



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



16th UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Blue Economy meeting
Brussels - 2 October 2024

Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation System – Country reports analysis

Contents of the presentation

1. Key regional indicators: Status
2. Outlining and summary of country-level inputs so far (work in progress)
3. Analysis of initial trends observed on:
 1. Overarching national blue economy strategies/frameworks,
 2. Existence of own national funds to support SBE related initiatives,
 3. Projects and main bottlenecks identified
4. Next steps

1. Key regional indicators: Status

The **selected indicators** analysed for each of the Ministerial Declaration priorities were as follows:

- **Total number of actions, sets of activities and projects of regional cooperation implemented per priority and overall: 657 actions identified** through the mapping exercise, of which: 137 (21%) are Mediterranean-wide frameworks, initiatives 150 (23%) are sub-regional frameworks and initiatives 370 (56%) are transnational projects)
- **Level of financial support secured through regional projects to support the priority and overall: Close to 1 billion euro (952.211.659,95 €)** have been mobilised through transnational projects related to the blue economy Ministerial Declaration priorities in the Mediterranean

Key **sources of information** exploited:

1. Information on regional policies, strategies, initiatives and projects gathered through the latest Roadmap update process (June 2024)
2. Complemented by baseline information provided by the countries in the latest round of yearly reporting in the context of the UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Blue Economy meetings

2. Summary of country-level results so far

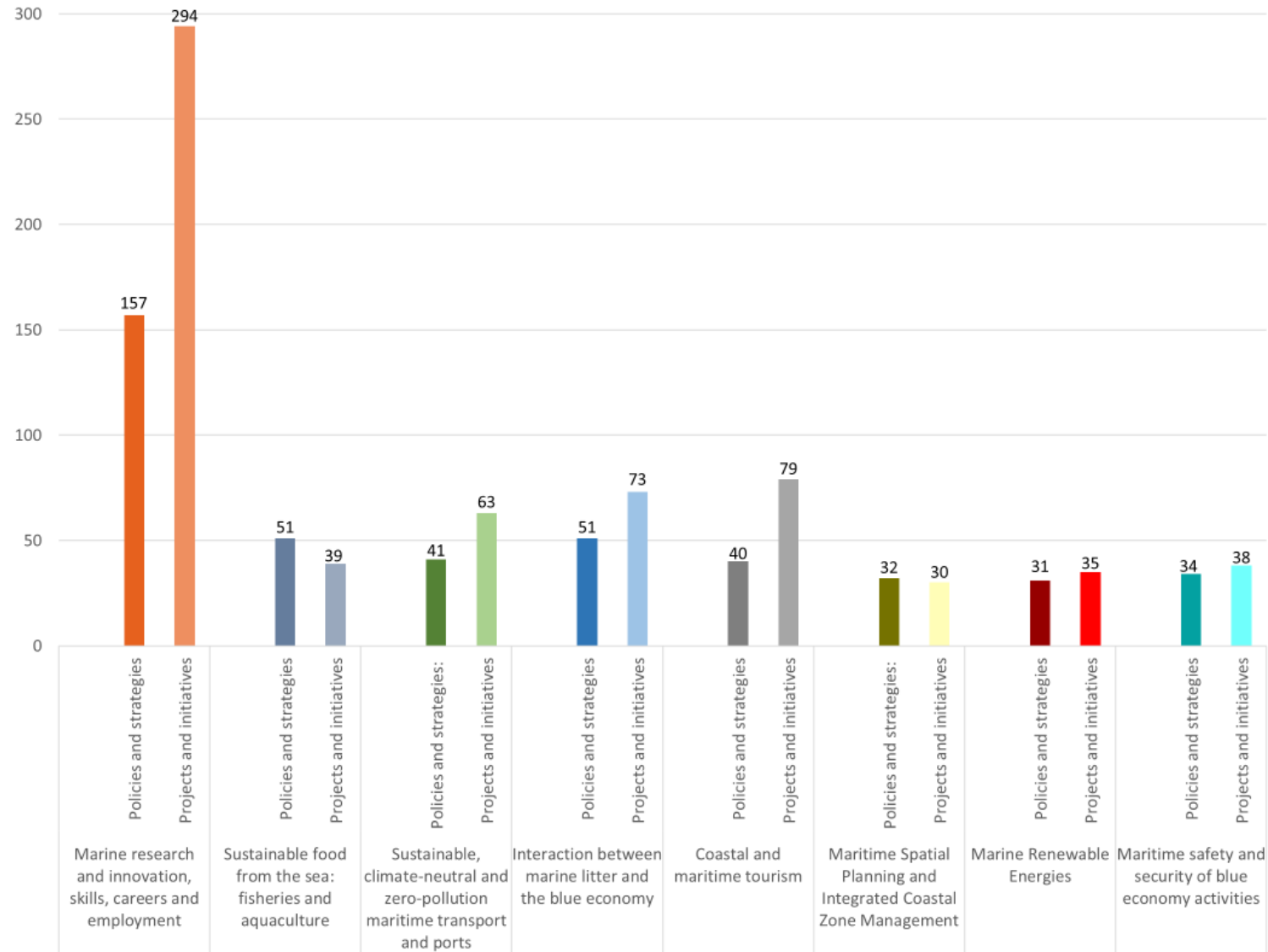
Country-based reporting – pillar of the Roadmap's monitoring system

- A **reporting template (PPT format)**, including concrete specifications and guidance on the information to be provided by the Blue Economy Focal Points was circulated in June 2024.
- The country reports constitute the basis for the **calculation of progress indicators in Autumn 2024**. A pilot/ zero-draft calculation of a selection of indicators has already been carried out and was presented at the 15th Regional platform on SBE.
- **12 countries** have submitted the country reports so far (as of October 2024) and have been incorporated in the analysis to be presented at the 16th Regional platform meeting.
- Additional country reports received during Fall 2024 will be integrated in the upcoming Yearly Progress Report.
- What follows outlines and provides a summary of country-level inputs received so far by sector/Priority:



Summary of country-level results so far

Information reported on the ministerial priorities



Marine Research and Innovation Skills, Careers, and Employment

This is **the priority with the higher engagement**, with 153 strategies and 289 projects and initiatives taken by the different countries.

Countries are engaging in regional and international collaborations to advance blue economy goals. For example, PRIMA (Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area) is mentioned by Egypt and Greece, while Malta and Spain participate in the BlueMED Initiative and JPI Oceans.

National research centers and councils play a key role in driving blue economy initiatives. For example, Italy has the National Research Council (CNR) and Marine Sciences Institute (ISMAR). Turkey has TÜBİTAK Marmara Research Center, and Egypt has established a National Blue Economy Research and Innovation Center.

Countries like Türkiye, Jordan and Morocco have developed long-term strategies and plans, such as Blue Plan 2053, the Morocco-Med Blue Innovation Corridor and the Jordan's strategic plan Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority, signaling long-term commitments to sustainable maritime development.

Spain and Portugal highlight programs like the National Basic Data Programme and MARineSIM training, reflecting a **trend towards data collection and training for building capacity in maritime research.**

Several countries emphasize a **strong focus on legal frameworks** and marine biodiversity conservation, such as Lebanon's Integrated Maritime Strategy and North Macedonia's collaboration on biodiversity.



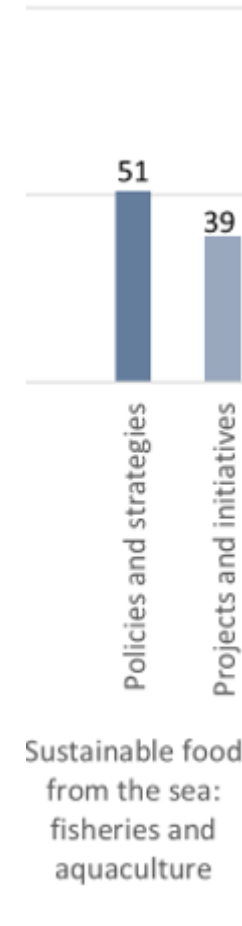
Sustainable Food from the Sea: Fisheries and Aquaculture

Several countries emphasize sustainable fisheries and marine conservation, such as Greece's 9th OOC Commitment to sustainable fisheries and Algeria's National Marine Conservation Plan. In this line, we see that **Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)** are important for Morocco and Spain, showing a trend towards preserving marine ecosystems.

IUU fishing is an issue being actively tackled by many countries: Egypt has policies addressing this issue, and Malta uses satellite monitoring for surveillance. Spain also aims to regulate fishing through its IUU Fishing Act by 2025. Morocco and Malta are utilizing specific technology for this purpose, such as the Vessel Monitoring System and satellite monitoring.

Several countries are prioritizing the support of artisanal and small-scale fisheries and aquaculture is becoming more prominent as part of national strategies. For example, Algeria has an Artisanal Fishing Support Program while Lebanon is focusing on similar support initiatives alongside an aquaculture project. Besides, Malta is involved in Bluefin Tuna farming and Jordan encourages the use of environmentally friendly fishing gear.

Countries are **setting up specialized networks or hubs** to support fisheries and the blue economy. For example, Portugal has a Blue Hub Network aimed at fostering collaboration and Algeria has its Fishermen's Cooperatives.



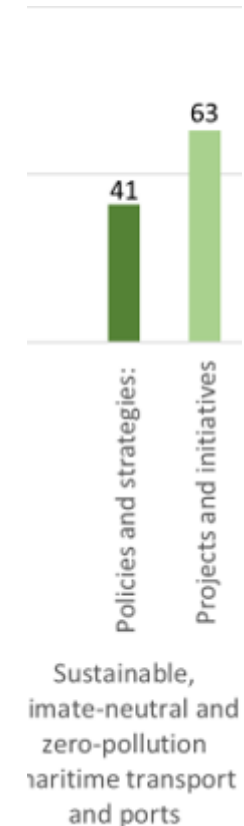
Sustainable Climate-Neutral and Zero-Pollution Maritime Transport and Ports

Emission Control Areas for Sulphur Oxides are being established or planned in several countries, including Greece, Spain, Morocco, and Italy. This signals a **regional push towards lowering sulphur emissions from maritime activities**. Furthermore, MARPOL Annex VI is mentioned by Lebanon and Türkiye, demonstrating efforts to regulate air pollution from ships and reduce emissions.

Green shipping initiatives are emerging across countries like Türkiye, which has established a Financial Support Mechanism for Green Shipping and an LNG Bunkering Project in the Marmara Sea. Similarly, Morocco is working with FAO on the Blue Port Initiative, focused on sustainable port infrastructure. Furthermore, **some ports are moving towards electrification to reduce emissions**. Greece has initiatives like CIPORT and EALING projects, while Malta is implementing Onshore Power Supply at the Malta Freeport, and Grand Harbour is undergoing the Clean Project. Besides, Jordan participates in the YEP MED program, and its first eco-port is in progress. Morocco's National Port Strategy 2030 and Portugal's PT Recovery and Resilience Plan focus on modernizing ports.

Several countries are embracing green hydrogen as part of their green energy transition. Egypt has formed international alliances for green hydrogen production, particularly in the Suez Canal Economic Zone. Similarly, Portugal has the H2DRIVEN Green Agenda, and Spain is decarbonizing fleets with projects like LOCATIONS, PASSAGE, and SEAFIRE.

Countries are participating in international collaborations to advance their green maritime goals. Italy has a Bilateral Cooperation Agreement with UNEP, while Algeria is involved in the EMFAF POWER4MED Project, highlighting international partnerships for sustainable energy and emissions control.



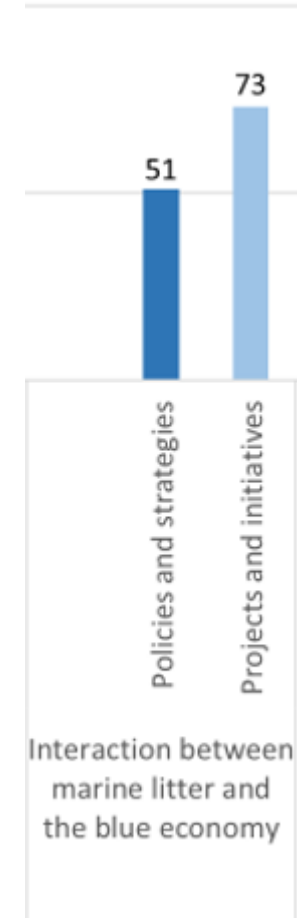
Interaction between Marine Litter and the Blue Economy

Many countries have introduced national strategies to address marine litter and plastic pollution, such as Egypt's National Action Plan for the Sustainable Management of Marine Litter (2021), Portugal's Marine Litter Action Plan 2024-2026 and Jordan's National Training on Marine Litter monitoring and mitigation. Morocco focuses on **plastic reduction** with programs like the Plastic Free Coastline and Clean Beaches initiatives while Algeria also targets plastic waste through its Plastic Reduction Program and National Waste Management Strategy. Italy joins these efforts with its National Strategy to Combat Plastic Pollution, backed by its National Waste Prevention Program.

Türkiye's Zero Waste Regulation (2019) and Circular Strategy for Marine Litter highlight a **circular economy approach to waste, focusing on reducing, reusing, and recycling materials to prevent marine debris**. Furthermore, Lebanon's waste management policies, derived from the Lebanon Blue Economy Dialogue 2024, also likely emphasize more sustainable, circular waste management solutions.

Countries are working together to address marine and coastal pollution. Greece, Cyprus and Israel reached an agreement for the implementation of a subregional emergency plan for marine oil pollution in the context of the Implementation Agreement of the Sub-Regional Marine Oil Pollution Contingency Plan between Cyprus-Greece-Israel, in force since March 2022. Malta and Spain emphasize regional collaboration through their Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter Management and Marine Litter Monitoring Strategy, alongside cleanup initiatives like Fishing for Litter and PlasticBusters.

Several countries have implemented the Fishing for Litter scheme, which encourages fishermen to collect marine litter during their regular fishing activities. Malta's scheme and Portugal's "Fisheries for a Sea Without Litter" both focus on engaging the fishing industry to help clean the oceans.



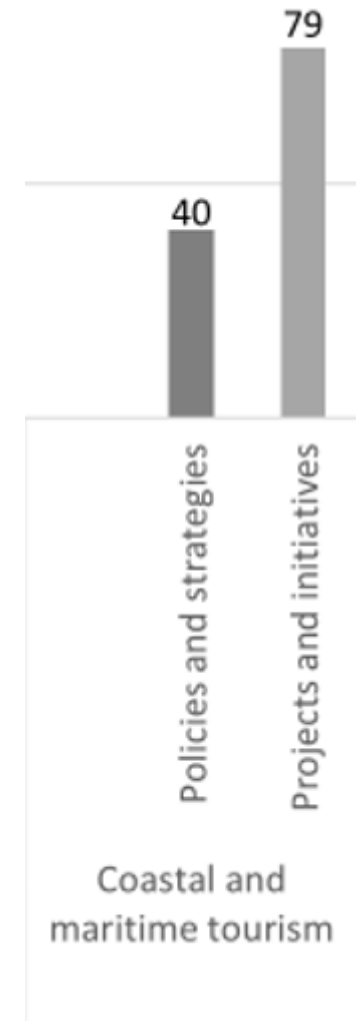
Coastal and Maritime Tourism

Many countries are prioritizing eco-tourism in their development strategies. Egypt's National Eco-Tourism agenda, Spain's Declaration for Sustainable Tourism, Jordan's Environmental and Social Assessment for the Jordan tourism strategy, and Türkiye's eco-tourism development reflect a commitment to promoting environmentally friendly travel.

Tourism digitalization is becoming increasingly important, with Algeria and Greece focusing on creating platforms for managing tourism flows, including underwater and diving tourism. Malta is also advancing tourism digitalization, particularly in Gozo.

Some countries focus on infrastructure development to increase tourism attractiveness, e.g. Greece or Morocco (2023-2030 Roadmap for tourism and beach development).

Countries like Portugal, Italy, and Egypt are **heavily investing through national funds in coastal and marine tourism.** Portugal's nautical stations, Italy's focus on sustainable coastal tourism, and Egypt's green yacht marina project highlight this growing trend.



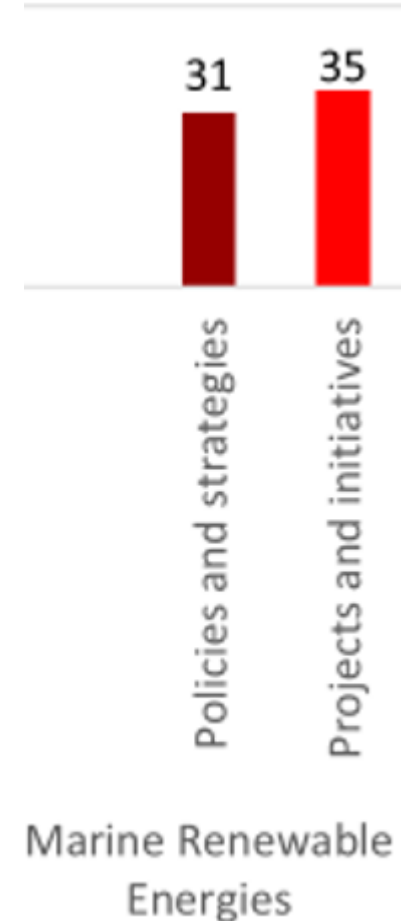
Marine Renewable Energies

Many countries are actively developing MRE. For example, Algeria's National Renewable Energy Program and Morocco's 2050 low-carbon strategy highlight this focus. Besides, the **presence of national plans and strategies** (like Greece's National Plan for Energy and Climate and Italy's National Strategy for the Decarbonization of the Economy) indicates a structured approach to renewable energy development and climate action.

There is a notable emphasis on hydrogen as a key energy source, particularly green hydrogen. Egypt's SC Zone Green Hydrogen Cluster, Jordan National green Hydrogen Strategy, Morocco's green hydrogen and broader renewable strategies, and Türkiye's Hydrogen Technologies Strategy showcase this trend, suggesting a **regional interest in hydrogen** as a clean energy carrier.

Several countries are investing in offshore wind projects. Greece, Portugal, Spain, and Türkiye all have specific initiatives aimed at expanding their offshore wind capacities, signaling a growing recognition of offshore wind as a viable renewable energy source. Nevertheless, **countries are not limiting themselves to one type of renewable energy.** For instance, Malta is exploring offshore renewable potential while also partnering with solar energy research, and Portugal's CorPower's wave energy device demonstrates a commitment to advancing and diversifying energy sources.

Collaboration with international organizations, such as Lebanon's partnership with IRENA, is becoming more common.

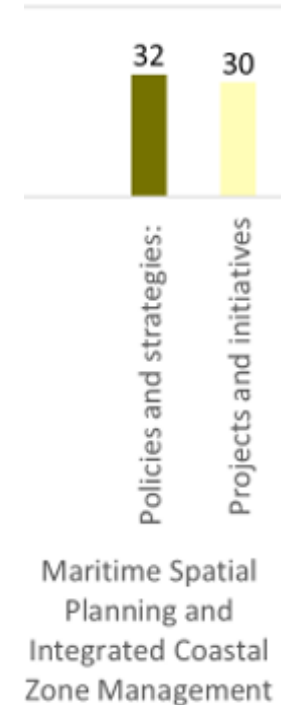


Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management

Countries are actively pursuing strategies for ICZM to promote sustainable development in coastal areas. For instance, Algeria's National Strategy for Integrated Coastal Zone Management, Italy's National Plan for the Sea and Egypt's ICZM Strategy demonstrate a commitment to managing coastal resources effectively. Additionally, there is a significant focus on **creating and implementing maritime spatial plans**. Greece, Spain, and Italy have all developed or are in the process of finalizing MSP plans, reflecting a growing recognition of the need for coordinated maritime governance.

Many countries are emphasizing participatory approaches in their planning processes. Egypt's consultations and Lebanon's draft law on ICZM indicate an awareness of the importance of involving various stakeholders, including local communities and industries, in decision-making. In this sense, countries are increasingly looking to collaborate on maritime and coastal issues, as seen in Spain's collaboration with UNESCO and Türkiye's Blue Plan 2053, which aims for regional sustainability in the blue economy.

Several countries are developing or updating their legal frameworks to support integrated management of marine and coastal resources. For example, Malta's draft amendments to the Exclusive Economic Zone Act and the transposition of the EU Directive in Portugal show efforts to align national laws with broader regional objectives.



Maritime Safety and Security of Blue Economy Activities

There is a significant emphasis on regional cooperation among countries for maritime safety and control. For instance, Egypt and Lebanon's collaborations with organizations like SAFEMED and EMSA demonstrate a shared commitment to improving maritime governance through partnerships. Other examples are Italy's participation in the EUREKA project and Spain's policies with multiple maritime organizations.

Countries are investing in infrastructure for maritime traffic monitoring and search and rescue operations, as seen in Morocco's development of a Maritime Traffic Monitoring Centre (CSTM) and search and rescue system. The digital transformation of maritime operations is evident in Malta's implementation of SafeSeaNetSSN V5 and the modernization of Italy's ADRIREP System.

The establishment of national strategies is growing, such as Portugal's National Ocean Strategy 2021-2030 and the Türkiye's creation of the Turkish National Maritime Safety Centre signify a structured approach to managing maritime operations. North Macedonia's focus on compliance with international agreements and EU regulations and Jordan's has incorporated all international agreements related to the marine environment.



3. Analysis of “Open Questions”

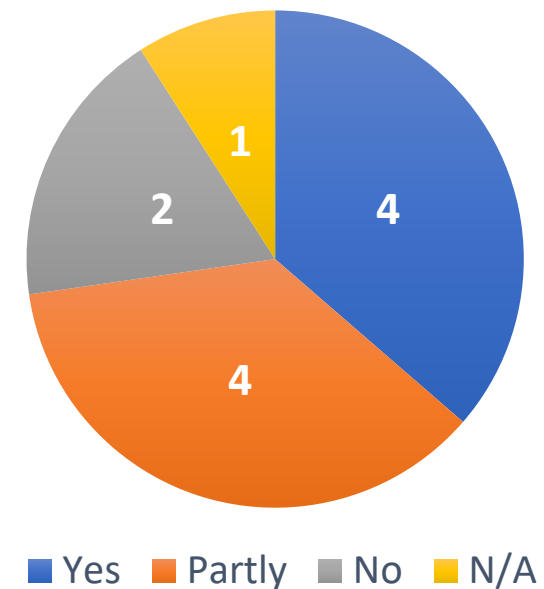
1 – Related to the priority on Governance and the future of sea basin strategies in the Mediterranean region: Is there any overarching blue economy strategy in your country? Or any process initiated leading to the elaboration of such a strategy?

From the 12 country reports received, there is a clear trend toward the effective implementation of the SBE Ministerial Declaration, with 4 countries who have a national Blue Economy strategy already in place (covering the full country): **Algeria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Portugal**.

In some cases, although not yet formalized under a national strategy, various frameworks that include key blue economy components are under development, such as in **Greece** (where a Integrated Maritime Strategy related to Islands is in place); **Italy** (with sectoral plans such as the National strategy to combat plastic pollution); or **Spain** (with MSP plans developed in 2023).

Among countries without blue economy strategies but considering or planning them, we find **Malta**, which does not have currently have a blue economy strategy as such but recognizes the need for one; **Turkiye**, planning to elaborate the SBE Action Plan, and **Morocco**, who is developing a large-scale blue Economy program in cooperation with the World Bank.

Overarching Blue Economy Strategy at national level



2 – Related to the priority on Sustainable investments in the blue economy: is there any national funding/financing scheme related to the blue economy (or any of its sectors) promoted by your country? If yes, please specify.

As an additional positive trend in the implementation of the Ministerial, there is a growing recognition across Mediterranean and nearby countries of the need for sustainable investment in the blue economy. Notably, **all the countries analysed (12) have reported the existence of funds/financing schemes related to the blue economy at the national level.**

These funding schemes often focus on startup support (e.g. the **Portuguese Fundo Azul**, the **Algerian Startup Fund** which, being the first investment fund entirely dedicated to startups in this country, constitutes one of the essential pillars for the emergence of an ecosystem with the capacity to bring added value to the economy; or the **Malta Maritime Proof of Concept Fund**), renewable energy (e.g. the **Greek Decarbonization Fund for Islands**), and environmental sustainability. Other initiatives reported include the **Egyptian Sovereign Funds**.

3 – What are the main challenges, issues or bottlenecks for the implementation of the SBE Ministerial Declaration in your country?

- **Cross-sector coordination:** The blue economy involves many different sectors (fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, maritime transport, renewable energy, environment, etc.) which require close coordination between different government agencies and stakeholders. a platform to facilitate this coordination and ensure an integrated approach could be an accelerating tool.
- **Budgetary strengthening:** Although financing programs exist, the financial resources available are often insufficient to support all the necessary projects at the same time, particularly projects that require the acquisition of equipment.
- **Institutional and technical capacity building:** It is essential to strengthen the capacities of national and local institutions to plan, implement and monitor initiatives related to the blue economy. However, there is a deficit of technical skills and specific knowledge in some sectors, which slows down implementation.
- **Stakeholder awareness and engagement:** Public awareness and stakeholder engagement are still insufficient. It is necessary to strengthen communication, visibility and education on the benefits and sustainable practices of the blue economy to obtain better buy-in and active participation of all parties concerned.
- **Climate and environmental changes:** The impacts of climate change, such as rising sea levels, more frequent and intense storms, and acidification of seas and oceans, represent major challenges for the sustainability of maritime economic activities . It is crucial to develop adaptation and resilience strategies and put in place regional programs to face these challenges.

4. Next steps

| Activity | October | November | December | January | February | March |
|---|---------|----------|----------|---------|----------|-------|
| Remaining country reports to be submitted | ■ | | | | | |
| Analysis of all country reports | | ■ | ■ | ■ | | |
| Update of the Roadmap , incorporating countries' reports | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| Calculation of remaining indicators , building on countries' reports | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Elaboration of Yearly Report on Progress (to be delivered in the next Regional Platform meeting) | | | | | ■ | ■ |

