



Mediterranean Blue Economy Stakeholder Platform

Biannual Flash News on Blue Economy

Welcome to the 13th issue of the flash news on blue economy in the Mediterranean region!

Explore the most updated information related to the work of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and its partners to promote the blue economy in the Mediterranean region.

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Latest News

1. 11th Meeting of the UfM Working Group on Blue Economy (21 June, Barcelona)

The 11th meeting of the [UfM Working Group on Blue Economy](#) took place at the Barcelona World Trade Center on June 21st back-to-back with the [UfM Conference on Blue Finance 'Investing in a Sustainable Blue Economy in the Mediterranean'](#). Countries and stakeholders convened to continue progress on the Roadmap for the implementation of the 2021 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy. Among the key agenda items discussed was Greece's proposal on regional cooperation on 'healthy sailing' protocols, successfully carried out among EU countries over the past years. The presentations of the meeting can be found [here](#).



2. UfM Conference on Blue Finance ‘Investing in a Sustainable Blue Economy in the Mediterranean’ (22 June, Barcelona)

The UfM Blue Finance Conference took place on June 22nd at the Barcelona World Trade Center. The goal of the Conference was to encourage investments in and funding of the Sustainable Blue Economy in the Mediterranean region, with a particular focus on Southern countries. Financed by DG MARE and chaired by the UfM EU and Jordan Co-Presidency in close collaboration



with the UfM Secretariat, the Conference was structured around two main sessions on (i) access to finance, opportunities and modalities for investments in Med blue economy sectors, enabling conditions, and examples and best practices currently in place; and (ii) Matchmaking meetings between countries/project promoters and Banks/Financial institutions. [Learn more.](#)

3. Interreg Euro-MED, the UfM, and the WestMED Initiative team up on joint info sessions on opportunities for Southern partners: How to be part of Interreg Euro-MED? (26 April and 10 October)

The Euro-MED Programme 2021-2027, the WestMED Initiative, and the Union for Mediterranean organized on April 26 an info session on “How to be part of Interreg Euro-Med?” aimed specifically at Southern partners, in order to exchange on the Programme, on the role that they can play as Associated Partners in Euro-MED projects, as well as to share expertise and experiences on common challenges and collaboration at Med level. [Learn more.](#) A [follow-up session centered around the 2nd call for thematic projects](#), launched on June 23rd, took place on October 10.



4. ‘No Green without Blue’: Switchmed, Bluefasma, and the Interreg MED Blue Growth Community join forces to promote the Blue Circular Economy in the Mediterranean (10 May)

On May 10, 2022, the SwitchMed programme, the Interreg MED Blue Growth Community, and the Interreg MED BLUEfasma modular project co-organised a hybrid capitalisation event on 'Fostering Circular Blue Economy in the Mediterranean'. The event, which took place In Barcelona and online, was also the occasion to launch a report on [the integration of Circular Economy in the Blue Economy sectors in the Mediterranean.](#) [Learn more.](#)



5. Successful ‘WestMED in my country’ events help to identify possible solutions to bridge the maritime skills gap in Malta (12 May, Valletta) and to foster blue growth opportunities for Italian accelerators and incubators (26-27 May, Naples)

One of nine ‘WestMED in my country’ events, the seminar organized by the Malta National Hub for the WestMED Initiative and the Malta Maritime Forum, brought together in Valletta, key public and private stakeholders of the Maltese blue economy (including key maritime Industry operators, experts, academia, and youth) to identify the challenges related to the skills gap between the labour market and available education curricula across key blue economy sectors in Malta, as well as to explore the strengths and available opportunities to bridge this gap. [Learn more.](#) The UfM also took part on **26-27 May (Naples)** in the WestMED In my country event dedicated to **Blue Growth / Blue Economy opportunities for Italian accelerators and incubators.** [Learn more.](#)



6. A new Blue Economy Observatory to monitor and promote the sustainability of our ocean related activities (19 May)

The new observatory coordinated by DG MARE and DG JRC will help set the EU on the path towards a sustainable, carbon-neutral, and circular blue economy. Launched by the European Commission on May 19, 2022, the Observatory is part of the transition strategy defined in the EC’s Communication on [Transforming the EU’s Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future](#), published in May 2021. [Learn more.](#)



7. Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030 launches a second wave of actions

The Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030, a large-scale, 'Appollo-11 style' push to protect and restore the health of our ocean and waters, launched In June 2022 a second wave of actions contributing to the overarching goal of achieving healthy marine and freshwater ecosystems through research and innovation, citizen engagement, and blue investments. [Learn more.](#)



8. How to engage with the Mission 'Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030' (June 13-14, Marseille)

The event focused on the implementation of the Horizon Europe Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030, Its Mediterranean lighthouse, and the related planned actions to accelerate the transition to zero pollution in the Med Sea. In particular, it presented an opportunity to outline the co-creation of the Mission Charter by discussing how stakeholders and youth can get involved. The gathering, which also counted with High-Level representation from the UfM, was organized by the European Commission together with the Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur Region, cluster Pôle Mer Méditerranée, the City of Marseille, Aix-Marseille University, researchers and students. [Learn more.](#)

9. UfM Ministers launch a new Research and Innovation Agenda for the Mediterranean region

On 27 June Research and Innovation Ministers from the 42 countries of the UfM met for the first time to discuss ways to promote scientific cooperation on climate change, renewable energy, and health. They endorsed a [ministerial declaration](#) that seeks to exploit the potential of research and innovation to increase the resilience of the Euro-Mediterranean region against environmental, food security, and socioeconomic challenges, as well as to promote science diplomacy. Looking ahead to the ongoing and future challenges of the region, ministers adopted a ministerial declaration that paves the way for further strengthening scientific cooperation, fostering linkages on research, innovation and skills, as well as supporting capacity building, coordination and joint actions, including on sustainable development and employability. [Learn more.](#)



10. BLUEfasma project closes with Final Conference on project closes with Final Conference on Shaping a Circular Blue Economy in the Mediterranean (27-28 June; Cairo, Egypt)

The Conference, which counted with the participation of the UfM, provided an important opportunity to bring together key actors including public authorities, businesses, researchers, and civil society representatives from both shores of the Mediterranean to identify common challenges and opportunities, share best practices, and discuss tools, methods, and recommendations to increase innovation capacity and foster the Circular Sustainable Blue Economy transition in the region. The Interreg Med [BLUEfasma project](#) focuses on the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, aspiring to trigger sustainable changes and increase the sector's Circular Economy innovation performance through tailored tools and the implementation of BLUEfasma living labs in 11 territories, in 9 Mediterranean countries. [Learn more.](#)



11. Blue Invest Africa 2022 (07-08 September, Seychelles)

BlueInvest Africa provides an opportunity to put forward the African know-how and local skills, business projects and initiatives. The event served as a meeting and exchange point for investment parties, pooled across Europe and Africa, with innovators and entrepreneurs, small-scale businesses and start-ups operating in Africa with the common interest to generate concrete business opportunities, develop sustainable products and services in the blue economy sectors. Matchmaking between investors and entrepreneurs, in the form of pitching sessions, were also at the core of the event. [Learn more.](#)



12. SHAREMED International Workshop: Connecting marine research and boosting benefits to society (13-14 September, Malta)

The SHAREMED project actively assesses and addresses common and emerging challenges related to trans-boundary marine environmental threats and pollution in the Mediterranean, and the related shared observing systems needed for effective monitoring, governance, and decision-making. The workshop showcased the achievements of SHAREMED in enhancing the impacts on collective research, improved networking, strengthened governance, and a future vision at a Mediterranean scale, embracing direct collaboration, technology transfer and training, and the involvement of experts from both shores of the Med. [Learn more here and here.](#)



13. Joint Final Event of the Interreg MED BEST MED and SMARTMED strategic projects on enhancing Mediterranean tourism governance (14 September, Granada)

The joint Final Event was co-organized by CPMR-IMC, the Council of Europe, the Junta de Andalucía, and El Legado Andalusi Andalusian Public Foundation, with the support of the key partners of the two Interreg Med strategic projects, and external actors including the UfM and the EC. With the goal of sharing the tools/solutions and policy recommendations developed under the projects and dedicated to enhancing cultural and sustainable maritime and coastal tourism planning and governance in the Med, the event was also the occasion to build momentum within the wider Med sustainable tourism community on next steps and viable pathways for the future. The UfM participated in a joint strategic policy session for the projects aiming to trigger a discussion synergies at Med level and the convergence of efforts on the basis of the results of the projects. [Learn more.](#)



14. BLUE BIO MED Blue Innovation Forum and Final Conference (14-15 September, Cadiz)

After two years of rich and fruitful collaboration, the Interreg MED [BLUE BIO MED](#) project organised its Final Conference in Cadiz, Spain, on 14-15 September 2022. The event brought together over 100 Mediterranean and Atlantic stakeholders in person and online and aimed at fostering alliances for the blue economy. The Conference served to showcase the projects' achievements and set path for the future. In particular, the Forum contributed to strengthen cooperation between the Mediterranean Innovation Alliance for Sustainable Blue Bioeconomy (MedIA-SBB) and the Coastal Atlantic Alliance for blue growth, impelled by Atlazol. [Learn more. Access the final brochure of the project here.](#)



15. MSP-MED Pan-Western Mediterranean Workshop 'Towards the operationalization of an MSP Community of Practice in the Western Mediterranean' (26-28 September, Tunis) and Final Conference (13-14 October, Rome)

The workshop organized by the Istituto Nazionale di Oceanografia e di Geofisica Sperimentale (OGS) and the Instituto Español de Oceanografía (IEO,CSIC) in close collaboration with the coordination and partners of the MSP-MED Consortium, aimed to foster exchanges on matters of common concern to MSP Competent Authorities in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Malta, Italy, France, Spain and neighboring countries; to build links among international initiatives operating in the Western Mediterranean; and to foster exchanges on the set up of an MSP Community of Practice in the Western Med. The workshop also provided valuable opportunities to strengthen links with organizations and initiatives including the UfM, the 5x5 initiative, WestMED, UNEP-MAP (PAP-RAC), IOC-UNESCO MSP initiative, DG-RTD/MARE (Mission: Restore our Ocean and Waters), MED Lighthouse, etc. [Learn more.](#) Outcomes and results of the European MSP-MED, showing peculiarities, basin-specific approaches, and solutions to MSP towards a sustainable, inclusive, and long-lasting Blue Economy in the Med Sea were further presented during [Final Conference of the project](#) which took place at the CNR premises in Rome.



16. Final Conference of the Interreg MED Blue Growth Community (29-30 September, Lisbon and online)

Over the past six years, the Interreg MED Blue Growth Community has set the groundwork for unique cooperation opportunities aimed at fostering a new paradigm for sustainable Blue Growth in the Med. The Final Conference was the opportunity for the members of the community to come together to celebrate the cooperation achieved. The Blue Growth Community Project's main capitalization achievements were presented. The gathering was also the occasion for looking forward to future cooperation opportunities for the new EURO-MED Programme. [Learn more.](#)

17. Fisheries: MEDSEA4FISH programme formally launched

On June 21st, the MedSea4Fish programme was officially launched with the endorsement of its guiding document by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM). The program will support Mediterranean riparian countries and stakeholders in meeting their GFCM commitments through active participation in strategic initiatives. The goals of the programme are to create a level playing field and to ensure the sustainable management of fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea. [Learn more.](#)



18. 2022 Mediterranean Coast Guard Functions Forum (29 September – 01 October, Naples)

As a non-binding, voluntary, and independent forum bringing together representatives from institutions and agencies with competencies in coast guard functions in the Mediterranean and international observers including the UfM, the 2022 MCGFF provided a unique opportunity to facilitate multilateral cooperation on a wide range of common challenges including maritime safety, security, and environmental protection activities, as well as enabling potential partnerships, sharing expertise and best practices, and promoting international efforts to enhance the safety and security of activities in the Med Sea. [Learn more.](#)

19. UfM and CPMR-IMC Side Event on relaunching a sustainable post-COVID-19 tourism model in the framework of the 9th Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (6 October; Nicosia, Cyprus)

In the framework of the [9th Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference \(EfE9; 5-7 October; Nicosia, Cyprus\)](#) addressing (inter alia) circular economy, sustainable tourism, and Education for Sustainable Development In the ECE region, the UfM together with CPMR-IMC and with the participation of the World Tourism Organization (WTO), organized on October 6 a Side Event on '[Social and economic regeneration of the Mediterranean after the pandemic: shared methods and tools for relaunching a sustainable post-COVID-19 tourism model](#)'. The Side Event took the form of a capacity building exercise, enabling participants to share and learn about available tools and methods to ensure the delivery of sustainable tourism policies and pathways while strengthening operators' and sustainable tourism stakeholders' skills. [Learn more.](#)



20. 2022 Sustainable Ocean Summit and Global Blue Finance Summit (17-19 October, Barcelona)

The [World Ocean Council](#) (WOC) has partnered with the City and the Port of Barcelona to develop a global Blue Economy hub, headquartered in Barcelona, Spain. In celebration of this new partnership, the World Ocean Council hosted two high-impact ocean events in this vibrant port city: the much anticipated return of the Sustainable Ocean Summit – SOS 2022, taking place 17-18 October, followed by the launch of the Global Blue Finance Summit – BlueFIN 22 on 19 October. The UfM joined forces with WOC as Endorsing Partner of the events. [Learn more.](#)



21. DG MARE Smart Specialization for Blue Economy Follow-up Event (25 October, Crete)

As a direct follow-up to the 5 brokerage sessions held by DG MARE focusing on Blue Bio-technology, Marine Renewable Energies, Coastal and Maritime Tourism, Aquaculture and Fisheries, DG MARE organized on October 25 a hybrid event focused on smart specialisation strategies (S3) to promote interregional partnerships and blue economy value chains across borders. In addition to the outcome of the brokerage sessions, the event presented the recently launched S3 thematic platform for Sustainable Blue Economy, that is being set up by DG MARE in cooperation with DG REGIO. [Learn more.](#)

22. 12th UfM Working Group on Blue Economy and Back-to-back Capacity building on project development associated to EU funding programs ('Access EU funding for your Blue Economy project: Training session on project proposal development') (24-25 October; Aqaba, Jordan and online)

Countries and stakeholders met in Aqaba, Jordan, and online on 24-25 October in order to discuss ongoing and future joint activities, and exchange on operational advancements (i.e. projects, technical assistance, dialogue groups) related to the agreed upon priority areas of joint work in the short-term under the Roadmap for the implementation of the 2021 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy (namely: the diversification of small ports and marinas; Innovation ecosystems and introduction to the concept of Smart Specialization Strategies; and MSP as an overall sector enabler). During the back-to-back capacity-building session, countries and interested stakeholders were guided through practical exercises associated to EU funding programs, increasingly open to Southern partners. The session combined the basics of project proposal development, put the spotlight on concrete Calls for Proposals, and offered concrete examples of ongoing blue economy projects counting with the participation of southern partners. [Learn more.](#)

Resources and Opportunities

1. The EU Blue Economy report 2022: Ocean economy fuels European green transition

The European Commission published its annual EU Blue Economy Report in May, taking stock and uncovering the latest trends and developments in all economic sectors related to the oceans and coastal areas. With a turnover of more than €665 billion and €184 billion in gross value added, the EU blue economy sectors significantly contribute to the EU's economy, especially in its coastal regions. The EU's blue sectors are a spawning ground for innovative solutions and technologies that can help fight climate change and take the green transition to the next level. [Learn more here](#) and [click here](#) to download the report.



2. A Circular Blue Economy for the Mediterranean: Current Practices and Opportunities

This report aims to describe the state of play in the development of circular economy in key blue sectors in the Mediterranean, also providing Insights on how such developments can be strengthened, and on how the transfer process across the sea basin can be fostered. It was prepared in the framework of two EU-funded initiatives, the Interreg MED Blue Growth Community and the SwitchMed programme, emerging also from the will to join forces of CPMR-IMC and the UNEP/MAP Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production MedWaves. [Access the report here.](#)



3. Recordings WestMed Hackatons

The WestMED Hackathons on project development took place on 30 June 2022 under the Maltese and Libyan Co-Presidency of the WestMED Initiative. Ideas for future projects on Sustainable Tourism, Aquaculture, Green Shipping & Ports, Blue Skills and Maritime Clusters were developed. [Watch the recordings here.](#)



4. Publication of the European Commission's report on the implementation of the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive

The European Commission has published a report on the implementation of the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive, which sets the obligation for the 22 coastal Member States to establish maritime spatial plans by 31 March 2021 at the latest. While the majority of the coastal Member States now have a maritime spatial plan in place, there is still much room for progress. [Learn more here](#) and [access the report here](#).



5. The Interreg MED Blue Growth Community launches an online program on managing Blue Growth Potential in the Mediterranean

The Learning Program 'Fostering and Managing Blue Growth Potential in the Mediterranean' is offering the opportunity to gain fundamental theoretical knowledge on the main thematic areas of the blue economy and to explore best practices, tools, and achievements through the valuable experience gained within the Interreg MED Communities, mainly within the Blue Growth Community. [Learn more.](#)



6. Virtual Blue Career Centre is available

Virtual Blue Career Center (VBCC) is a digital platform designed to attract youth but also experienced workers and professionals to fill existing skill gaps that will increase employability in key Blue Growth services. It promotes the blue economy as an opportunity for professional development and education for young future professionals and professionals already active in the blue economy sectors. [Learn more.](#)



7. Towards a sustainable development of marine renewable energies in the Mediterranean

The report 'Towards a sustainable development of marine renewable energies in the Mediterranean' has been published in the framework of the Interreg Med Blue Growth Community, led by Plan Bleu. It provides an overview of the development of marine renewable energies in the Mediterranean region and presents various existing technologies and practical cases to reconcile biodiversity and development of marine renewable energies. [Learn more](#)



Upcoming events

1. **6th UfM Task Force on Environment**, 3 November 2022 – online
2. [14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands \(COP14\)](#), 5-13 November 2022, Wuhan – China
3. [UN Climate Change Conference 2022 \(UNFCCC COP 27\)](#), 6-18 November 2022, Sharm El Sheikh – Egypt
4. [COP 27 UfM Side Event on Sustainable Blue Economy 'A rising tide which lifts all boats'](#), 17 November 2022, Sharm El Sheikh – Egypt
5. [5th International MSP Forum](#), 21 November 2022, Barcelona - Spain
6. [3rd International Conference on Marine/Maritime Spatial Planning](#), 22 November 2022, Barcelona – Spain
7. [EMFAF 2022 Info Day](#), 24 November 2022, Brussels – Belgium. [Calls for proposals open as of 13 October!](#)
8. [Forum Blue Cluster](#), 29 November 2022, Roscoff – France
9. [CommOCEAN Conference](#) (5th International Marine Science Communication Conference), 30 November - 01 December 2022, Online and Sète – France
10. **UfM Conference on Wetlands**, 1 December – online

11. [UN Biodiversity Conference \(15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Conference on Biological Diversity, CBD – Part 2\)](#), 7-9 December, Montreal – Canada
12. [1st International Conference on Ocean Education and Training](#), 09-11 January 2023, Ghent – Belgium

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