



Union for the Mediterranean
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17th UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Blue Economy

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UfM Publication on Sustainable Blue Economy

Aim and scope

This is the **3rd edition** of the **UfM periodic publication on the status of the sustainable blue economy in the Mediterranean**, following the 2021 and 2017 versions.

The aim of this publication remains to provide an accurate depiction of the status of SBE sectors in the Mediterranean region, focusing on **key emerging trends and drivers** for the sustainable development of BE sectors based on the most up-to-date quantitative and qualitative data available.

The **main regional cooperation platforms, initiatives, and projects** are highlighted. Recent developments in terms of policy frameworks and technical cooperation - and particularly the role of the Union for the Mediterranean - are also outlined.



SBE Sectors in the Mediterranean

Following the priorities of the 2nd UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy, the publication covers the following sectors:

Fisheries and Aquaculture
Maritime Transport and Ports
Coastal and Maritime Tourism
Marine Renewable Energies
Maritime Safety and Security

For each of the sectors addressed, an overview of the **main economic indicators** is provided, paired with **key environmental, technological and social considerations**. Furthermore, the present edition of the report places a specific focus on **employment opportunities**: an overview of expected career pathways and skills needs is provided for each sector.

Cross-cutting themes in the Mediterranean

To complement the analysis, opportunities offered by key Blue Economy enablers and tools are also assessed:

Interactions between Marine litter and the Blue Economy
Marine Research and Innovation
Maritime Skills, Careers and Employment
Sustainable Blue Economy as an opportunity: Financing Sustainable returns
Governance of the Sustainable Blue Economy
Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management

Cross-cutting priorities are defined as transversal, horizontal sets of methodologies and actions which are considered **instrumental for the development of the sustainable blue economy sectors**.

Summary overview of key findings (1/4)

Additionally, the 3rd edition of the UfM report on the Sustainable Blue Economy (SBE) in the Mediterranean offers a comprehensive review and analysis of current trends and future outlooks across different sectors, following the 10 priorities of the 2021 UfM Ministerial Declaration on SBE.

Despite the **significant (and growing) role of established sectors including tourism, ports, shipping, and fisheries** in the Mediterranean economy, the report emphasises current and potential challenges deriving from **pollution, the reliance of fossil fuels, and supply chain disruptions, among others.**

In parallel, the emerging sectors such as **marine renewable energy** and **blue bioeconomy** analysed in the report hold immense potential to drive the future of the Mediterranean's Blue Economy. However, they require significant **investments, regulatory support, and technological advancements to realize their full impact.**

Summary overview of key findings (2/4)

- The **maritime transport and ports** sector remains a fundament of the Mediterranean Blue Economy, handling over 80% of global trade and representing a hub for shipping routes between Europe, North Africa, and Asia. The report highlights that there is a clear trend towards decarbonizing maritime transport through the adoption of zero-emission technologies and regulations (i.e. **Mediterranean Emission Control Area (ECA)**), increased digitalization, and smart port initiatives.
- **Coastal and maritime tourism** is a cornerstone of most Mediterranean economies, contributing to 13% of Mediterranean exports. The region remains one of the **world's top destinations**, accounting for 35% of global tourist arrivals. Nonetheless, the report points out concerns about seasonality, climate change impacts, and environmental degradation., with a major shift toward sustainable tourism needed.
- **Fisheries and aquaculture** are well-established and form the backbone of the Mediterranean Blue Economy, providing **employment and food security**. For the future sustainability and resilience of these sectors, the report emphasizes technological innovations that reduce environmental harm.
- Though in its early stages, **marine renewable energies**, and in particular offshore wind, have significant potential to decarbonise the Mediterranean's energy infrastructure. The report highlights the need for **integrating MRE with Maritime Spatial Planning** and developing shared regulatory frameworks.
- The **blue bioeconomy** is emerging but also remains underdeveloped in the Mediterranean. The report suggests growth will depend on **greater coordination** between researchers, industry, and policymakers to build

Summary overview of key findings (3/4)

- **Research and Innovation** are foundational to driving the blue economy sustainable transition forward, which requires evolving “Blue Skills”. The report underscores the importance of **boosting knowledge transfer** between EU and non-EU Mediterranean countries, as well as to address the skills mismatch and the “brain drain”.
- While **MSP** is gaining importance in the Mediterranean, its implementation is still **uneven across countries**, especially in the southern Mediterranean. The report emphasizes that the lack of integrated data and cross-border cooperation makes it difficult to establish effective MSP frameworks.
- **Sustainable Financing** continues to be crucial for realizing the region’s blue economy potential. The report highlights the **Blue Mediterranean Partnership** (BMP) as a significant milestone in pooling private sector resources and boosting cross-border collaboration towards large scale investment projects.
- **Governance** of the sustainable blue economy in the Mediterranean is complex due to the diversity of countries and the range of sectors involved. The **Union for the Mediterranean** plays a key role in fostering **regional cooperation** by promoting a common vision for the SBE and aligning policies between countries. However, the fragmentation of governance structures across different countries and sectors is a major barrier.
- **Maritime Safety and Security** remains a key pre-condition for the development of all the other sectors and activities. The report highlights the need for enhanced coastguard cooperation, particularly through initiatives like the **Mediterranean Coast Guard Functions Forum**.

Summary overview of key findings (4/4)

Regardless of the number of challenges identified, the reports highlight a promising future for the sustainable blue economy in the Mediterranean region, by restating the relevance of the **Ministerial Declaration priorities and related Roadmap to boost regional cooperation and coordination/convergence, effective policymaking, and innovation across the region.**

In this respect, the role of the UfM as an essential actor remains pivotal to steer effective policy commitments across the Mediterranean region and trigger greater synergies and convergence amongst the many initiatives in place.





Towards a Sustainable Blue Economy in the Mediterranean region – 2024 Edition

This is the 3rd edition of the UfM periodic publication on the status of the Sustainable Blue Economy in the Mediterranean, following the 2021 and 2017 versions.

The aim of this publication remains to provide an accurate depiction of the status of Blue Economy sectors in the Mediterranean region, focusing on key emerging trends and drivers for the sustainable development of BE sectors based on the most up-to-date quantitative and qualitative data available. For each of the sectors addressed, an overview of the main economic indicators is provided, paired with key environmental, technological and social considerations.

The main regional cooperation platforms, initiatives, and projects are highlighted. Recent developments in terms of cooperation – and particularly the role of the Union for the Mediterranean – are also outlined. In addition, the report provides an assessment of the future outlook (2025-2030), based on observed trends, drivers and challenges.

Lastly, the present edition of the report places a specific focus on employment opportunities: an overview of existing and emerging needs is provided for each sector.

Following the priorities of the 2nd UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy, the publication covers the following sectors: Transport & Ports, Marine renewable energies, Coastal and Maritime Tourism; Fisheries and Aquaculture; Intersecting sectors of the blue economy; and Maritime safety and security.

To complement the analysis, opportunities offered by key BE enablers and tools are also assessed: Financing Sustainable Blue Economy; Blue careers and employment; Marine Research and Innovation; Governance of the sustainable blue economy; and Nature-based Solutions and Integrated Coastal Zone Management.

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3rd Edition of the UfM Publication on 'Advancing towards Sustainable Blue Economy'
 The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) has published the third edition of its periodic publication on the status of the Sustainable Blue Economy (...) [Read more.](#)

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Thank you!

Merci !

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