



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

Barcelona, UfM Secretariat

19-20 February, 2025

Introducing the first edition of the Yearly Progress Report

About this report

The first **Yearly Summary Report** on the implementation of the Sustainable Blue Economy Ministerial Declaration has been produced, as foreseen in the general implementation arrangements set out in the Roadmap's Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation system specifications document.

The report aims to provide an up-to-date picture on the **status of implementation of the UfM Sustainable Blue Economy Ministerial Declaration**, looking at a series of indicators for each of the priorities included in the Declaration.

Indicators analysed include the following:

Output (Process indicators)

+Number of actions, sets of activities and projects of regional cooperation being implemented in the Mediterranean area per Declaration Priority

+Level of financial support committed/secured to support each priority of the UfM Ministerial Declaration

+Number and typology of partners and stakeholders involved in the actions/sets of activities/projects

Sources of information

As prescribed by the *stand-alone document of the monitoring system of the Roadmap*, the key **sources of information** analysed are:

1. Information on regional policies, strategies, initiatives and projects gathered through the latest Roadmap update process and its corresponding annex (mapping contained in the annex updated in December 2024).
2. This is complemented by **a representative sample** of information **provided by the countries in their yearly updates** (i.e. Algeria, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, North Macedonia, Palestine, Portugal, Spain, and Türkiye). This information was obtained through the presentations of the country reports that were delivered in the framework of the 15th and 16th meetings of the UfM BEWG.
3. Due to the heterogeneity of inputs from these country reports, a standardised methodology has been followed to ensure consistency and comparability

Sub-priorities covered

The approach used for determining the sub-priorities of this summary report has been based on the actual **UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy 2021 itself**, The following table illustrates this approach, and how Priorities have been disaggregated in different sub-priorities for the sake and clarity of the analysis:

	R&I	AQUAFISH	PORTS	MARLITTER	TOURISM	MRE	MSP	MSS
REGIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business opportunities • Collaboration on education • Ocean literacy • Smart specialisation strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversification of the blue bio-economy • Market innovation and eco-labelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities with high social and environmental standards • Onshore power supply • Reduce relevant air pollution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of port reception facilities • Address the issue of marine litter from aquaculture • Achieving 100% plastic waste collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of carbon emissions in the sector • Diversification of the sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental impacts of MREs • Multi-use activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine and Coastal Protected Areas • Land-sea Interactions • Preserving Inland Wetlands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ship pollution • Prevention and reaction against disasters
NATIONAL & REGIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socioeconomic observatories • Clusters development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecosystem-based approaches to fisheries • Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing • Small-scale fisheries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides • Alternative transitional fuels • Digitalization of the sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness and addressing marine litter • Prevention measures and circular approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitalization of the sector • Promotion of eco-tourism and niche tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of regulatory frameworks • R&I MRE technologies 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of training activities • Exchange of information and best practices

Contents of the Yearly Progress Report: How is it structure?

1. About this report
2. Sources of information and Sub-priorities covered
3. Analysis of regional and country-level indicators
 1. Marine Research and Innovation Skills, Careers, and Employment
 2. Sustainable Food from the Sea: Fisheries and Aquaculture
 3. Sustainable Climate-Neutral and Zero-Pollution Maritime Transport and Ports
 4. Interaction between Marine Litter and the Blue Economy
 5. Coastal and Maritime Tourism
 6. Marine Renewable Energies
 7. Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management
 8. Maritime Safety and Security of Blue Economy Activities
4. Analysis of trends observed so far on:
 1. Governance and the future of sea basins strategies
 2. Sustainable investment in the blue economy

Example: Coastal and Maritime Tourism

UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy, 2nd February 2021 :

- *Promote policy coordination, stakeholder collaboration and cooperation mechanisms to strengthen the resilience of the tourism sector in the Mediterranean;*
- *Develop comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and statistics schemes and promote the digitalisation of the sector;*
- *Implement sectoral strategies and action plans to green the sector and reduce carbon emissions from the whole tourism industry, including tourism-related maritime transport;*
- *Address seasonality and overtourism by promoting the diversification of the tourism offer, encouraging experience-based and slow tourism as well as associating the hinterland;*
- *Promote eco-tourism and niche tourism, including activities such as pesca-tourism, culinary tourism, and sport tourism, among others;*
- *Promote fiscal and investment policies to support sustainable coastal and marine tourism.*

Output (Process indicators)

INDICATOR 1: Number of actions, sets of activities and projects of **regional** cooperation being implemented in the area of Coastal and Maritime Tourism, in particular with regards to the following sub-priorities:

- Promotion of the digitalization of the sector
- Reduction of carbon emissions and greening of the tourism industry, including tourism-related maritime transport
- Diversification including experience-based and slow tourism as well as tourism associating the hinterland
- Promotion of eco-tourism and niche tourism

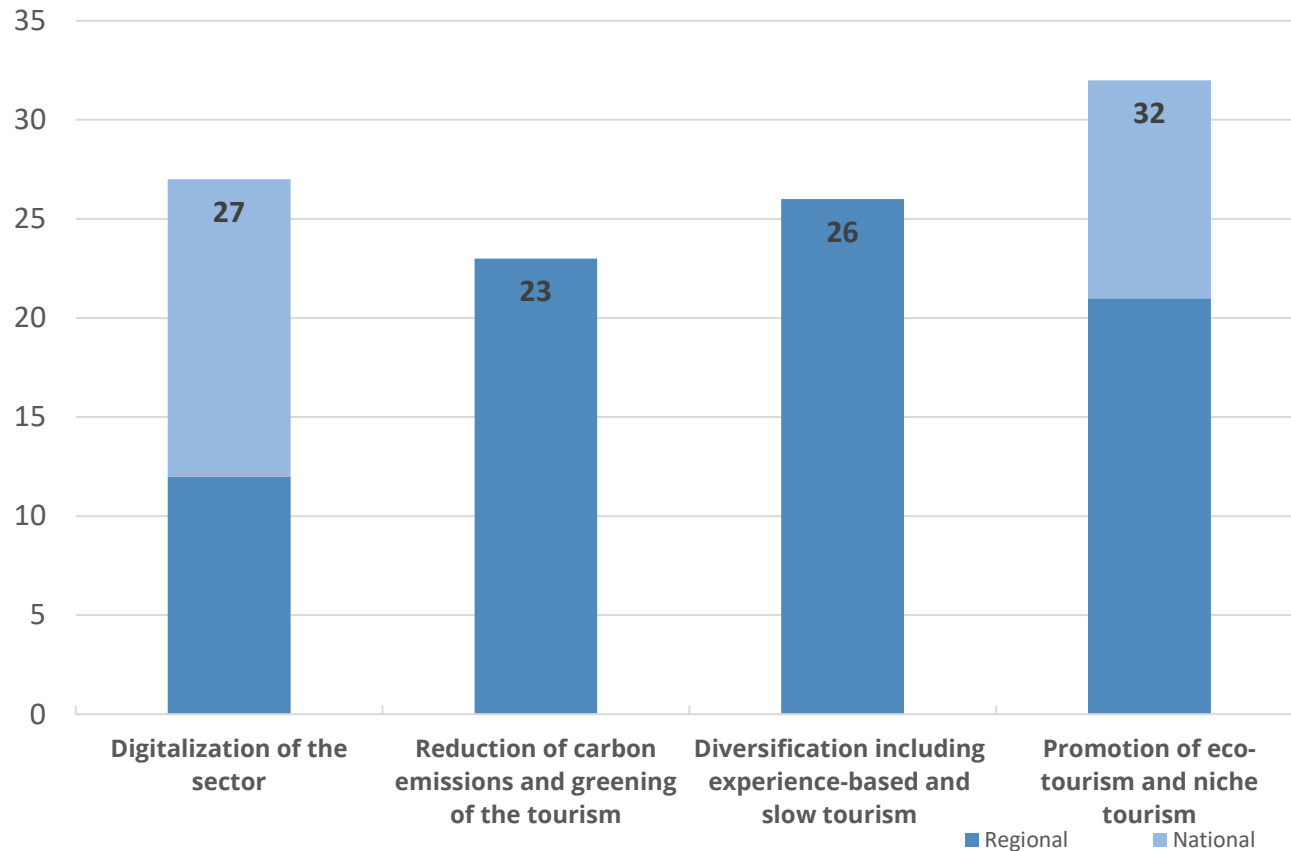
INDICATOR 2: Level of financial support committed/secured to support sustainable coastal and maritime tourism

INDICATOR 3: Number and typology of partners and stakeholders involved in the actions/sets of activities/projects

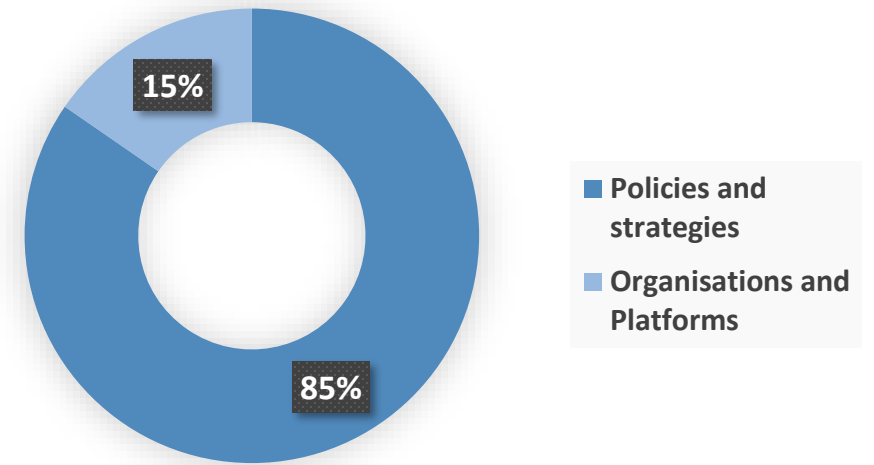
Coastal and Maritime Tourism

INDICATOR 1

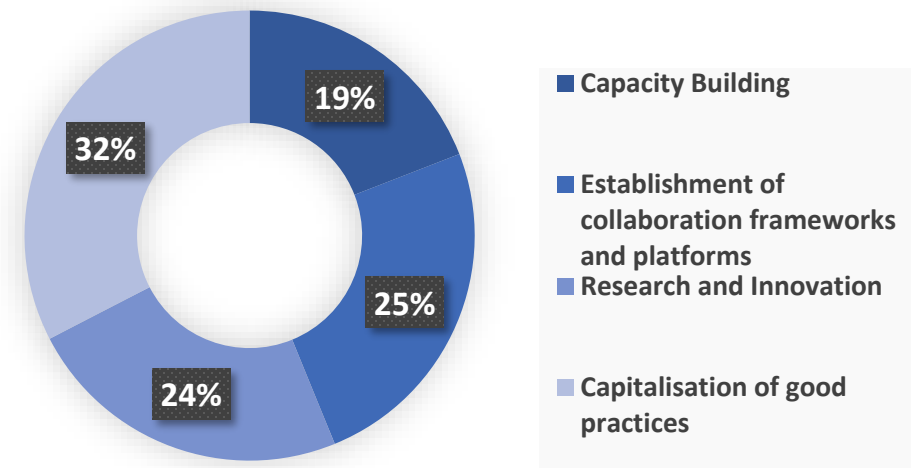
Actions being implemented



Types of initiatives being implemented



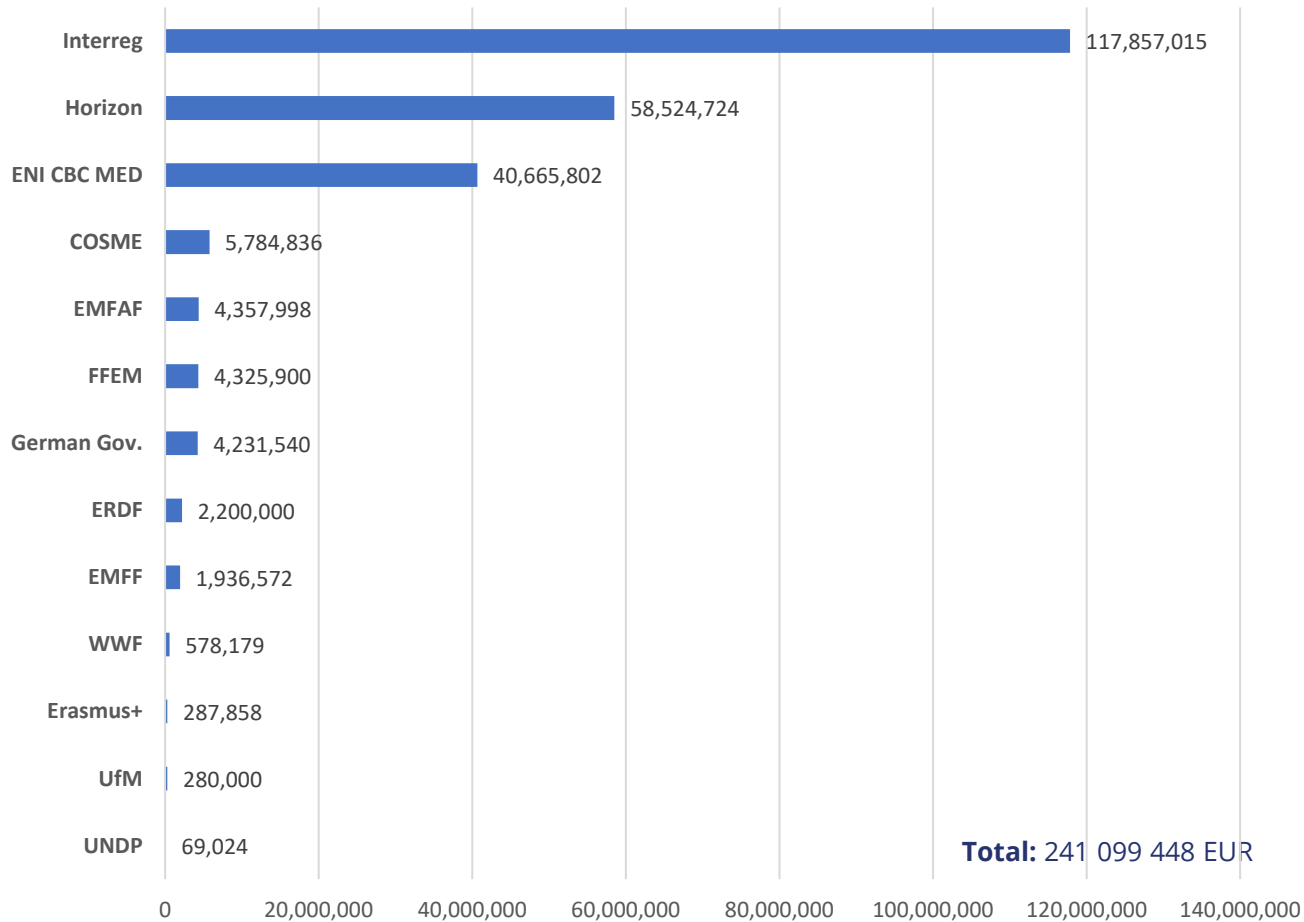
Types of projects being implemented



Coastal and Maritime Tourism

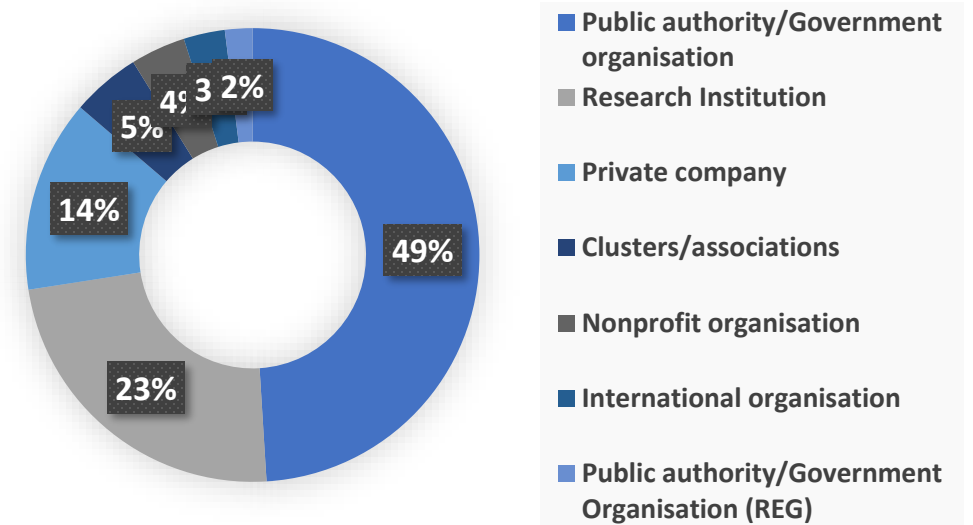
INDICATOR 2

Financial support (regional level)

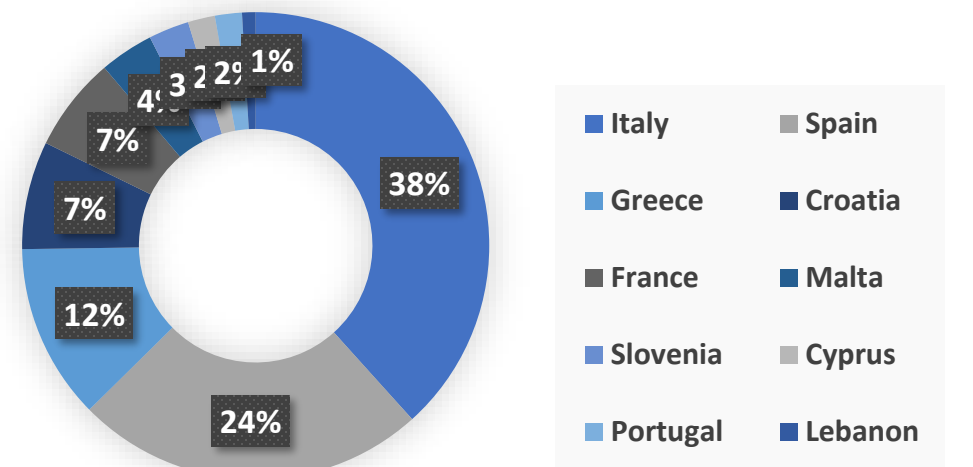


INDICATOR 3

Type of lead stakeholders (projects)



Country of lead partner (projects)



Coastal and Maritime Tourism

- **INDICATOR 1** (Number of actions of **regional** cooperation being implemented):
 - **129 actions** were implemented regionally regarding Coastal and Maritime Tourism.
 - **Capitalisation of good practices** (32%) of projects and **Establishment of collaboration frameworks and platforms** (25%) are the primary project types, with Policies and strategies leading 85% of initiatives.
- **INDICATOR 2** (Level of financial support):
 - €241M have been mobilised from diverse sources, primarily driven by **Interreg** and **Horizon programmes**.
- **INDICATOR 3** (Typology of partners and stakeholders involved):
 - **Public authorities and government organisations** (48%) dominate leadership in projects, with regional authorities playing a prominent role.
 - Italy (39%) and Spain (28%) are the main project leaders countries.

Coastal and Maritime Tourism

- Coastal and Maritime Tourism has received over **€237.1M** in support regionally. There are important **regional initiatives** within this priority. These include the [Interreg Multiprogramme Coordination Mechanism](#) which aims to enhance sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean across various Interreg programmes through **transferring the most valuable results, creative tools** and **governance papers** to support stakeholders the tourism sector, as well as the [WestMed Sustainable Tourism Technical Group](#) launched in July 2024 which has the aim of discussing opportunities towards sustainable tourism in the region as well as support in the development of project ideas. Besides, the [BlueTourism Initiative](#) supports exchanges of knowledge, good practices, projects and experiences between three major marine regions sharing similar environmental and social challenges related to coastal and maritime tourism.
- The focus on sustainable tourism is reflected in the importance of **promotion of eco-tourism and niche tourism** both at **national and regional level**. Various countries have incorporated sustainable tourism into their wider national strategies on tourism, such is the case for **Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco** and **Spain**. Some recent regional projects implemented in this area include those funded by EMFAF such as [REBOOT MED](#) and [TWINNEDbySTARS](#), funded by Horizon such as [TOURAL](#) and funded by various Interreg programmes such as [NaTour4CChange](#) and [GUSTI](#).
- **Promotion of the digitalisation of the sector** is also important, both at national and regional level. At national level, plans relating to the digitalisation of the tourism sector have been implemented in **Greece, Spain, Morocco, Algeria and Egypt**. Important regional projects have begun within the Horizon and Interreg EURO MED funding programmes, such as [SEA-LIMITHS](#) for the former and [D4T - Dialogue4Tourism](#) for the latter.

Governance and the future of sea basin strategies

- *Ministers task the UfM Secretariat to reinforce dialogue between UfM member countries and stakeholders on the sustainable blue economy, maximising regional coordination, partnerships, opportunities for cooperation and pooling of resources – in close cooperation with the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention and other relevant partners, and commit to continue their constructive work within the Blue Economy Working Group;*
- *Ministers welcome the proposals made by civil society representatives of 10 countries within the Summit of the Two Shores to develop concrete projects in the fields of sustainable development, support to Mediterranean youth, development of digital technology, culture and circular economy;*
- *Ministers take note of the on-going implementation of the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) and call participating member countries to make full use of future European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and the Instrument for pre-Accession (IPA), including Interreg programmes, to actively support the development of sustainable blue economy in the Adriatic and Ionian region;*
- *Ministers recognise both the WestMED initiative and the EUSAIR as successful examples of cooperation, focused on clear goals, priorities and measurable targets and as a catalyst for the development of sustainable blue economy projects in the region;*
- *Ministers call for further opportunities for exchange of experiences and best practices, as well as cooperation between the countries of the Mediterranean region, maximizing the potential of the above mentioned two sub-regional initiatives and encourage the involvement of other UfM countries in relevant activities;*
- *Ministers call on relevant Managing Authorities and participating countries to further enhance synergies between future Interreg programmes and other European Union funds, aligning them to the extent possible to address the needs of the whole region whilst avoiding double funding, and promoting their contribution to the achievement of policy objectives set out either in the UfM context, or within the context of agreements between the European Union and third countries, or within the context of other regional cooperation agreements;*
- *Ministers encourage the engagement of all the relevant national and local authorities;*
- *Ministers call on other donors to further support the fruitful cooperation in the region and complement the ongoing and future actions, as possible and opportune*

Governance and the future of sea basin strategies

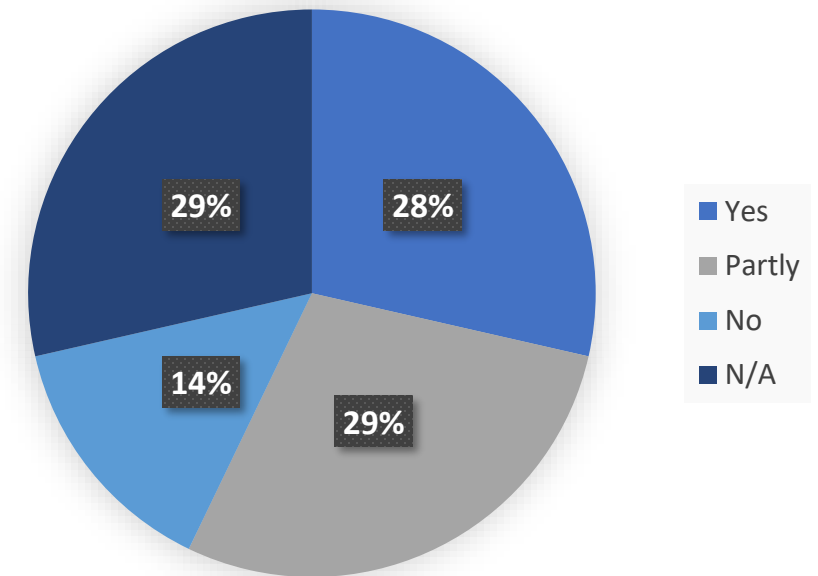
Is there any overarching blue economy strategy in your country? Or any process initiated leading to the elaboration of such a strategy?

From the 13 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).

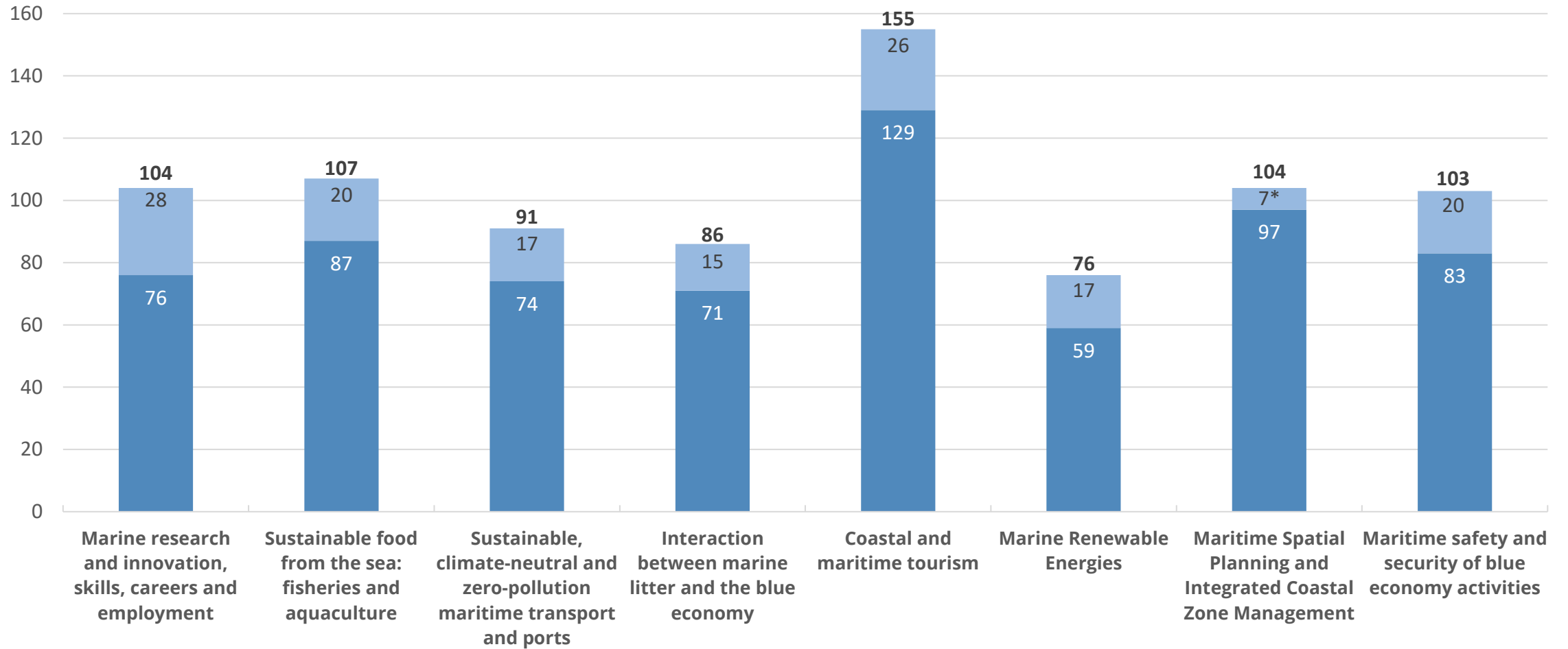
Among countries without blue economy strategies but considering or planning them, we find **Malta**, which does not have currently have a blue economy strategy as such but recognises the need for one; **Türkiye**, planning to elaborate the SBE Action Plan, and **Morocco**, who is developing a large-scale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

Overarching Blue Economy Strategy at national level



In a nutshell...

Coverage by Declaration Priority



*This information is not included in the country reports

■ Regional ■ National

In a nutshell...

Key sectors and enablers

- **Coastal and maritime tourism** stands as the top priority, with 129 projects and initiatives implemented and €241 million invested.
- Growing emphasis on digital platforms for maritime transport and tourism, with a focus on **smart specialisation partnerships** and fully digital administrative environments.
- **Maritime Spatial Planning** has emerged as a key enabler, due to its multi-dimensional foundation.

Funding trends

- **Interreg** and **Horizon programmes**, in all their forms, serve as the primary funding sources driving the blue economy in the Mediterranean.

In a nutshell...

Cooperation priorities and structures

- New coalitions, technical groups, and structured dialogues (e.g., Med OCEaN, MSP-CoP) have been created to foster **cross-sector cooperation**.
- The **development of clusters** and initiatives like CALLMEBLUE play a critical role in advancing the blue economy and fostering cooperation across the Mediterranean region.

National efforts

- UfM countries have effectively **integrated the diverse priorities of the Blue Economy** into their regulatory frameworks.
- **Italy, Spain, and Greece** are consistently leading in project implementations and partnerships across various blue economy priorities.
- Strong leadership from **research institutions** and **the private sector** drives innovation, though public authorities play a key role in policy and strategy development.



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Thank you!
Merci !

شكراً

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