



Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
الإتحاد من أجل المتوسط

Mediterranean Blue Economy Stakeholder Platform

Biannual Newsletter on Blue Economy

Welcome to the 15th issue of the biannual newsletter 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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Click [here](#) to submit news and upcoming events for the next issue of the newsletter or to publish your news and events on the [Mediterranean Blue Economy Stakeholder Platform \(MedBESP\)](#).

Read our [Quick user and onboarding guide](#) to get the most out of MedBESP.

Latest News

1. 14th meeting of the UfM Working Group on Sustainable Blue Economy (11 October 2023, Barcelona and online)

Following up on the 13th UfM BE WG held in Brussels on 14 March 2023 back-to-back with the First meeting of the Blue Mediterranean Partnership (BMP), UfM countries and Mediterranean SBE stakeholders and partners met on October 11 in Barcelona at UfM Secretariat premises and online in order to continue making progress on the implementation of the [2021 UfM Ministerial Declaration on SBE](#) and on the related [UfM Roadmap on SBE](#). In addition to green-lighting the mid-to-long-term activities in the framework of the implementation of the Roadmap/Ministerial, the members of the WG discussed key ongoing and future joint initiatives, including the 2nd UfM Stakeholder Conference on Sustainable Blue Economy (Athens, 19-21 Feb. 2024) and updates on funding opportunities including the Blue



Mediterranean Partnership (BMP) in-the-making, and in the framework of EMFAF and Interreg NEXT MED. [Learn more.](#)

2. 2023 WestMED Ministerial Declaration and Stakeholder Conference (21-23 June, Malta)

On 23 June 2023, ministers and high-level representatives from the 10 WestMED countries met in Malta together with representatives of the European Commission and the Union for the Mediterranean to reassess and update the priorities stated in the WestMed Framework for Action as supported by the WestMED Initiative. The new Declaration focuses on addressing common sea basin challenges, resulting in a joint commitment in the Western Mediterranean and beyond to further develop a sustainable, resilient, decarbonized and circular blue economy, addressing climate change, adapting to its effects, and halting and reversing marine biodiversity loss. [Learn more.](#)



Organized back-to-back with the WestMED Ministerial, the 2023 WestMED Stakeholder Conference brought together more than 100 stakeholders from around the region, including the UfM, to exchange experiences on a wide variety of sustainable blue economy topics. This year's edition focused on 'Boosting the Sustainable Blue Economy' and highlighted the WestMED Initiative's activities on Sustainable aquaculture, green shipping, ports, maritime clusters, Maritime Spatial Planning, sustainable tourism, and ocean literacy. [Learn more.](#)

3. 4th meeting of the UfM Working Group on Environment and Climate Change (24 May, Barcelona)

The 4th meeting of the UfM Working Group on Environment and Climate Change took place in Sitges, Barcelona, on 24 May 2023. Member countries of the UfM Working Group on Environment and Climate Change, as well as different key stakeholders (CPMR, UNEP MAP, FAO, the European Forest Institute or Clima-Med, among others) met to foster progress on the [2nd UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Change action](#), adopted in Cairo in 2021. The 2021 Ministerial aims to intensify and accelerate the Mediterranean's transition to a green, circular and inclusive economy and to climate resilience. At a more operational level, the 2nd UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Action endorsed the [2030GreenerMed Agenda](#) as a regional structured framework for cooperation and coordination as well as the Climate Action Work Plan. [Read more.](#)



4. Mediterranean Lighthouse gains momentum at Mission Oceans event in Palermo (31 May, Palermo)

The high-level event celebrated in Palermo 31 May was the occasion to consolidate and strengthen the political commitments made by the Mediterranean countries towards the Implementation of the Mission and its Mediterranean Lighthouse. It also showcased an array of initiatives and actions that support the Mission's goals and which have the potential to be scaled up and implemented in sea basins around Europe. The two-day event was organised by the European Commission in close cooperation with the Italian government, the Sicily Region, and the University of Palermo, with the support of the BlueMissionMed



Coordination and Support Action. The second day featured islands' actions to implement the ecological, circular and energy transitions for sustainability and increased resilience. [Learn more.](#)

5. Launch event 'Towards a more sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean – 3 Interreg programmes joining forces' (4 May, Florence and online)

Since 2021, the Interreg Euro MED, Maritime Italy France and NEXT MED Programmes, have been working together to enhance sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean. This pilot action aims at transferring the most valuable results and governance tools to concretely support stakeholders in the tourism sector. This collective work is foreseen to be extended to other key sectors and open to additional Mediterranean Interreg Programmes in order to facilitate synergies and contribute to local policy development with tested solutions.

The meeting was the occasion to present, to the 120 attendees onsite and 138 online, a synthesis of the work carried out by several public and private operators co-financed by European funds during the 2014/20 period and to showcase how cooperation in partnership is effective in finding unique solutions to common challenges.

[Learn more.](#)

6. European Maritime Day and launch of the European Blue Forum (24-26 May, Brest)

Co-hosted annually since 2008 by the EC and a European city mobilized for the Sustainable Blue Economy (SBE), European Maritime Day (EMD) is the 'annual EU meeting point on maritime affairs and sustainable blue economy'. It is also a public and multi-stakeholder event reaching out to citizens, including youth, across Europe through local events under the 'EMD in my Country' label. This year's EMD

brought together in the maritime city of Brest, more than 1600 participants and stakeholders, including the UfM, to discuss key topics including the use of marine space, the energy transition, and blue skills.

On May 26, UfMS also attended the launch of the European Blue Forum led by the EC (DG MARE). Aimed at fostering dialogue among all sea users, including offshore operators, stakeholders and scientists engaged in fisheries, aquaculture, shipping, tourism, renewable energy, and other activities at sea, the Forum will provide a unique space to develop synergies between maritime activities and reconcile the various uses of the sea. More than 150 people attended the launch event in Océanopolis, Brest, and around 250 joined the meeting online.

[Learn more](#) [here](#) and [here](#).



7. High Seas Treaty signed at United Nations

The High Seas Treaty, also known as the agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction or 'BBNJ', was signed in New York on 20 September, in the margins of the United Nations High Level Week. In addition to the EU, [many countries signed the treaty](#).

The agreement provides the framework for the common governance of about half of the Earth's surface and 95% of the ocean's volume, the largest habitat on our blue planet, to: promote equity and fairness, tackle environmental degradation, fight climate change, and prevent biodiversity loss in the high seas. The adoption of this agreement is a historic achievement marking the successful end of more than a decade of multilateral work. It complements the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which provides the legal framework under which all human activities in the ocean take place. [Learn more.](#)



8. UfM-labelled Co-Evolve4BG project Event on dissemination at Med level (17-18 July) and Final Conference (25-26 October, Tunis)

The 2-day event took place online on 17-18 July and presented the dissemination of project results and the development of a transferability strategy for the Mediterranean region. The Union for the Mediterranean namely took part in the session on 'Fostering Sustainable Blue Economy in the Med community: The UfM Blue Economy Roadmap and Co-Evolve4BG'. The Closure Event of the UfM-labelled Co-Evolve4BG took place in Tunis on October 25th and 26th. Aiming to celebrate the successful completion of the project and showcase its outcomes, the Conference brought together key project stakeholders and partners, including the UfM, Interreg NEXT MED, and ENI CBC Med. Operating under the UfM's label, MedCoast4BG has been a driving force in advancing sustainable Coastal/Maritime tourism throughout the Mediterranean region while fostering the principles of Blue Growth. [Learn more here](#) and [here](#).



9. WestMED Maritime Clusters Alliance presenting major achievements and developments at SeaFuture 2023 (8 June, La Spezia)

With the support of the WestMED Assistance Mechanism and the Italian national clusters CTN BIG and Federazione del Mare, and including the participation of the UfM, the Maritime Clusters Alliance organised an event during SeaFuture 2023 in LaSpezia, Italy, focused on the [WestMED Maritime Cluster Alliance](#). The main objective was to provide an overview of the cooperation among maritime clusters that are part of the [WestMed Maritime Cluster Alliance](#) (WM MCA) after two years since its inception. [Learn more.](#)



10. Joint Italian-Maltese WestMED national event in Catania boosts blue opportunities in the Mediterranean (4-6 October, Catania and online)

For the first time since the launch of the WestMED Initiative and the set-up of the Westmed Technical Assistance Mechanism, a joint national event was coordinated by the Italian and Maltese National Hubs, in Catania on Oct 4-6 2023. Sicily, home of the Managing Authority of INTERREG Italy-Malta and INTERREG NEXT Italie-Tunisie, and Catania in particular (with its rich ecosystem of high tech companies, university and research centers) was the natural place to leverage the potential of a North-South event with national representatives attending from Italy, Malta, Algeria, Libya, Mauritania and Tunisia, as well as institutional invitees including the UfM. [Learn more.](#)

11. New EMFAF Regional flagship projects just kicked off their work

The EMFAF [Regional flagships call](#), with a budget of EUR 7.6 million, focusses on EU sea basins cooperation; in particular the Atlantic, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, the Baltic Sea Region and the EU Outermost Regions. Ten new projects have just kicked off, with four of them to be implemented in the Mediterranean: Green Marine Med, GreenMED, POWER4MED and CALLMEBLUE. [Learn more.](#)



12. Barcelona to host 2024 UN Ocean Decade Conference (12-14 April 2024)

Three years after the start of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), a global conference will bring together the Ocean Decade community and partners to celebrate achievements and set joint priorities for the future of the Decade. Hosted by Spain and co-organized with UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC/UNESCO), the 2024 UN Ocean Decade Conference will take place on 10-12 April 2024 in the coastal city of Barcelona. [Learn more.](#)



13. EU Mission 'Restore our Ocean and Waters': €106 million for 18 new projects for protection, conservation, depollution and innovation

On July 17, 2023, The Commission announced 18 new projects which will receive over €106 million to contribute to the [EU Mission 'Restore our Ocean and Waters'](#). The projects gather over 370 beneficiaries from 36 countries, including SMEs, research institutions, local authorities, schools and businesses. They will play a key role in achieving climate neutrality and restoring nature by protecting and restoring biodiversity in waters, cutting pollution, supporting a sustainable blue economy and developing the [European Digital Twin of the Ocean](#). All EU Member States are involved in the projects, with actions from the Baltic and North Sea, through the Danube River, Mediterranean Sea, and across to the Atlantic. [Learn more.](#)



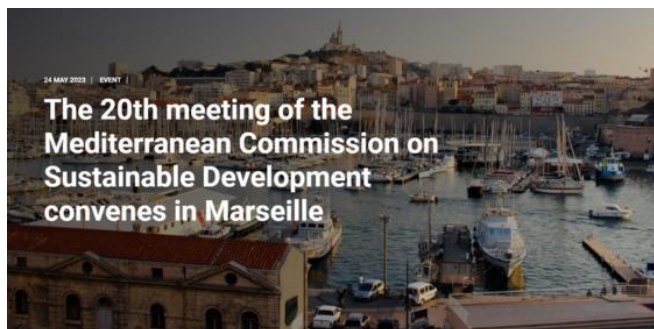
14. Interreg Euro-MED Consultation Day (17 October 2023)

The Interreg Euro-MED Programme held an online Consultation Day on October 17th. The objective of the meeting was to present the state of the art of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme by leveraging the insights and recommendations from third-party partners, namely on next steps and activities. This meeting served as an occasion to present a preview of upcoming calls with the aim of collecting expertise and recommendations from participants to better shape the future Programme orientations. [Learn more.](#)



15. 20th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) (14-16 June, Marseille)

Mediterranean countries, institutions, representatives of the private sector and academia, and civil society organizations came together on 14-16 June in Marseille for a new push for sustainable development in the Mediterranean region. Unlocking the potential of the blue economy sustainably holds the key to the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy on Sustainable Development adopted within the framework of the UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan—Barcelona Convention system. [Learn more.](#)



16. UfM takes part in 2023 Forum Mondial de la Mer (22 September, Bizerte)

Taking place since 2018, the Forum Mondial de la Mer brings together key maritime players and stakeholders from the Southern shores of the Mediterranean to discuss key challenges and solutions. Including thematic sessions on climate change and the central importance of science-based evidence for policy-making, and offering opportunities to share project-based experiences and lessons learned, this year's edition also counted with the participation of the UfM. [Learn more.](#)



17. The European Commission welcomes the launch of the Black Sea Strategic R&I Agenda Implementation Plan (4 May 2023)

The Implementation Plan for the Black Sea Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) was launched on May 4th during a [dedicated conference](#) in the European Parliament, hosted by MEP Marian-Jean Marinescu. The event featured the participation of the European Commission, EU and partner countries, regional organisations, and the cohort of the Black Sea Young Ambassadors, which in the event represented the passion and hopes of the future generations. [Learn more.](#)

18. Maritime safety: new proposals to support clean and modern shipping

On June 22, 2023, the Commission presented [five legislative proposals](#) to modernize EU rules on maritime safety and prevent water pollution from ships. The proposals will equip the EU with new tools to support clean and modern shipping. They will align EU rules with international regulations, securing a level-playing field for the sector while improving implementation and enforcement through digitalization and more EU cooperation. The European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) will play a prominent role in the implementation of the new requirements through the support it will offer Member States administration to enforce the new rules. A separate proposal puts forward changes to EMSA's mandate and incorporates these new tasks. [Learn more.](#)



19. Sustainable fisheries: Launch of Energy Transition Partnership for EU fisheries and aquaculture

The Commission has launched the Energy Transition Partnership for fisheries and aquaculture at the high-level conference '[Joining forces for the energy transition in EU fisheries and aquaculture](#)'. The Partnership will provide a central platform for all actors of the sea to share knowledge and solutions, and coordinate efforts in order to achieve a climate-neutral sector by 2050, as set out in the [Communication on the energy transition in EU fisheries and aquaculture](#). It will notably help address some of the most pressing challenges in the energy transition process such as the need for new professional skills, ensuring sufficient financing, and closing the gaps in knowledge, research and innovation. The Commission will coordinate the work of the partnership. [Learn more.](#)



20. Global campaign for clean, plastic-free oceans - #EUBeachCleanup

The #EUBeachCleanup campaign is organised by the [European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries \(DG MARE\)](#), with [EEAS](#) and the [United Nations](#). Raising awareness about marine pollution and how our habits impact our ocean is vital. Up to 37 million tonnes of plastic waste will reach the ocean annually by 2040. The campaign consists of clean-up events organised by institutions (EU Delegations and Representations, Europe Direct Centres, United Nations Regional Offices, etc.), NGOs, and citizens wanting to put up their own events. We encourage everyone to join forces at the local level (with, for example, climate pact ambassadors, schools, and municipalities). International Coastal Clean-up Day, which is on September 16, was the last day of the programme, but events can be held at any time until October. [Learn more.](#)



21. Moving forward in the implementation of the Ocean Decade in Africa and the Adjacent Island states

In response to the growing degradation of marine and coastal ecosystems in Africa, an information webinar brought together stakeholders from Africa and the Adjacent Island States to discuss advances and next steps in catalysing science-based solutions to achieve the ocean we want as part of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030 ('Ocean Decade'). Established to spearhead the implementation of the Ocean Decade in Africa, the African Ocean Decade Taskforce organized an online information webinar on 2 June 2023. The event, led by the Ocean Innovation Africa and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO, was attended by approximately 120 participants from within and beyond Africa, who were informed on the progress of implementation of the [Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap](#) and continuing processes related to the Ocean Decade in the region. [Learn more.](#)



Resources and Opportunities

1. The EU Blue Economy report 2023

The European Blue Economy report is a compass to help decision-makers and stakeholders navigate the waters of the European blue economy. The 2023 edition of the report highlights the evolution of the blue economy sectors since 2010. It shows that despite the negative impact of the COVID19 pandemic and the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine, most of the analysed sectors increased their economic performances. Together with the findings on established and emerging sectors, the 2023 version includes a chapter on the Energy Transition in the Blue Economy. The section dedicated to Climate Change and Coastal Impact is another new addition to this year's edition, all topped with a new and fresher look to offer better information. [Learn more.](#)



2. The European Blue Economy conference: Post event report

The conference brought together in Brussels on 21 June policymakers, local government, and industry representatives from the marine, maritime, shipping and technology sectors to explore how Europe can lead the way towards a sustainable blue economy. The keynotes and panels explored the work of policymakers to date in helping to achieve this goal, including the safeguarding of economic growth, the various funding opportunities for innovative projects and R&D initiatives, and the support for small and medium-sized enterprises. Leaders and groups discussed how technology and innovation can reduce the effects of climate change and promote a more sustainable blue economy whilst driving economic growth for all – including harnessing of renewable energy; reducing ocean plastics and waste; and accelerating the digital and green transformation of the shipping industry. [Learn more.](#)



3. EU Fishing Authorisations website launched

The European Commission has launched a new website on EU Fishing Authorisations. Users can now search for data on fishing authorisations that have been granted during the last 10 years for EU vessels fishing outside EU waters and for non-EU vessels fishing in EU waters. This website boosts transparency in EU fisheries and digitalization of EU administration by making relevant fisheries data available in real-time to the public. The shared information ensures that the operations of EU external fishing fleets are open and accessible to everyone. [Learn more.](#)



Upcoming events

1. [Tomorrow Blue Economy: A new global initiative developing the potential of the Blue Economy](#), 7 November 2023, Barcelona - Spain
2. [26 Edition ECOMONDO - The Green & Blue Technology Expo](#), 7 - 10 November 2023, Rimini - Italy
3. [2nd International UfM-labelled TouMali project conference](#), 8-9 November 2023, Marrakech - Morocco
4. [MedPAN Workshop on tourism in Mediterranean MPAs](#), 13 November 2023, Hyères - France
5. [7th UfM Task Force on Environment](#), 15 - 16 November 2023, Brussels - Belgium
6. [UfM Regional Forum](#), 27-28 November 2023, Barcelona - Spain
7. [Day of the Mediterranean](#), 28 November 2023
8. [S3 Forum for practitioners](#), 28 November 2023 (Barcelona, Spain & online)
9. [COP28 UAE](#), 30 November – 12 December 2023, Dubai - UAE
10. [UNEP/MAP CoP 23](#), 4-8 December 2023 - Slovenia
11. [2nd UfM Stakeholder Conference on Sustainable Blue Economy](#), 19-21 February 2024, Athens - Greece
12. [9th WORLD FISHERIES CONGRESS](#), 3-9 March 2024, Washington - USA
13. [UN Ocean Decade Conference 2024](#), 10-12 April 2024, Barcelona – Spain
14. [9th Our Ocean Conference](#), 15-17 April 2024, Athens – Greece
15. [European Maritime Day](#), 30-31 May 2024, Svendborg – Denmark
16. [37th Americas Cup Barcelona](#), August-October 2024, Barcelona - Spain

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