



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



15<sup>th</sup> UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Blue Economy  
Brussels - 27 June 2024

***WestMED Update (Celia Murcia, Coordinator of the WestMED Assistance Mechanism)***

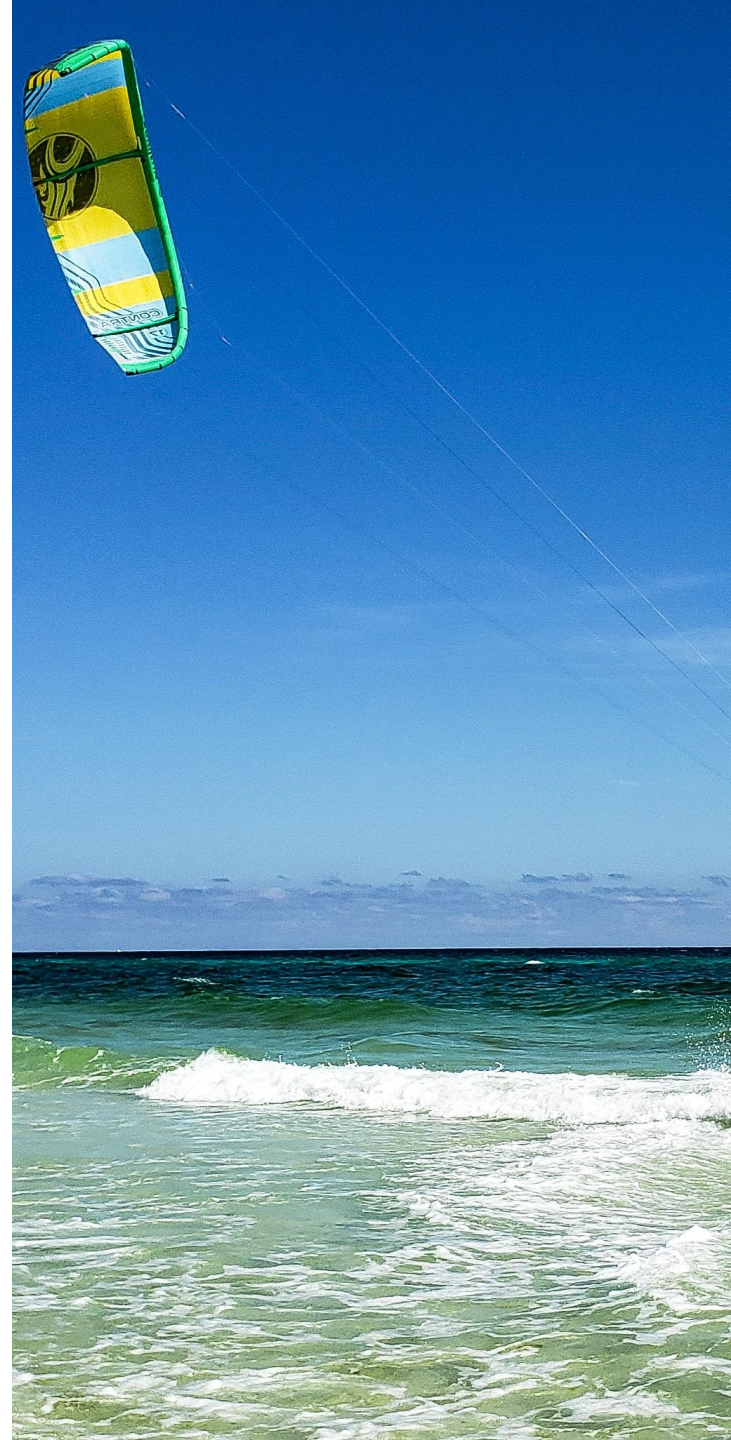
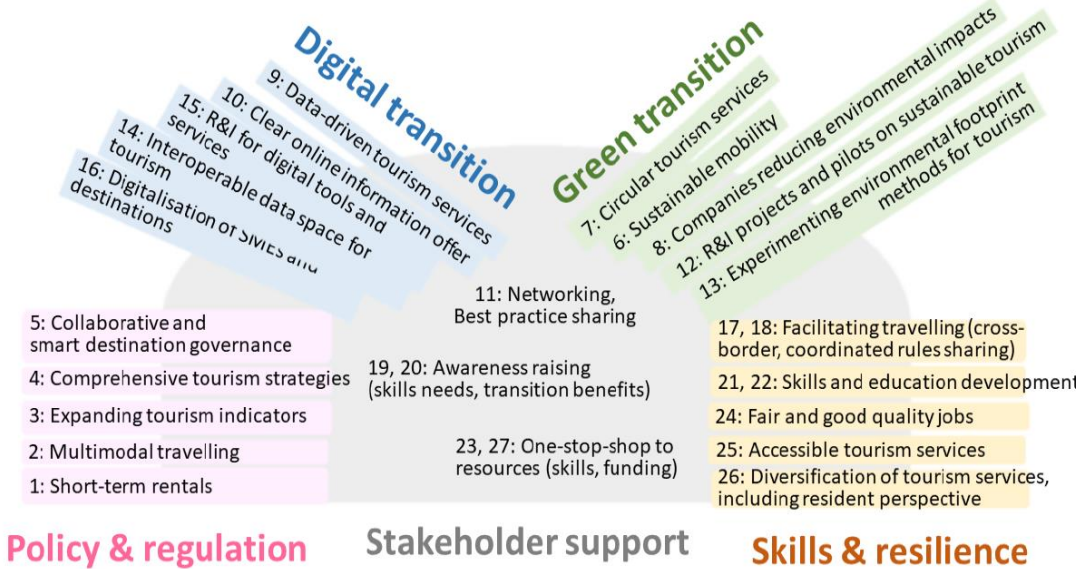
# New WestMED Technical Group on Sustainable Tourism

- Numbers of tourists have already reached pre-pandemic levels and are further on the rise in the Mediterranean.
- A ‘traditional sun, sea and sand model’ is no longer viable
- Important source of employment in the Med (averaging 11.5% of total employment in Mediterranean countries)
- **WestMED’s key goal** : ‘strengthen the competitiveness and sustainability of the coastal and maritime tourism sector, as part of a smart and resilient blue economy by preserving the marine and coastal environment as well as marine cultural heritage and contributing to the attractiveness of coastal areas by means of ecotourism, digitalisation and mobilising private-public investments’.
- **UfM**: ‘need to promote policy coordination, stakeholder collaboration and cooperation mechanisms to strengthen the resilience of the tourism sector in the Mediterranean’.
- Eco-tourism, cross-border cooperation to multiply results



# Objectives of the TG

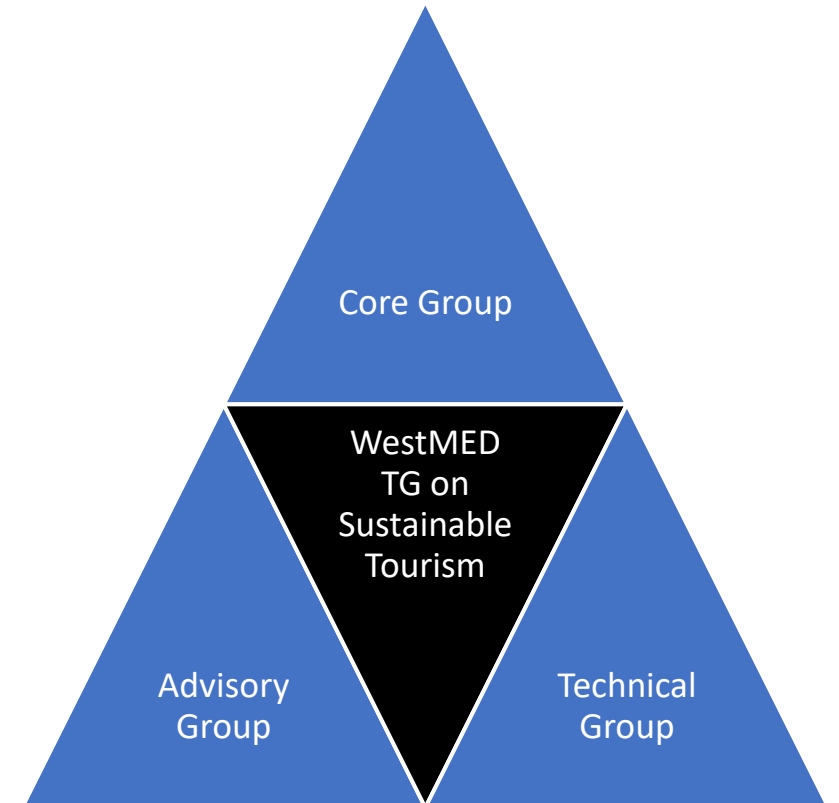
Overall objective: to serve as an informal FORUM where participants can discuss about their needs to advance towards a sustainable tourism within the Western Mediterranean around the topics already set at EU level with regards to the tourism-related topics of green transition, digitalization, governance, and skills.



# Governance of the TG

TG formed by 3 subgroups:

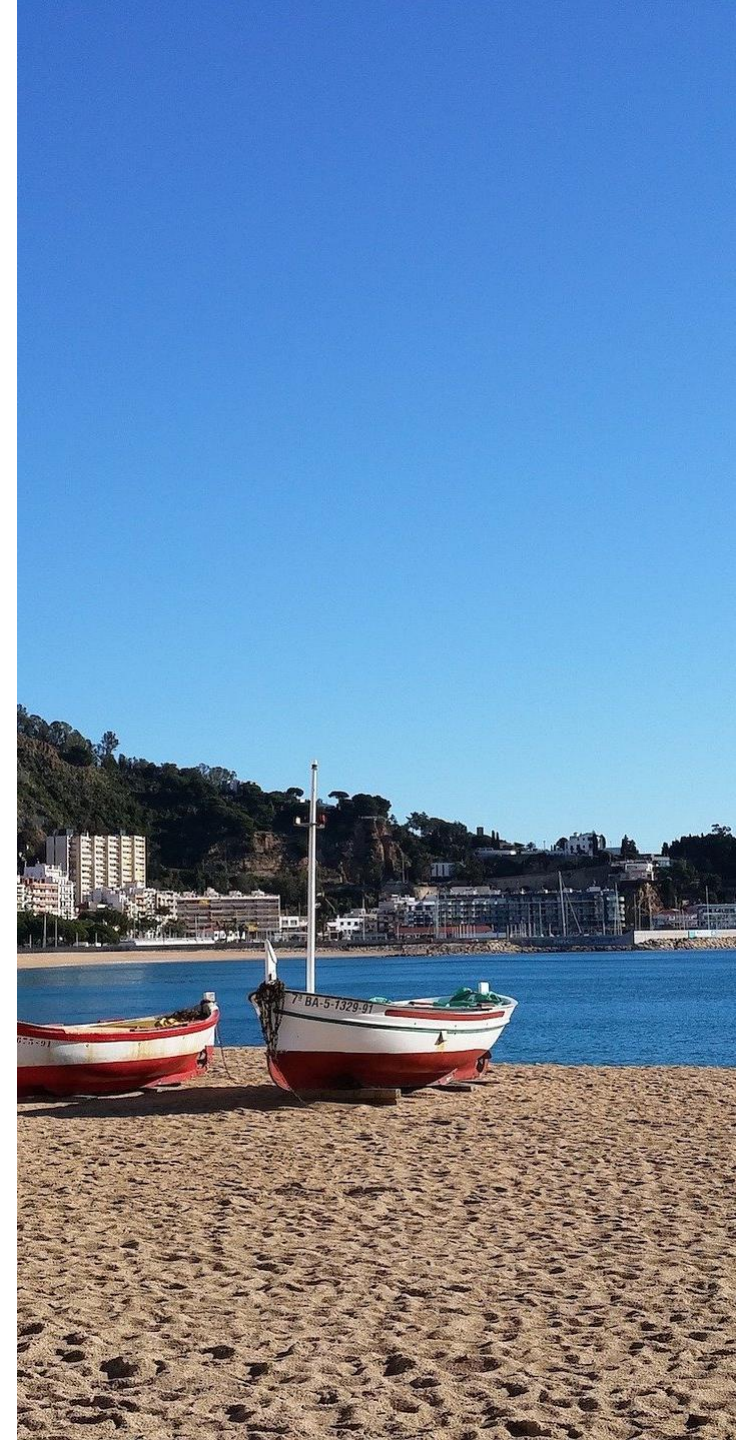
1. A **core group** (with 1-2 national members assigned by the National Coordinators)
2. An **advisory body** (with relevant stakeholders that are also involved in steering various tourism initiatives, funding opportunities, etc.). For example: DG Grow, ASCAME, WOC, CPMR, UfM, UNEP MAP, etc.
3. A **technical group** (where all other remaining stakeholders from the tourism industry will be invited to take part to develop project ideas and concrete proposals). For example: stakeholders from Travel Foundation, Associations, Networks, Tourism businesses, research and innovation centres, technological centres, universities, nautical sector, etc.



# Next steps of the TG

## Upcoming developments from approval:

- July 2024 – **Kick off meeting** to launch the Technical Group on Sustainable Tourism in the Western Mediterranean and establish the status-of-play (online Webinar, duration 2 hours)
- October 2024 – **3rd Edition WestMed Hackathon** (Algarve, Portugal). Hackathons on Project Development: Dedicated parallel session on Sustainable Tourism to work on 1-2 project ideas and develop these for future EU funding opportunities.
- **Sun&Blue Congress** (20-22 November 2024, Almeria, Spain). Official launch of the TG on Sustainable Tourism of the WestMED under the Sun&Blue Congress (21st November 2024). Advisory Body members and some members of the TG will be invited to attend the launch.
- December 2024 – **Online Webinar** to discuss the topic of “Digitalization of the Western Mediterranean Tourism ecosystem”.
- March 2025 – **Online Webinar** “Blue Tourism Indicators”
- June 2025 – **Online Webinar** “One year of the TG on Sustainable Tourism within the WestMED: what have we achieved so far?”



# Technical (TG) / Working Groups (WGs)/ Community of Practice (CoP)



**Sustainable Aquaculture**



**Maritime Clusters**



**Maritime Spatial Planning**



**Green Shipping And Ports**



# Sustainable Aquaculture

- **Last TG meeting: 29<sup>th</sup> April**
  - Funding opportunities
  - Partnership with FAO/GFCM for capacity building
  - Synergies with EU Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism
- **Participation of AquaWEST at the Black Sea Aquaculture Technical Group**
- **Online workshop** on selection of allocated zones for aquaculture (October, tbc)
- In the near future, AquaWEST aims at strengthening involvement of the EU 'Energy Transition Partnership'



**WestMED's Aquaculture Technical Group AquaWest intensifies cooperation with the EU Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism and FAO/GFCM**

29 April 2024 / by National Hub Algeria



# Green Shipping and Ports

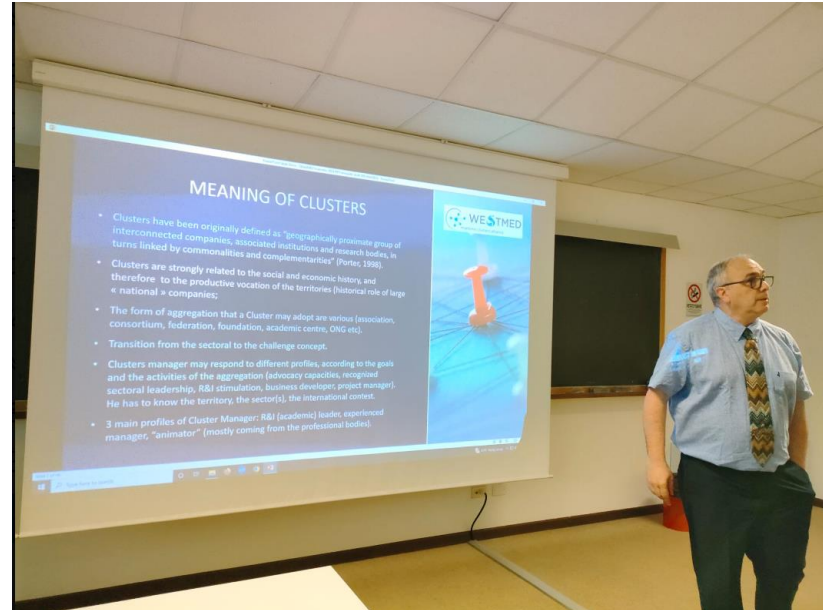
- **Last TG meeting:**
  - Pillar 1 (Ports) Atlantic Maritime Strategy
  - Approved EMFAF projects
  - Upcoming funding calls
  - Approaching the new MED SOx-ECA SOx from 2025 on
- TG presented at the Moroccan national event + EMD and 5<sup>th</sup> Macro-region and Sea-Basins Strategies + MEDALOGISTICS SUMMIT + Deportibus Festival
- **Atlantic – WestMED sea basins' synergies** under *Pilar 1 Atlantic Ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy*: joint participation at events
- Collaboration with REMPEC and WOC
- Possibility to develop a **S3 Partnership** out of the TG to raise visibility and policy relevance
- New Libyan delegates on the TG





# Maritime clusters

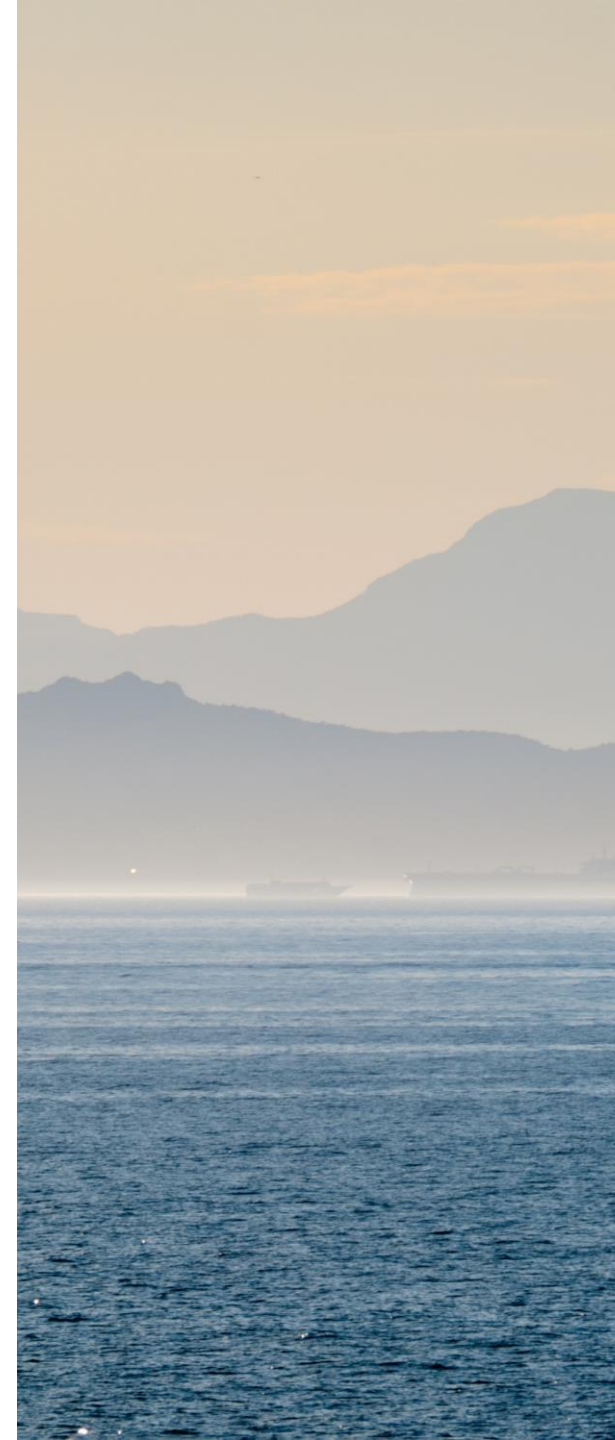
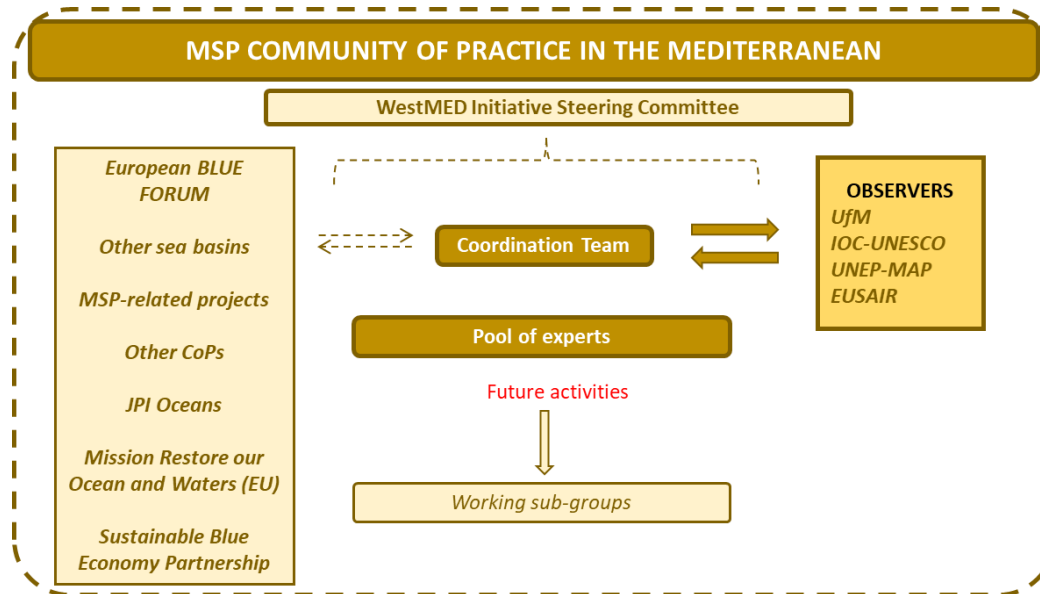
- **Follow-up on the supported projects:** CALLMEBLUE, MEDBAN, etc.
- **Upcoming meeting** in collaboration with CALLMEBLUE awarded project (TBC)
- **TG presented at the MARMED Blue Cluster Managers Training (14 June)**



# CoP on MSP

- General objectives:

- Create a permanent communication and dialogue across borders among experts on MSP to exchange knowledge and experiences and to reach a shared perspective on topics of common interest
- Enhance cooperation between the north and the south and the west and the east of the Mediterranean sea on common MSP challenges and opportunities
- Share practices and knowledge about how to use MSP as an enabler for sustainable blue economy and improved protection of the marine environment
- Provide recommendations supporting regional cooperation on MSP and MSP national processes



# Project Development

## Assistance Mechanism supports to:

- Identify / shaping proposals ideas
- Identification funding calls for project proposals
- Matchmaking among stakeholders
- Supporting partnership building

## Outcomes (6 years):

- **115 sustainable blue economy projects** were supported
- **45 projects awarded** funding by different EU and non-EU institutions and programmes
- **€78.1 Million** mobilized
- Organisations from **31 different countries** benefitted
- **Increased involvement from East Med and Black Sea partners**
- Assessment and capitalization of **Maritime DataHub**



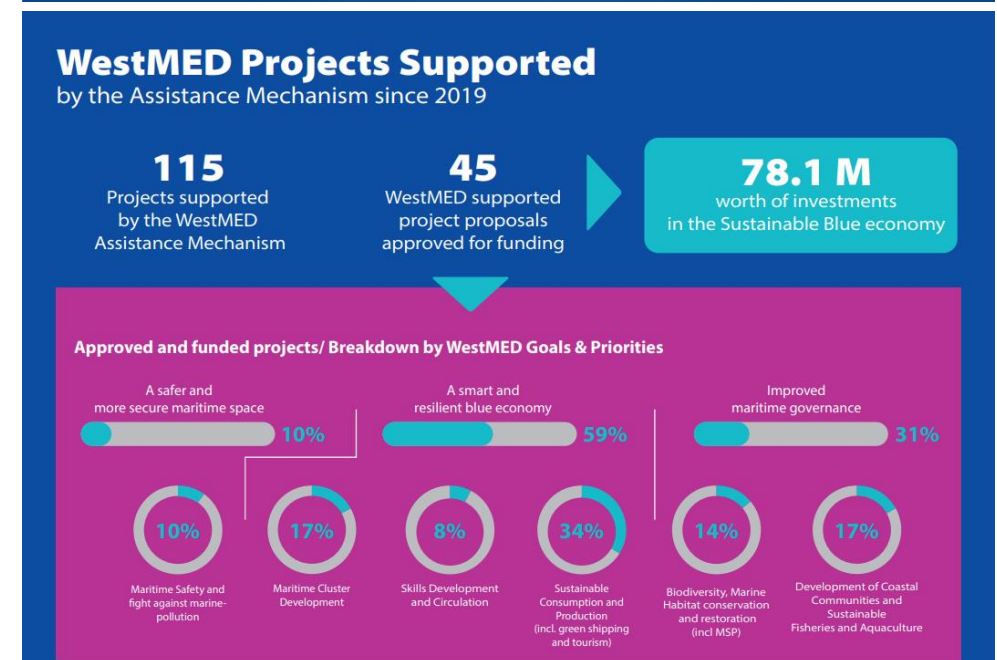
**WestMED Brochure**  
Maritime Cooperation  
in the Western Mediterranean  
6 years on...

DOWNLOAD NOW

The WestMED Initiative  
6 years on...

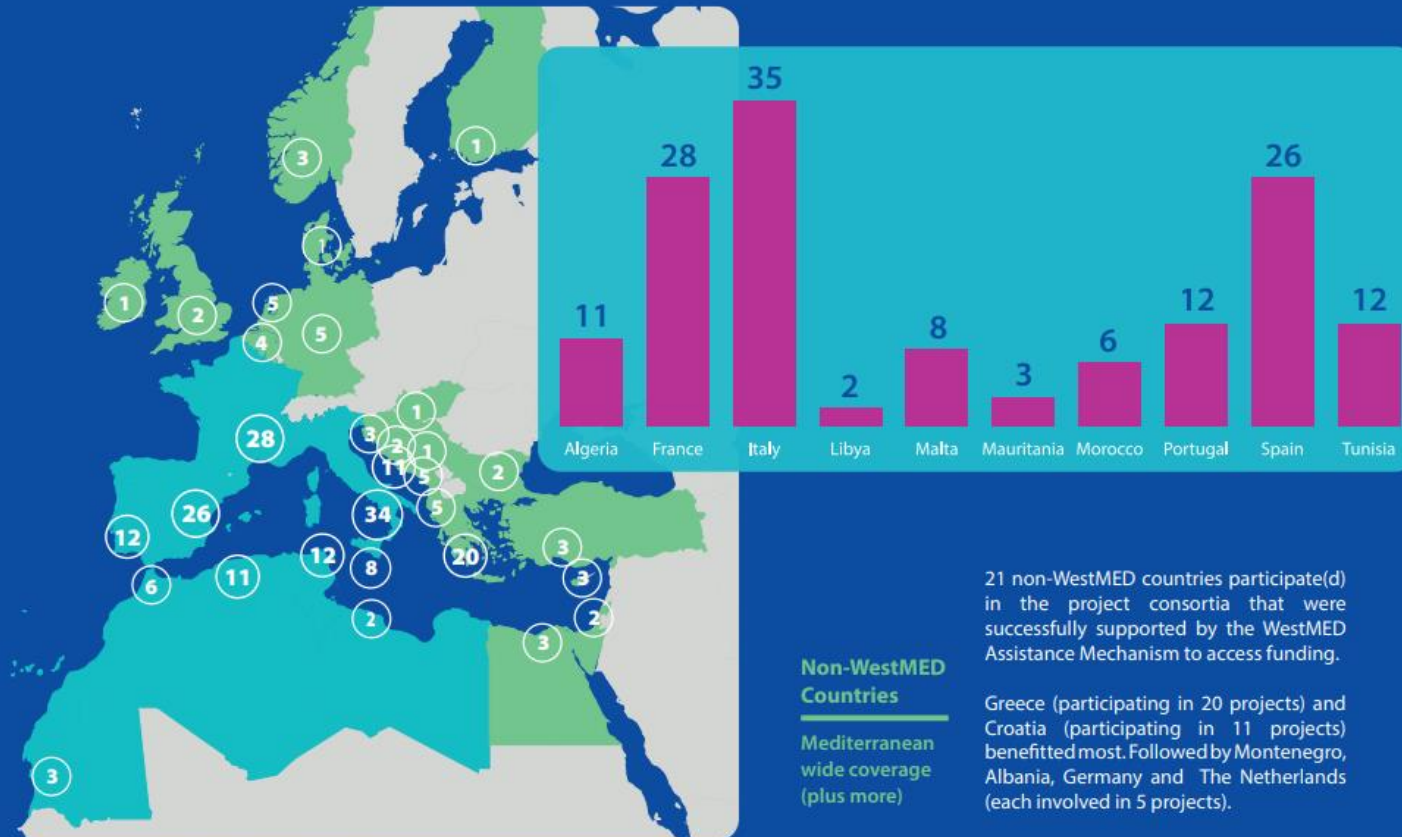
WESTMED  
blue economy initiative

Supported by the  
European Union



# Project Development

## WestMED supported projects that were awarded funding | involvement per country



# Upcoming WestMED developments

- **3rd WestMED Hackathon**

- When: 8-10 October 2024
- Where: Algarve (Portugal)
- How: through Projects Development Labs
- Aim: facilitate the exchange of project ideas and promote concrete project development among stakeholders operating in the Blue Economy in the western Mediterranean and beyond.

**WESTMED**  
In my country

**AQUACULTURE**  
HACKATHON SESSION

**Context**  
The Aquaculture project development lab focused on further defining the proposal emerging from the WestMED Technical Group for a COSIT Action (deadline October 2022) to accelerate the uptake of innovative and circular models in sustainable aquaculture across the Mediterranean (both north and south shores).  
This is to be achieved through the (i) sharing of good practices, (ii) support to SMEs for uptake of such practices and (iii) identification of innovation opportunities across the aquaculture value-chains (breeding, harvesting, processing, monitoring, diversification, commercialisation, support services, etc.).

**Outcomes and emerged ideas**

- Diversification of aquaculture (species, practices, activities...)
- Promoting circular approaches in aquaculture value-chains
- Establishing a permanent dialogue mechanism

**Potential funding opportunities/ programmes targeted**

- COSIT Actions
- EMFAP



**WESTMED**  
In my country

**BLUE SKILLS & OCEAN LITERACY**  
HACKATHON SESSION

**Context**  
This hackathon session was aimed at allowing practitioners to reflect on the main needs and future directions for supporting blue skills, to identify areas for cross-fertilisation and capitalisation of regional projects in this area, including the Blue Skills project which has been awarded as 'Best WestMED Project' in 2021.

**Outcomes and emerged ideas**

- Develop a platform to address the identification of gaps in blue skills. The platform would bring together government authorities, private sector and educational providers which have offered or are offering solutions to address gaps
- Address skills for traditional and artisanal sectors such as fishing. The project would focus on recognition of skills, upskilling, development of skills which support diversification, supporting greening and digital skills.
- Focus Ocean Literacy on marine litter. The discussion centered around a two-pronged approach to ocean literacy: youth and private sector, with a focus on corporate social responsibility

**Potential funding opportunities/ programmes targeted**

- Horizon Europe
- Erasmus+



**WESTMED**  
In my country

**TOURISM**  
HACKATHON SESSION

**Context**  
A focus on sharing the potential for capitalisation and synergies amongst regional projects, towards a 'leveraging-up' of current practices in sustainable tourism (operators and policymakers) across the Mediterranean.  
Amongst the project invited to discuss this topic were Interreg MED projects and some of those supported by the WestMED through time for their further capitalisation.

**Outcomes and emerged ideas**

- MED NSTO (Med Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatory), an idea capitalising on the Interreg MED 'BESTMED' project
- MED DTM - Mediterranean Network of Maritime Tourism Destinations
- MEET Network - MFAs & Business Opportunities

**Potential funding opportunities/ programmes targeted**

- INTERREG EURO MED
- INTERREG NEXT MED
- National Funds



**WESTMED**  
In my country

**SMALL PORTS & MARINAS**  
HACKATHON SESSION

**Context**  
Building on the work promoted through the WestMED Technical Group, this hackathon focused on the smaller-scale ports and their need to receive support towards greater sustainability and identification of innovative business models for greater local added-value (quality jobs, sustainable growth and environmental sustainability).  
The approach revolved around the potential for greater diversification of local services and strategies towards emerging niches (tourism, green marinas, small-scale charters, etc.).

**Outcomes and emerged ideas**

- Network of specialised crafting / artisanal manufacturers
- Label of marinas regarding the sustainable services that marinas are offering at Mediterranean level
- Waste reception facilities - establishment a consortium of cruise ports who are offering complementary waste management facilities
- Dedicating some ports to fishery activities in terms of infrastructure implying refrigeration, storage, ice-making, desalination which could become a hub for aquaculture
- Digitisation of smaller ports for shipping, especially tailored for some niche sectors

**Potential funding opportunities/ programmes targeted**

- INTERREG NEXT MED
- INTERREG EURO MED
- EMFAP



**WESTMED**  
In my country

**MARITIME CLUSTERS**  
HACKATHON SESSION

**Context**  
Building on the several streams of work promoted under the WestMED Cluster Alliance, including the recently awarded **Lead4Blue** awards, the discussion aimed at identifying areas for greater support towards southern countries, including the acceleration of cluster development in Algeria and Morocco - also building on the outcome of the dedicated event on cluster support promoted by the WestMED in Mauritania, with the participation of international clusters and supported by the Tunisian Cluster.

**Outcomes and emerged ideas**

- Develop national clusters (support cluster development in southern-west shores)
- Extend Med Alliance (promote a platform for cluster cooperation in the south also supported by north)
- Create a Maghreb Cluster 'light' platform to federate and support capacity development between southern clusters)

**Potential funding opportunities targeted**

- To be defined



**WESTMED**  
In my country

**MSP**  
HACKATHON SESSION

**Context**  
This hackathon session aimed to bring together major actors' initiatives from across the Mediterranean, to allow knowledge sharing and discuss the state of the art of Maritime Spatial Planning practices on both shores of the sea basin.

**Outcomes and emerged ideas**

- Confirmation of interest to set a group of MSP experts to share experience and practices on MSP in the WestMED as several actions/ projects and commitments for Countries to give a WestMED overview of MSP implementation
- The main goals of this group would be to ensure transfer of techniques and research for decision makers; link with national and local actors (MSP/ICZM/MP) and contribute to the development of a 'community of practice' on MSP for a sustainable Blue Economy

**Potential funding opportunities targeted**

- To be defined

