

UfM Webinar

Scaling up synergies and partnerships for the sustainable maritime and coastal tourism transformation in the Mediterranean

Concept & Draft Agenda

Date: 20 June, 2024

Time: 10:00-12:30 CET

Objective

This webinar aims at showcasing the crucial role that synergies, partnerships and regional cooperation can play in fostering the uptake of innovative approaches in the tourism sector towards its 'green and blue' transformation. It seeks to assess and promote alignment between policies and funding; as well as to share/illustrate with concrete examples of existing multi-level and cross-sectoral cooperation, including partnerships between academia, industry, and public authorities.

Background

Coastal and maritime ('blue') tourism is one of the most important economic sectors for Mediterranean countries, representing 35% of global tourist arrivals and 30% of global receipts, while hosting about 20% of the world's hotel accommodation capacity.¹ It therefore plays a crucial role in terms of economic development and job creation across the Mediterranean region, with a steady recovery, particularly across EU Member States, since the latest crisis induced by the 2019 COVID pandemic.²

However, as underlined by the [UfM Operational handbook 'Shared methods and tools for relaunching a sustainable post COVID-19 tourism model'](#)³, the sector is currently characterized by structural fragilities that undermine its future sustainability, including its significant impacts on the environment and on local populations, high seasonality, and low offer diversification.

In this context, [the 2021 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy](#)⁴ called for preserved marine and coastal ecosystems and maritime cultural heritage to contribute to the attractiveness of coastal areas; and recognized that relevant policies, including research and

¹ ASCAME (2022), The new normal for Mediterranean tourism, <https://www.ascame.org/new/the-new-normal-for-mediterranean-tourism/>

² Plan Bleu (2022), State of play of tourism in the Mediterranean https://planbleu.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/EN_VF_stateoftourism_PLANBLEU.pdf

³ UfM (2022), Operational handbook: Shared methods and tools for relaunching a sustainable post COVID-19 tourism model, <https://medblueconomyplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/socialandeconomicregenerationufmcprn.pdf>

⁴ Union for the Mediterranean (2021). Ministerial Declaration on the Sustainable Blue Economy. Available at: <https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Declaration-UfM-Blue-Economy-EN-1.pdf>

innovation, must consider the impacts of tourism activities on coastal areas and the vulnerability and complexity of coastal and maritime ecosystems.

More recently in Athens,⁵ [Mediterranean stakeholders concretely acknowledged the importance of promoting multi-level governance models](#) that take into account not only economic opportunities, but also broader sustainability dimensions, such as waste management, biodiversity protection, or adaptation to climate change.

This webinar builds on previous and on-going synergetic efforts among different types of stakeholders in various areas, including public funding programming such as the Interreg Multi-programme Coordination Mechanism⁶; cross-sector technical cooperation projects, including the UfM-labelled project TouMali⁷ or the Blue Tourism Initiative⁸; stakeholder networking platforms like the Sun&Blue Congress⁹; or industry representative fora, such as ASCAME, among others.

It also concretely follows-up on the outcomes and innovative approaches highlighted in the 2021 webinar organised between UfM and the WestMED Initiative on ‘Sustainable Tourism Innovation’¹⁰, reflecting on what has been achieved since then and identifying next steps.

Specific objectives

- Showcase existing **regional cooperation mechanisms** in the area of sustainable blue tourism, their specific objectives and ways/best practices to engage.
- Promote **alignment between policies and funding** to enable and boost innovative approaches and sustainability in tourism, both at regional (Mediterranean) and EU level.
- Identify needs and challenges for **public-private** collaboration and dialogue.
- Disseminate successful examples/good practices of **multi-level and cross-sectoral cooperation**, highlighting the strategic links between tourism and other ‘blue economy’ areas (i.e. marine litter, marine spatial planning, etc.)

Target audience

- Quadruple-helix stakeholders in the Mediterranean tourism sector, including researchers/academia, industry, policy-makers, and civil society organisations.
- Eligible beneficiaries of sustainable ‘blue tourism’ projects.
- EU funding Programmes Managing Authorities (including INTERREG) and other donors.

Expected outcomes

- Inform stakeholders about existing regional collaboration platforms and ways to engage in them.
- Steer a debate amongst practitioners in the tourism sector to understand gaps, challenges and further opportunities for synergies and regional cooperation
- Encourage future cross-sectoral collaboration at multiple levels of governance to achieve blue tourism sustainability objectives.

⁵ UfM (2024). 2nd UfM Stakeholders Conference on sustainable blue economy- Available at: <https://medblueeconomyplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/2nd-ufm-sk-conf-sbe-outcomes-main-messages.pdf>

⁶ <https://interreg-euro-med.eu/en/multiprogramme-sustainable-tourism/>

⁷ <https://toumali.org/en>

⁸ <https://bluetourisminitiative.org/>

⁹ <https://sunandbluecongress.com/es>

¹⁰ <https://medblueeconomyplatform.org/fr/vkc/event/sustainable-tourism-innovation-884b6cfa4d/>

<p>10:00-10:15 CET</p>	<p>Welcome and Setting the stage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UfM EU Co-Presidency: Mr Manuel Pleguezuelo – Policy Officer, DG MARE • UfM Secretariat: Mr Almotaz Abadi – Deputy Secretary General for Water, Environment, and Blue Economy <p><i>Moderation:</i> Ms Alessandra Sensi – Head of Sector; Environment, Green, and Blue Economy, UfM</p>
<p>10:15-11:45 CET</p>	<p>Scaling up synergies, partnerships, regional collaboration, and innovation; Focus on gaps/challenges, best practices, and future outlook/opportunities</p> <p><u>Session 1 – Synergies & collaboration: Relevant frameworks and processes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Marta Pascual, Spanish National Hub of the WestMED Initiative • Ms Monica Bellisario, Interreg Multi-programme Coordination Mechanism on Sustainable Tourism • Ms Carole Martinez, MedPAN, Sustainable tourism governance and Mediterranean MPAs <p><u>Session 2 – Panel on cross-thematic synergies among projects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Angelo Sciacca, Senior Research Fellow – Blue Tourism & Project Coordinator <i>Sharing the Blue Tourism Initiative experience in the Mediterranean</i> • Ms Alexia Spyridonidou, Business Development Manager, EPLO Circular Economy & Climate Institute <i>Interreg Euro-Med Dialogue4Tourism Project – boosting sustainable tourism in the Med</i> • Mr Giuliano Tallone, Regione Lazio • Ms Eleonora Ambrosi, Project Manager at X23 - The Innovation Bakery <i>Sharing the experience of the EU WeMED NaTOUR, EMFAF Flagship project</i> • Ms Nour El Houda Chaher, Research Associate & Project Manager, University of Rostock (<i>video message</i>) <i>TouMaLi Project: Sustainable management solutions to tackle waste from the tourism sector in Northern Africa</i> • Mr Abdel Wahab Mohamed, General Manager of the Egyptian

	<p>Ministry of Tourism, Alexandria Office, Egypt <i>National Strategies for a Circular Economy approach in the Tourism Sector in Egypt</i></p> <p><i>Moderation:</i> Mr Javier Fernandez (Sea Basins Assistance Mechanism), Ms Adriana Salazar (SBE Expert, UfM Secretariat)</p>
11:45-12:15 CET	<p>Q&A and wrap-up by moderator</p> <p><i>Moderation:</i> Mr Javier Fernandez (Sea Basins Assistance Mechanism)</p>
12:15-12:30 CET	<p>Conclusions and way forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• UfM EU Co-Presidency: Mr Manuel Pleguezuelo – Policy Officer, DG MARE• UfM Secretariat: Ms Alessandra Sensi – Head of Sector; Environment, Green, and Blue Economy <p><i>Moderation:</i> Ms Alessandra Sensi</p>