other main policies financed with the EU multiannual budget and the new extraordinary plan Next Generation EU agreed to support the recovery and resilience after the COVID19 pandemic.

Along with this strategic shift, a new role of Government and public policies is recognized, calling for a renewed public policy toolbox to deal with long lasting and systemic changes (change of paradigm). There is a general consensus that the transition will happen only if multiple actors go in the same direction, with public administration playing a leading role and private actors – from large corporations to citizens– actively involved.

In this challenging and very wide strategy, Interreg MED should have a pivotal role –beyond the relatively low amount of its financial resources– leveraging on territorial cooperation added value. Namely the Programme can contribute to:

- focus on a strategic transnational approach in the functional area. The ecological transition in Europe is a multi-scalar challenge from EU wide to a very local dimension. There is a plurality of funding and tools for action at local, regional and national levels and the EU wide dimension is supported by new regulations and direct management programmes. Instead, the transnational Mediterranean dimension has lower profile and needs to be reinforced with a strategic approach –in close coordination with the upcoming Interreg NEXT MED– and the involvement of other macroregional actors such as the UfM, UNEP/MAP, EUSAIR, WESTMED and the related initiatives;
- improve the multilevel territorial dimension of Mediterranean transnational strategies. Existing Mediterranean governance frameworks still face the challenge to effectively bridge with the territorial (regional) dimension. The macroregional and sea basin strategies are the most advanced in this direction, but the results are far from being fully satisfactory;
- gather quadruple helix stakeholders around challenge-based initiatives. Interreg can encourage coalitions of diversified stakeholders from the quadruple helix (QE) from different territories to align efforts towards common goals (i.e. SDGs);

- promote sandboxes (spaces for experimentation) where prototypes and demonstrators can be constructed and where innovative communities can generate new social practices going beyond business as usual.

A better cooperation governance would contribute to reorient Interreg MED (and Interreg programmes in general) from a platform to support stakeholders' experiments towards a **platform to amplify the impact** of bottom-up innovative projects and other isolated local initiatives towards the SDGs.

Taking stock of the experience gained in the latest years, the focus should be put on the mechanisms necessary to go from projects to systemic transitions. The challenge is how to encourage transformative innovation, i.e. innovation that is not only focused on providing new potential solutions to challenges but on transforming the system accelerating the transition towards a sustainable and climate-neutral society.

It is about developing and to implementing more effective answers to the challenges that matter to society and to citizens, prioritized by the transnational governance bodies. It requires Public Administrations equipped with skills and tools that are currently scarce and deal with:

- understanding systemic challenges with all their complexity;
- co-creating (with academia, companies and civil society) strategies but also operational tools and mechanisms to address the challenges;
- monitoring and evaluating progress towards the expected results and steering action in the desired direction.

Interreg MED can contribute in this direction through a mix of interlinked actions at three levels:

- projects level;
- Horizontal projects level, i.e. communities of projects contributing to the same mission, with a role of consolidating and amplifying projects' results, facilitating cross exchanges and learning among projects and with the outside world;
- Programme level, with facilitation processes and mechanisms involving national and regional authorities to promote vertical multilevel coordination and the connection with territorial dynamics.

As pointed out by the PANORAMED Mainstreaming exercise, to amplify the impact of funded projects having good projects' results and action to demonstrate and showcase them (so that more actors become aware of the innovation delivered and the opportunities related to it) is not enough. Capacity building of territorial stakeholders is needed to ensure that the innovation is integrated into their practice. Thematic communities and Programme facilitation processes can support the amplification of impact promoting adaptation of outcomes to other sectors and/or territories besides the replication in similar territorial contexts.

In addition, the Programme governance architecture should pursue a more ambitious and challenging objective to increase the impact by changing the "business as usual" rules or system's logic. Assuming the aim of encouraging transition towards a climate-neutral society, it should help project beneficiaries to identify obstacles at policy and institutional levels that hinder the implementation of transformative innovation towards more sustainable and inclusive



development pathways, and should provide mechanisms or channels for advocacy and lobbying to promote changes at the policy and institutional levels (law, norms, current institutional organization or practices, incentives, policies) and for generating coalitions and networks of actors supporting alternative visions, generating new practices and generating new narratives leading to real change in the territorial dynamics.