



# Smart Specialisation (S3)

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# Background

- 2022 MARE set up a **S3 SBE platform** as part of the EU S3 Community of Practice. The platform acts as a tool to develop/adapt S3 in the SBE and support innovation.
- The platform hosts **public-private thematic partnerships bringing together regions, companies, academia, and civil society** interested in initiating and exploring new value chains in priority areas based on shared S3 interests.
- The sectors of partnerships are **fisheries, aquaculture, renewable energy, coastal and maritime tourism, and blue biotechnologies**. A 6<sup>th</sup> sector, ‘**ports and maritime transport**’, will soon be added.
- **4 partnerships approved**: 2 are working on challenges related to the deployment of solutions for offshore renewable energy. 1 focus on the development of smart circular aquaculture models and 1 on sustainable blue bioeconomy, respectively.

# EMFAF calls

- Interested regions and eligible entities can apply to join an existing partnership or create a new one. **A rolling call for the creation of new partnerships** is open throughout the year on the S3 Community of Practice's website, with 2 cut-off dates for EC to evaluate applications. **Next cut-off, spring 2025.**
- **EMFAF call:** Last week, the EC and CINEA published a **call under the EMFAF to support 'S3 and Innovation in the SBE'**.
  - The call covers S3.
  - The call budget is **EUR 3 800 000**
  - **Deadline to apply is 18 Feb 2025.**
  - **The geographical scope: 3 EU sea basin strategies as well as EU outermost regions.**
- 3 ○ more info under the call in the EU funding & tenders portal

# S3 Events

- **Info day on call**: DG MARE and CINEA will organise an **online info day** on **15 October** (pm)
- S3 conference Rimini, IT on 11-12 December in person
- Registration open!

# The Africa-Europe Ocean Strategic Group

- VdL Commission entered into office in 2019, it announced a new strategy between the EU and Africa, to build a renewed partnership between the two continents. But how to translate this idea into something concrete and elevate the profile of the ocean in this setting?
- 1 thought was that a partnership cannot and should not be imposed. Building a partnership takes time, practice and trust because partners are seeking shared goals and mutual interest need to be defined.
- 2 thought we had was that any ocean partnership between Africa and Europe should be based on an open dialogue and experience-sharing with the aim to finding concrete solutions to common challenges.

# Group set up

- The Africa-Europe Ocean Strategic Group was initiated:
- July 2020 launched a study to provide an analysis of the feasibility and modalities for setting up an EU-Africa 'blue' task force. The methodology followed an evidence-based approach, in which listening to stakeholders was essential.
- The key recommendation of the study was to set up such a cooperation mechanism, stressing that an EU-Africa task force on ocean governance would be timely and of high relevance.
- The decision was then taken to go ahead. We contacted the Africa-Europe Foundation to support us in the setting-up and management of the Group and we allocated money to the initiative.
- 27 members, 14 from Africa. Gender equality 16 women. The EC, EP, the African Union Commission, the UN Economic Commission for Africa and African Union Development Agency as observers. Mr Pascal Lamy and Ms Nancy Karigithu (Kenya) co-chairs.

- The UfM represented. We thank Alessandra (Sensi) for her contribution and having brought the Med perspective in the discussions.
- two-fold mandate: 1-to define common priorities and objectives, 2-on that basis, to present a joint plan of action. A scoping paper was prepared.
- The Group engaged in a consultative process and identified common priorities. The definition of these priorities was based on the following criteria:
  - (1) strategic relevance for the Africa-Europe Partnership in general;
  - (2) practical feasibility to yield results and tangible deliverables;
  - (3) cross-sectoral relevance to other domains of Africa-Europe cooperation
- Priorities:
  1. governance with a focus on joint efforts at multilateral level to address collective responsibility regarding the state of the ocean,
  2. capacity sharing (not building)to emphasise the spirit of fostering an Africa-EU partnership.
- The Group submitted its final report in summer- will be made public on 10 October at the Blue Africa Summit in Tangier.