



STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE RESULTS

Towards concrete 'blue'
actions in the western
Mediterranean

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Table of Acronyms

AFD	French Development Agency
AZA	Allocated Zones for Aquaculture
BE	Blue Economy
CC	Climate Change
CNFE	National Conservatory of Environment Training of Algeria
CNRDPA	National Centre for Research and Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Algeria
CPMR	Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions
DG MARE	European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
DGPA	General Directorate for Fisheries and Aquaculture
DTLM	Liguria Cluster of Maritime Technologies
ECGFF	European Coast Guard Functions Forum
EFCA	European Fisheries Control Agency
EIB	European Investment Bank
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ENSSMAL	National School of Marine Science and Coastal Planning of Algeria
EU	European Union
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GES	Gas Emissions
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
GVA	Gross Value Added
HE	His Excellency
ICT	Information and Technology Monitoring
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IMTA	Integrated Multi-trophic Aquaculture
INSPA	National Institute of Fishing and Fish Farming of Algeria
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated
JPI	Joint Programming Initiative
KfW	Reconstruction Credit Institute
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MAP	Mediterranean Action Plan
MC4BG	Med Coast for Blue Growth
MMO	Marine Mammal Observer
MPA	Marine Protected Area
O&G	Oil and Gas
PMS	Planned Maintenance Scheme
R&D	Research and Development
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
USTHB	University of Sciences and technology Houari Boumediene
VKC	Virtual Knowledge Centre

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context and objectives of the Stakeholder Conference

The initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean region was adopted by the European Commission on 19 April 2017¹ and endorsed by the Council on 26 June 2017. In its Conclusions² on Blue Growth, the Council invited the participating countries, the European Commission and the Union for Mediterranean (UfM) Secretariat to take forward its implementation in coherence with all the other initiatives which are taking place in the region.

Ministers of the western Mediterranean countries gathered in Naples (Italy) on 30 November 2017 to endorse and launch the Initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean. Ministers agreed on the initiative's system of governance and the meeting culminated with the adoption of the Declaration of Naples signed by the 10 participating countries (Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia)³.

The initiative is the fruit of years of dialogue between ten countries of the western Mediterranean region involved in the 5+5 Dialogue, which are ready and willing to work together on their shared interests for the region: five EU Member States (France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Malta), and five Southern partner countries (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia). It follows up from the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Declaration on the Blue Economy endorsed by the Union for UfM on 17 November 2015⁴.

The initiative is meant to allow EU and neighbouring countries to work together to increase maritime safety and security, promote sustainable blue growth and jobs and preserve ecosystems and biodiversity. The initiative's three main goals are: a safer and more secure maritime space; a smart and resilient blue economy; a better governance of the sea.

Within the objective of pursuing an effective deployment of the Initiative, active engagement with stakeholders forms the heart of the approach.

Such engagement is crucial, not only to validate findings and ensure that interests and concerns are properly taken into account, but also to strengthen commitment and engagement for the actions that will be proposed.

In this respect, the European Commission and the Co-Presidency of the Initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean held, with the support of the WestMED Assistance Mechanism, the **"Stakeholder conference: Towards concrete 'blue' actions in the western Mediterranean"** on Monday 3 December 2018 in Algiers, Algeria.

The event, which counted over 250 participants, aimed to facilitate the exchange of project ideas and promote concrete project development among stakeholders in the region operating in the maritime

¹ See COM(2017)183 final https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/sites/maritimeaffairs/files/com-2017-183_en.pdf

² See <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10662-2017-INIT/en/pdf>

³ https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/sites/maritimeaffairs/files/2017-11-30-west-med-declaration_en.pdf

⁴ https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/2015-11-17-declaration-on-blue-economy_en.pdf

sector (businesses, researchers, institutes, national and local authorities belonging to the western Mediterranean Countries).

This exchange took place in the framework of 8 parallel sessions denominated 'Project Development Labs'.

These Labs constituted moderated workshops involving selected practitioners across the western Mediterranean (and beyond) with the purpose of creating strong partnerships and develop strategic projects ideas in 8 relevant areas for the WestMED Initiative:

Lab 1: Maritime Cluster Development and Innovation to support Blue Economy

Lab 2: Blue Tourism, Biodiversity and Marine Habitat Conservation

Lab 3: Sustainable Fisheries and Coastal Community Development

Lab 4: Blue Skills Development

Lab 5: Maritime Safety and Response to Marine Pollution

Lab 6: Eco-friendly Aquaculture

Lab 7: Marine Litter and Circular Economy

Lab 8: Building capacities to fight IUU fishing

The project ideas, concrete proposals and potential partnerships discussed will benefit of the support put in place by the Assistance Mechanism set up by the European Commission to boost the implementation of the WestMED Initiative.

The Stakeholder Conference was followed by the second Ministerial meeting on the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean, which reiterated the commitments made at the Ministerial meeting in Naples (November 2017), and confirmed in the Declaration of Algiers⁵ the on-going support of the existing cooperation efforts towards the implementation and success of the WestMED Initiative, in partnership with the European Commission and the UfM Secretariat, with a view to carrying out the projects identified under the WestMED Initiative and ensuring their added value and impact.

2. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS AND OUTCOMES

2.1. Opening remarks and round table on Paving the way for concrete action in the western Mediterranean

The opening remarks of the Conference were made by HE Mr. Abdelkader Bouazghi, Minister of Agriculture, Rural development and Fisheries, Algeria; HE Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for Environment, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs – Video Message; HE Mr. John O'Rourke, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Algeria; and HE Mr. Ali Mokrani, Director of the Cooperation with the European Union and European Institutions, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Algeria.

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/sites/maritimeaffairs/files/2017-11-30-west-med-declaration_en.pdf

At the opening of the Stakeholder Conference on blue economy in the western Mediterranean the background and history of the WestMED initiative were recalled and all the speakers welcomed the role and dynamism of the Algerian-French co-presidency which allowed the preparation of the WestMED Roadmap with a view to identifying and implementing concrete projects for joint actions to foster blue economy in the sub-region by engaging and mobilising stakeholders. The Algerian Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries announced that the country has embarked on a process aimed at ensuring food security, availability and access to water, energy and environmental transition and ecological integrity of ecosystems as well as the sustainable management of marine resources. Significant investments have been made in the maritime and coastal sector and a process has been initiated to adapt all the instruments to appropriate maritime governance.

The western Mediterranean region's strengths and advantages require a collective and integrated approach to guide the joint action in coastal zone management as well as the implementation of appropriate governance. The many valuable assets and the blue economy potential of the western Mediterranean open new prospects in the region for the wealth creation and job opportunities for young people. Nevertheless, during the introductory session, it was recalled that the coast of the region is overcrowded, the sea is polluted, fish stocks are decreasing, unemployment among young people is widespread, in addition to important security-related threats. This situation creates the conditions for instability while the sustainable implementation of the maritime economy needs a secure and stable environment to encourage new investments and the involvement of new companies in different fields. The region also faces other global challenges, such as climate change and sea-level rise.

Speakers highlighted the need for continued action to extend ICZM and PMS to new maritime areas, develop MPAs and reduce marine litter, increase marine scientific knowledge, and sustainably manage main Mediterranean stocks. These objectives require collective action, improving synergies and the use of available EU programmes and funds, namely the structural funds. The external investment platform and the mobilisation of public financing and private domestic capital must be combined with external financing. Countries should align their policy and national funding with regional funding to obtain maximum impact. The blue economy can also facilitate other important geopolitical developments that will enhance the integration and capabilities of civil society. Bilateral and multilateral collaboration in the region will be strengthened thanks to this initiative. The blue economy, due to its cross-cutting nature, will play a key role in the economic structural transformation of the sub-region in terms of development and sustainable and inclusive growth. This cannot be done without a substantial and high-quality partnership able to have a strong positive impact for the sectors concerned on the southern shore of the Mediterranean. The synergies with the UfM together with the 5+5 Dialogue and the relations with the EU will back up the implementation of this WestMED initiative which can help replicate these dynamics in the southern shore of the western Mediterranean basin and improve the performance of the maritime economy in these countries.



2.1.1. Round table

The first plenary session: **‘Paving the way for concrete action in the western Mediterranean’**, provided a comprehensive overview of existing funding opportunities that can be used to support the development of blue economy projects in the region.

In this respect, the Blue Economy Call 2018 (EMFF European Maritime and Fisheries Fund) was presented to the audience, together with the available EU External Instruments for promoting sustainable investments in Neighbouring Countries and the European Neighbourhood Instrument Cross Border Cooperation Programme.

Adding to this, the funding opportunities offered by INTERREG Programmes operating in the region and, in particular the call for proposals for the INTERREG Med Programme were thoroughly set out, including a special mention to the PANORAMED platform and the Strategic Projects they will be launching in the first part of 2019.

Subsequent to the above presentations, a round table on how to ensure that the right match-making is done between existing funding opportunities and relevant project ideas with a potential impact in the region to stimulate a sustainable development of the blue economy took place.

A wide and diverse range of Institutions was represented at the round table, including the Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission, the UfM, the WestMED National Coordinator for Morocco, the Department for Cohesion Policy – WestMED National Coordinator for Italy, the Directorate General for Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural development and Fisheries of Algeria (WestMED Co-Presidency), and the Directorate General of Maritime Policy at the Ministry of the Sea in Portugal (WestMED National Coordinator for Portugal).

All participants in the round table welcomed the process and the opportunity represented by the Stakeholder Conference, highlighting the momentum, with concrete open calls for proposals being launched or in the process of being opened during 2019. The topic on fund alignment and complementarity was also considered critical.

The WestMED initiative aims to convey the message on real economy and that the efforts of the stakeholders should make it possible to effectively mobilise funding for a joint action between both shores of the sub-region. Throughout this phase, the creation of start-ups must be accompanied by the Assistance Mechanism put in place by WestMED, taking the "Blue Invest" meetings as instructive examples for this purpose. The importance of encouraging interested stakeholders from southern Mediterranean countries to meet with those of the north shore to set up projects and seek new funding opportunities should create a new dynamic within the Mediterranean North-South partnership.

During the round table discussion, many topics were identified, on which the efforts of the countries and the different stakeholders should be focused, mainly on maritime safety, development, job creation and environmental protection. Strategically, it was stated that it would be more efficient to target specific regional problems to narrow the scope of action and increase the chances of success in the short term. The major achievements and the investments carried out by Morocco and Algeria in the field of the blue economy were highlighted, as well as the need to foster connectivity between countries and stakeholders, companies and institutions that deal with the blue economy. During the discussions, it was also pointed out that innovative technologies, such as wind turbines, give new and innovative opportunities to countries. Promoting the creation of the marine technological innovation ecosystem is also considered crucial to the development of the blue economy in the region.

The presentations from the session “Paving the way for concrete action in the western Mediterranean” which provided an overview of existing funding opportunities, and all related documents of the Conference are available at the dedicated project’s website: <http://www.westmed-initiative.eu/>



2.2. Parallel sessions: Project Development Labs

The Project Labs were composed of two sessions: through the initial ‘project pitching’ session, project ideas were discussed, screened and fine-tuned, while the ‘project planning’ session allowed to define common follow-up actions to ensure the submission of relevant project proposal under the best suited financing streams. Relevant identified EU funds include, among others, the following:

- The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) Blue Calls;
- The Interreg Med Programme;
- The European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) Cross Border Cooperation Programmes;
- The EU Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (COSME);
- The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF);
- The European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI);
- The European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD).

Additional resources could be also activated through funding and financing mechanisms available beyond the EU streams, such as national funds, the EIB-KfW-AFD Clean Ocean Initiative and the JPI-Oceans. During the final plenary session, rapporteurs or project promoters or moderators presented the project ideas that were identified as priorities among participants in the Labs and sketched the actions foreseen.

The Assistance Mechanism is following up with participants and other interested stakeholders to further assess and support the project ideas with greater innovation potential, help building on necessary partnerships and discuss concrete ideas and actions amongst partners.

2.3. Lab 1: Maritime Cluster Development and Innovation to support Blue Economy

Abstract: Maritime clusters are key to creating innovation, jobs and growth. They play a key role in generating the critical mass for economic activities currently not appealing to private investors, notably by developing new avenues for north-south cooperation and between ‘traditional’ and ‘emerging’ activities, and by identifying and building innovative value chains across the region. To do so, as well as boosting the exchange of sectoral data and information is essential to support private and public decision makers in investments. Specific sectors for further exploration and exploitation can be targeted depending on the priorities and interest of respective partners, including biotechnologies, sustainable energy and multi-use platforms.

Outcomes: Lab 1 was joined by 18 stakeholders, including moderator and rapporteur, including representatives from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.

The theme of the role of clusters as fundamental actors for the development of local SMEs, just like for international networking and the aim of achieving a common Mediterranean behaviour was at the centre of all project ideas.

Three ideas were showing an “almost ready” configuration:

- idea promoter who could be ready to become project leader;
- a clear project idea, with a defined “perimeter” of operability;
- a sufficient number of interested stakeholders, raised as potential partner for the project consortium, on Northern and Southern side of Mediterranean coasts.

These three project ideas will be hereunder shortly described:

- The creation of a “business model” to properly establish, manage and develop clusters on territories and connect them through networking activities as a way to make valuable the skills and expertise expressed by SMEs of the Blue Economy.
The birth of a Blue Biotechnology Cluster (originally a separated project idea) could represent a “prototype” of such good practice, where each of the interested stakeholders could bring, exchange, compare their own experiences.
This project idea also “attracted” another proposal, presented by Pôle Mer Méditerranée and aimed at creating a very large and powerful “big data” system on the Blue Economy (as a further capitalisation step of the project Blue Connect, within Interreg Maritime FR-IT), to be used as a data source but also as a collector of information/outcomes of the project.
- The promotion of clean shipping practices, through the establishment of an LNG network inside western Mediterranean ports. The idea would capitalise on previous experiences of a network of labs.
- Demonstration activities to boost the uptake of innovative technologies. The Seafuture experience to “drive” SMEs to make valuable the results of their own R&D activities (implemented internally or shared within common labs, clusters, consortia, universities) could represent an occasion of a larger access for more SMEs, but also the adoption of the same successful practice on other western Mediterranean scenarios.

The other three project ideas were also shown to be “feasible”, but need a better definition of “perimeter” of operability, or to enlarge the team of interested stakeholders to join a possible consortium. Here the role of WestMED Assistance Mechanism may really become decisive.

A number of financing sources were discussed as concrete opportunities to move forwards with those project ideas. In particular for the second proposal, the POSEIDON MED project (<https://www.poseidonmedii.eu/>) represents an experience to be considered as an opportunity of “capitalisation”.

Results and preliminary ideas emerging:

- **Regional Cluster development and networking – Capacity building:** Develop of Business Models for Clusters Creation, Development and Management.
- **Blue Biotechnologies cluster for West Med:** Set up of a Blue Biotechnologies cluster to federate public and private actors (networking) and to share best practices and develop projects.
- **Promotion of green shipping through the use of clean fuels:** Establishment of a distribution network of LNG for maritime transport, to be installed inside western Mediterranean ports.
- **Demonstration activities to boost the uptake of innovative technologies:** Indication of possible methods to transform results of R&D activities into largely adopted innovative technology is an important contribution to SMEs, as protagonists of sustainable development over next decades.
- **Set-up of a WestMed Blue Economy Observatory:** Improvement of knowledge on BE in the western Med (data collection structuring and storage) and data sharing (via VKC as a portal of portals) to support private and public decision makers (investment) and support key sectors with highest level of potential of GVA and job creation (SME market targeting support).

- **Blue growth innovation accelerator for the WestMED:** Follow-up project of NEPTUNE (Blue Growth Innovation Accelerator) with a focus on Smart ships, Smart shipyards and maritime surveillance.
- **Promotion of cooperation amongst maritime logistic clusters.**
- **Knowledge of marine grounds through hydrographic research and studies:** Sharing and coordination of hydrographic research of western Mediterranean marine ground, where necessary.
- **Prevention of accidental oil spillage from collecting centres and hydrocarbons treatment on coastal areas:** Application of cement-bentonite plastic barriers, develop a new generation of Decision Support Systems tools for emergency response in relation to marine pollution from accidents.

2.4. Lab 2: Blue Tourism, Biodiversity and Marine Habitat Conservation

Abstract: Pollution at sea, water, soils and air are important vectors of marine habitat degradation and biodiversity loss, modifying ecosystem functions and consequently leading to the decline of the region's fauna and flora. Such challenges are also exacerbated by a growing negative impact of climate change on coastal regions. Implementation of innovative and sustainable consumption and production models and practices is essential for addressing such issues while ensuring new jobs and business opportunities. This is particularly the case for innovative and sustainable blue tourism – including coastal and maritime tourism and sustainable exploitation of cultural and natural heritage.

Outcomes: Lab 2 discussed the innovation potentials that could emerge through the boosting of innovative approaches and technologies for sustainable (eco-) tourism, so to ensure protection and valorisation of local ecosystems in the West Mediterranean. For this purpose, about 20 experts joined forces across northern and southern countries in the sub-sea basin, covering a wide range of professions and expertise including policymakers, business representatives, as well as educational and research bodies.

Amongst the many project ideas discussed:

1. Support spatial planning and integrate coastal management as a strategic tool for the definition of tourism policies;
2. Boost climate adaptation across the tourism sector, as a way to innovate while mitigating the climate change devastating effects on local ecosystems and local communities;
3. Foster high-tech innovation for marinas and yachting, as an engine for eco-tourism and new offers that could add economic value to the preservation of local biodiversity in fragile and protected areas;
4. Support greater critical mass and visibility for local eco-tourism operators, through dedicated

networking across the sub-sea basin (and beyond).

Results and preliminary ideas emerging:

- **Med Coast for Blue Growth (UfM - MC4BG):** Strategic territorial planning is introduced as a tool to manage blue tourism destinations (human activities and natural systems in coastal touristic areas), through concrete pilot projects based on participatory planning (ICZM-PMS).
- **Blue-tourism/ecosystem indicators (based on local databases) for Decision Support Systems:** Collection and systematisation of indicators (socio-economic, environmental, alert systems) building on existing projects (MITOMED +, HERIT DATA, CO-EVOLVE, MED IAMER, etc.) and expand results to the southern Mediterranean.
- **MedResilience: Resilient Environment, Resilient People:** Countries with common management and development issues in wetland, coastal, and marine habitats host pilot actions so to enhance their resilience, foster active multi-sectoral engagement and better manage ecosystem services.
- **Tourism multi-uses of the seas:** Engage with local stakeholders and coastal communities in partner countries to identify and discuss practical issues regarding Multi Use (MU) development and remove existing barriers through pilots.
- **Bridge tourism innovation and climate adaptation to boost tourism competitiveness:** Provide additional skills and competencies to stakeholders in Blue tourism to address the growing impact of climate change for the sector (climate adaptation), boost sector competitiveness and ensure coastal/ecosystem resilience.
- **Tech innovation (accelerator/incubator): boost sustainable tourism and resilient ecosystems:** Multi-stakeholders platform to identify/piloting technological developments for eco-tourism product/service innovation (e.g. submarine archeo/heritage, micro-cruising and small yachting routes, ICT monitoring, eco-marinas/eco-ports).
- **New eco-tourism routes/development: platform of Blue Med Eco-tourism operators:** Networks/platform of local eco-tourism sustainable operators to foster eco-tourism thematic routes (cultural heritage, historical routes, etc.) across the West Med (and beyond).

2.5. Lab 3: Sustainable Fisheries and Coastal Community Development

Abstract: The fisheries production of the western Mediterranean region accounts for more than half of the whole Mediterranean, with extreme diversity of exploited species and fishing techniques. There is no doubt that Mediterranean stocks are in peril and that their exploitation needs to be brought to sustainable levels before they are driven outside safe biological limits. Specific opportunities and threats must be assessed and addressed through the identification of joint actions and intervention techniques. Best practices for marketing fisheries products can be identified and circulated, while knowledge and resources can be provided to increase the added value of fisheries products and diversify economic

activities in coastal communities.

Outcomes: Lab 3 discussed the current situation on fisheries and came with suggestions for project ideas that could foster a more sustainable management of fisheries in the Mediterranean.

For this purpose, more than 30 experts, mostly from southern countries in the sub-sea basin, covering a wide range of professions and expertise including policymakers, business representatives, as well as educational and research bodies, joined forces and discussed the following project ideas:

1. The creation of artificial reefs as potential fishing MPAs for the support of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the southern region of the Mediterranean;
2. The creation of Blue Belts as support for sustainable fisheries, networked conservation mechanisms and adaptation to Climate Change strategies as potential CO₂ capture and sinking areas through Nature Based Solutions;
3. The compilation of good practice cases concerning the setting of objectives, principles, and concrete actions for the long-term environmental, economic, and social sustainability of small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean;
4. The idea of clustering for discussing and networking along current knowledge on fisheries management within a context of Climate Change impacts and coastal adaptation.

Results and preliminary ideas emerging:

- **Artificial Reefs and Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture:** Pilot project in the Mediterranean (Morocco) where some Artificial Reefs are intended to be located along the coastline so as to serve as potential MPAs. These may serve as potential sustainable fisheries areas (fishing MPAs) as well as for alternative activities to those from artisanal fisheries.
- **Blue Belts, Sustainable Fisheries and CO₂ Capture:** Transversal project will touch on various environmental topics (some related to fisheries whilst other to conservation, marine litter, clusters, etc).
- **Good practice cases concerning governance and management measures for fishing harbors:** Regional project ideas aimed at setting the objectives, principles and concrete actions to be implemented in order to ensure the long-term environmental, economic and social sustainability of small-scale fisheries; and sustainable development to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, while respecting human rights and gender equality.
- **Cluster on Fisheries and Aquaculture - CC (knowledge transfer):** Idea on creating a Mediterranean Cluster to discuss potential knowledge and good practices/ideas around fisheries management within the context of Climate Change impacts and coastal adaptations.
- **Blue Observatory (Knowledge and awareness raising):** “Observing the Marine Environment to better manage sustainable fisheries”.
- **Durability of artisanal fisheries activity:** Promoting new opportunities, funding sources and

diversification inside the artisanal fisheries so as to overcome their current situation in the Mediterranean.

- **Awareness on local catching species through partnerships with primary schools:** Educational classes in partnership with primary schools where pupils are instructed on local fish species and “traditional catches” by local fishermen, including possible local fairs with local food (also within primary schools where possible) where families are invited to raise awareness on quality of local catches and foster local (sustainable) consumption.

2.6. Lab 4: Blue Skills Development

Abstract: A vibrant Blue Economy requires promoting and facilitating skills circulation between the countries of the region, through training, awareness-raising and research activities aimed at society. Actions discussed aim at fostering the development of innovative maritime skills through a range of strategic actions to match demand and supply. They will also promote advanced training on sustainable blue growth, and incentives for networking and exchanges between maritime institutes and academies at regional and national level. It is also essential to raise awareness on a range of maritime professions, make them more attractive to young people and to increase cooperation between maritime education institutes and industry.

Outcomes: 23 countries’ and EU’s representatives have participated in works of Lab 4 (from France, Morocco, Italy, Algeria and European Union). The participants also represent various sectors and stakeholders, such as academic and specialised scientific research institutions, companies, local authorities and regions, different ministries and government agencies. 3 PhD students have also participated in Lab 4.

Two main ideas of projects have been largely discussed and consensually agreed:

1. **Network of blue professions for the reinforcement of capacities for the promotion of Blue Economy** through different tools and frameworks such as summer schools and other online platforms to foster upscale of skills and competencies across the sub-sea basin, possibly by allowing mobility amongst various schools and practical training experiences across the region. First overview of potential. A preliminary list of interested parties and national organisations have been also identified (National Research Institute (Trieste), Liguria (DTLM), Oriental Region, Department of Maritime Fisheries of Morocco, ENSSMAL (Algeria), CPMR, and other partners from Algeria (CNRDPA, INSPA, DGPA, USTHB, CNFE, Ministries and technical bodies of Tourism and Handicrafts of Algeria, National Centre for Research in Archaeology).
2. **Creation of networks of incubators to boost capacity for young entrepreneurs** (capacity building for the promotion of activities linked to blue economy (emerge an ecosystem propitious to the creation of activities).

Funding and financing streams have been listed for these two ideas of project, in particular FEAMP (Blue Careers, Labs, Economy), direct funding, transnational cooperation programs (INTERREG), H2020, IEV CT MED, etc. In parallel of these main outputs, some other relevant points have been discussed:

- Develop general knowledge and capacities to foster the development of activities related to

blue economy;

- Develop knowledge and capacities in marine and coastal monitoring;
- Development of an international multidisciplinary Centre for the formation in the discipline of new Marine Mammals;
- Observer (MMOs) and experimentation of innovative methods for offshore scientific research;
- Oceanographic Institute of Trieste (Italy): Capacity building strategy, experience with a summer training (advanced training courses), multidisciplinary course (second level master implemented and following the courses of summer universities);
- FCE (Algeria): Cluster of maritime trades (youth and women for entrepreneurship);
- Archaeological Research Centre (Algeria): Maritime archaeology, experience of on-going projects and training. Seeks to be "attached" to a broader theme, such as participating in the promotion of underwater tourism in the West MED area;
- Ministry of Economic Development of Italy: Creation of training for marine mammal observers and assessment of the impacts of underwater gas and oil research on the environment (Practices in Liguria and Sardinia, where a professional category is dedicated to this type of activities (conduct of research in respect of the environment)).

Results and preliminary ideas emerging:

- **Network of existing institutes/schools for the reinforcement of blue skills and capacities:** Summer schools and other tools to foster upscaling of skills and competencies across the sub-sea basin, possibly by allowing mobility amongst various schools and practical training experiences across the region.
- **Boost capacity for young entrepreneurs:** Providing advice on business planning, start-up funding, with seed funding for the implementation of business proposals, training sessions and mentorship by technical experts (including as a further development/follow-up of the previous project idea).
- **Experts in management and promotion of activities for sustainable/eco blue tourism:** Develop knowledge and capacities to foster the development of activities related to Lab 2.
- **Experts in advanced methodologies for advanced eco-sustainable aquaculture:** Develop knowledge and capacities to foster the development of activities related to Lab 6.
- **Enhancement of capacities for maritime surveillance:** Develop knowledge and capacities to foster the development of activities related to Lab 5.
- **Professional skills for Marine Mammal Observer and offshore scientific research:** Development of an international multidisciplinary Centre for the formation of new MMOs and

experimentation of innovative methods for offshore scientific research.

- **Knowledge on seabed by deepening the topographical and geophysical knowledge:** Better understand the "landscape" of the deep sea, map the topography of seabed, its geomorphology and type of substrate and describe the geological and geophysical dynamics of the western Mediterranean.

2.7. Lab 5: Maritime Safety and Response to Marine Pollution

Abstract: Ensuring both safety of activities at sea and response to marine pollution is an essential prerequisite for the sustainable development of a range of relevant Blue Economy activities, as well as for the wellbeing and stability of the region. The dialogue aims at boosting concrete actions to: i) improve transport systems for smart, greener and safer mobility, ii) address major marine risks (marine submersion, oil spills etc.), marine pollution prevention and control; iii) develop effective maritime surveillance capacities in the region.

Outcomes: Lab 5 was dedicated to identifying needs and project ideas related to maritime safety and marine pollution with more than 20 experts (administration, research, industry). It was agreed that two different types of origins for the marine pollution must be distinguished: one from the sea (maritime transport, O&G exploitation) and from the land (water waste, litter, desalination release, and urbanisation). All the participants endorsed that marine pollution has a direct impact on the environment and subsequently on the Blue Economy (maritime and coastal activities, condition of living on coastal zones). Maritime and coastal surveillance could help in reducing marine pollution.

To do so, experts considered that the WestMED initiative could contribute to the enhancement of the maritime surveillance in the West Mediterranean by supporting:

1. The mapping of major maritime transport flux the West Mediterranean (first in East-West axis) in order:
 - a. to assess the impacts on sea (including pollution and noise) and air,
 - b. to promote low energetic consumption and low carbon foot print and;
 - c. to enhance the efficiency of maritime surveillance (coverage). This action could help in maritime spatial planning setup by defining on one hand safe maritime areas for marine transport, and on the other one by enhancing protection of the environment with the definition of Marine Protected Areas;
2. The development of solutions to support maritime, marine, and coastal surveillance network. Such solutions could be based on innovative observation (sensors, platforms) to support monitoring and policy activities implementation such as the recovery of the good environmental status (EcAp – MSFD) but also reduction of gas emissions (GES) etc.

In addition, experts considered that capacity building must be set up between North and South countries on training at sub-regional level, best practices sharing and scientific mobility (ERASMUS+).

To support such actions, some financing sources were identified (EMFF Blue call (innovation), Cross Border Cooperation programmes but also future calls PANORAMED (INTERREG MED) which will support

this topic. The potential involvement of Southern Countries as full beneficiaries must be consolidated.

To start the mapping of maritime transport fluxes along the Southern Med coasts, the Assistance Mechanism identified the EU IMP/CC project as a quick win opportunity. The EU IMP/CC would focus first on Algeria with a national technical assistance in the perspective of a potential extension of the outcomes to Morocco and Tunisia.

Results and preliminary ideas emerging:

- **Maritime transport impact assessment in the WestMED:** Mapping of major maritime transport flux in West Med (first on East-West axis) and assessment of impacts on the sea (including pollution and noise) and air – in order to promote low energetic consumption and low carbon foot print.
- **Maritime balloons to support maritime surveillance (initial component of the action above):** Development/enhancement of permanent maritime surveillance capacity for safety and security. The project is based on the definition of a multi-sensor platform (balloon). Based on previous studies, the objective is to provide and test an affordable solution with a pilot project to be deployed in the Southern countries.
- **Marine and maritime surveillance development:** Development of solutions to support maritime and marine surveillance based on innovative techniques for observation (sensors, platforms), monitoring and support to policy activities: environmental status (EcAp – MSFD), GES, etc.
- **Prevention of accidental oil spills from collecting centres and hydro-carbons treatment:** Applications of plastic diaphragms (cement-bentonite) evolved for the prevention of accidental spills from coastal plants for treatment and / or storage of liquid hydrocarbons.

2.8. Lab 6: Eco-friendly Aquaculture

Abstract: The promotion of innovative, sustainable and eco-friendly aquaculture practices is essential to ensure economic and job returns which are not impacting local ecosystems. To achieve this goal, it is essential to promote the diversification of aquaculture towards more value-added niches and the use of multitrophic marine farming systems which could be efficient and less intrusive for the ecosystem. The discussion will support the development of optimal strategies, technologies and practices (e.g. pilot farms, certification, and technological innovation and impact measurement).

Outcomes: The Lab discussed the current situation on aquaculture at the Mediterranean Basin and came with suggestions for project ideas that could foster a more eco-friendly and sustainable management of aquaculture practices in the Mediterranean.

For this purpose, about 20 experts covering a wide range of stakeholders, from research bodies up to businesses and policy-makers, discussed the following project ideas:

1. The promotion of the use of Integrated Multi-trophic Aquaculture (IMTA) systems within the concepts of the circular economy and blue growth;

2. Ideas on how to best establish Allocated Zones for Aquaculture (AZA) so as to improve farm's efficiency while at the same time reducing the potential environmental impacts that these may cause;
3. The promotion of diversification, added value products, enhanced production and improvement of cost/efficiency production inside aquaculture farming;
4. Enhancing co-production benefits of aquaculture practices towards bio-remediation, carbon sequestration and other potential co-benefits that may come from eco-friendly aquaculture practices;
5. The promotion of standard certification processes for aquaculture firms across the (sub)basin so as to increase the quality of fish products whilst at the same time enhance best-practices, develop common technical standards and facilitate the export of products across Mediterranean countries;
6. Promotion and transformation of the aquaculture industry and services through the digitalization on feeding strategies, genetic selection, precision farming tools, etc.

Results and preliminary ideas emerging:

- **Promote the use of IMTA systems:** Within the concepts of the circular economy and blue growth, within the AZA, foster the reduction of environmental impact (bio-remediation, carbon sequestration), to increase the economy benefits (diversification, enhancement of productions and increased profitability) and the social acceptability of aquaculture (more jobs and better interaction with local activities).
- **Promote sustainable and certified aquaculture firms across the (sub)sea basin:** Promote standard certification process as a tool to increase qualities and safety of fish products, train aquaculture operators about best practices, develop common technical standards across countries and facilitate export.
- **Digitalisation and transformation of the sustainable aquaculture industry and services:** Promote a modern, resilient and sustainable production of fish, molluscs and algae. Foster advanced technologies, new tools and precision fish farming concepts will innovate, support and improve the whole value chain of aquaculture. Develop new standards and organic feed formulations according to the circular economy principles, whereas new feeding strategies, farming systems and genetic selection will improve health and welfare of farmed aquatic animals.

2.9. Lab 7: Marine Litter and Circular Economy

Abstract: Marine litter has become a major pollution problem affecting all of the world seas. Increased levels of marine litter originate largely from land-based activities and results in negative impacts on human health, marine wildlife, marine ecological systems, beach quality, and navigational safety, as well as fishing and maritime industries. A number of actions have been implemented to address this issue

across the Mediterranean, while stronger focus could be put on the adoption of the “circular economy” concept in relation to the Blue Economy.

Outcomes: Lab 7 was attended by about 20 experts coming from across northern and southern countries in the sub-sea basin, covering a wide range of professions and expertise including policymakers, business representatives, as well as educational and research bodies.

Amongst the many project ideas discussed:

1. Collecting and Recycling Technologies for Land Sea based Litter taking into consideration creation of employment “focused on small scale technologies for Artisanal Solutions”;
2. Data collection analysis and representation for decision-making processes;
3. Innovative ideas for cleaning Litter;
4. Capacity building on recycling technology for SMEs;
5. Tackle waste from ships (and beyond).

Results and preliminary ideas emerging:

- **Collecting/Recycling Technologies for Land Sea based Litter:** Artisanal fisheries to collect deep marine litter collection, sorting and valorisation of plastic residues at coastal and river level towards reduction of plastic at sea level and conversion into new products, according to the principle of bio and circular economy. Focus on knowledge transfer and policy makers and on training activities (policy frameworks of local level in connection with citizens) taking into consideration jobs creation.
- **Data collection analysis and representation for decision-making processes:** Combine climatic data (currents etc), additional satellite data information, artificial intelligence and remote sensing, to allow for the monitoring of state of the art in plastic littering management. Bring together industry, research, NGOs, finance and policymakers to develop a toolkit on how to get data and display them to decision makers to reduce/reuse/recycle plastics.
- **Trans-boundary Assessment, Monitoring, Management of Sea-based Litter (TAMMAL):** In the Alboran/Levantine Seas compare the different types, sizes, categories, distributions and destination of floating litter across these two ecoregions in order to understand the scale and intensity of the common challenges and design adequate management interventions that straddle borders. This will include engaging with a multitude of stakeholders and sectors to extend the scale and resolution of the field observations and interventions across each of these two ecoregions.
- **Plastic Busters to the South Med:** Assess amount, sources, pathways, distribution convergence areas and effects of marine litter on biota as well as mitigate and reduce the impact of marine litter in the Mediterranean Sea. Nature and effects of plastic litter on the marine food chain, fisheries and fishing activities, as well as human health are still largely unknown and are important issues to be investigated.
- **Innovative Ideas for Cleaning Litter (CLAIM to expand to the South):** Develop innovative technologies able to reduce the amount and impact of plastic pollution on the ecosystem-based services of the Mediterranean Sea; set the basis for operational forecasting of the impacts of

marine plastic litter pollution on ecosystem services. Change policy and public perceptions and provide advice for management decision-making.

- **Capacity building on recycling technology for SMEs:** Recycling but for private sector. SMEs of recycling market.
- **Tackle waste from ships:** To tackle waste from ships. Available Technology for ships to recycle on board and recycle afterwards. Recycling on board.

2.10. Lab 8: Building capacities to fight IUU fishing

Abstract: The main objective of the Lab is to identify cooperative projects to improve and deepen the fisheries control sea basin in support of the MEDFISH4EVER declaration and the sustainability of the fisheries. In the framework of the above mentioned declaration, there is a commitment to develop a culture of compliance and eliminate IUU fishing. Main elements to get this goal requires the efficient and responsible action of flag states in coordination with Coastal, Port and market states to ensure an effective level playing field across the Mediterranean. There are joint initiatives established in the area following the adoption of Recommendations by the GFCM⁶ to improve control activities, as the Pilot Project established for the Strait of Sicily. The good results achieved should impulse and deepen cooperation as well as help finding more joint initiatives to improve the culture of compliance and ensure a level playing field in the area.

Results and preliminary ideas emerging:

Capacity building and training to fight IUU fishing: Creation of a Regional Academy to create a common understanding and uniform interpretation and enforcement in the field of:

- Fisheries control training
- Fisheries Monitoring Centres training
- Risk assessment
- Regional and international legislation
- Control technologies
- Enforcement measures
- Dissemination of EFCA material (manual and e-learning initiatives)

The enforcement capacity might be supported by a **chartering a patrol vessel to be operated at regional level, which will allow** a more permanent surveillance in the West Mediterranean and will support the training activity. The vessel could be operated by the Academy in cooperation with the Member State interested.

The Patrol could be used with a multipurpose mission, in line with other approaches and initiatives such as SAFEMED IV and the ECGFF.

The Charter may permit to improve the capacity building of the inspection personnel of the participating countries through the exchange of best practices and training on-the-job.

⁶ <http://www.fao.org/gfcm/background/about/en/>

The current cooperation in the fisheries control in the area is organised by EFCA in cooperation with Italy, Malta, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Libya. These are potential partners to this initiative, but also others may be welcomed.

EFCA is ready to cooperate and support in this Project.

2.11. Plenary session: The way forward

Mr. Michael Köhler, from the **Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations of the European Commission**, highlighted the importance of the Stakeholder Conference and the quality of the Labs attended, as well as the project ideas discussed during the sessions. He stressed the importance of drawing up common rules and sharing control methods of activities at sea since maritime surveillance is essential for a successful blue economy. The exchange of information between the different services concerned must be at the centre of this process. The blue economy can become a circular economy knowing that the Mediterranean is overexploited, even if its western part is more or less free from pollution compared to the eastern part. The avant-garde approach used by the WestMED community given to tackle the various challenges can be replicated in other regions or sub-regions. Preventing and fighting pollution, cleaning the sea and coastline, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and adapting to climate change are all part of this approach.

The EU initiated its integrated maritime policy under the chairmanship of Mr. Barroso and has put in place numerous instruments since then, including the SwitchMed programme which brings together businesses and civil society organisations with the overarching aim of creating new job possibilities. This regional initiative has been replicated at national level in countries like Algeria due to its satisfactory results. A great work is also being carried out together with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) to create new marine protected areas.

Mr. Köhler also underlined the EU's commitment to working further on ICZM with the participation of stakeholders, including communities and municipalities. He stressed that any policy or strategic approach must be knowledge-based and that the European Environment Agency is launching another concrete project together with UNEP in the framework of the MAP to develop new indicators and foster partners' capacities so that pollution can be measured.

As regards climate change, tangible support is mobilised for the benefit of national and local authorities to implement adaptation and mitigation measures. In this sense, specific instruments include the regional ClimatMed programme (2022), the transfer of expertise through twinning and peer-to-peer learning to and joint studies between EU Member States and the countries of North Africa and the Near East. Mr. Köhler finally stressed that collective efforts are needed to work together on shared priorities, in particular to address employment as a common challenge of North African countries by encouraging sustainable maritime activities and blue economy.

Mr. Christos Economou, from the **Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries of the European Commission**, stated that these types of meetings are a source of inspiration to pursue the regional maritime policy with conviction. He also noted the originality and creativeness of the "Labs" format which allows discussing and developing project ideas even before the calls for projects are launched. In fact, ideas are, together with funding and mobilization, the driving force for projects and

actions. A dynamic process needs to be created to empower and enable all stakeholders to work together, provide for themselves, and no longer require technical assistance to lead projects. Continuing work and support will be needed in all countries to foster entrepreneurship. Last but not least, he expressed his gratitude to the Co-presidency for the good work done, as well as to DG MARE for providing the necessary support and the set-up of the Assistance Mechanism.

Mr. Miguel Garcia-Herraiz, Deputy Secretary General of the UfM highlighted the value of the blue economy approach as well as the dialogue that exists in the framework of the UfM and WestMED on global ocean governance which presently reaches consensus. As such, it is necessary to define a common approach on the challenges connected to the sea and to the job creation in the maritime economy. The sea is a shared space and a cultural and physical heritage, exploited and very rich, and at the same time a legacy that is in danger. There are also several platforms and a continuing dialogue between different stakeholders that must be used in the building of a common vision that can be operationalised through national law for example. The EU model can be a reliable baseline for the establishment of a joint action.

Mr. Miguel Garcia-Herraiz clarified that whilst funding continues to be a major challenge, it is worth noting that opportunities exist, and they should be seized within the blue economy. He also emphasized that there is neither rivalry nor competition in the blue economy, but rather a necessary and beneficial cooperation. In addition, he emphasized that companies also depend on this cooperation; this is yet another reason behind the choice and the willingness to move towards a sustainable maritime economy (sustainable consumption and production). Mr. Miguel Garcia-Herraiz welcomed the importance given to climate change in the many discussions of the conference and the work of the Labs. He also recalled that the first 5+5 stakeholder forum was held in Barcelona in February 2017.⁷ This regional forum was followed by the first sub-regional forum a year ago in Naples;⁸ a great success in participation and exchanges of great ideas and innovation characterized these meetings. In Algiers, this dynamic has intensified and the second forum for the entire Mediterranean basin on the blue economy should be held at the end of 2019. The ministerial segment planned for this forum should make it possible to evaluate the progress made, the obstacles encountered and the paths to be chartered in the future.

Mr. Vincent Bouvier, Secretary General for the Sea in France, pointed out that one year after the Naples Declaration, the Algiers Declaration will be adopted on the occasion of this conference, including a roadmap and six priority activities. He included four main ideas in his speech on this ongoing process. The first idea has to do with the remarkable work done throughout the first year of the WestMED Initiative, identifying the European programmes as well as the eligibility conditions and synergies (like as it was done for Blue Med for instance). This brainstorming exercise made it possible to define projects to be financed by European programmes that match the priorities and the main topics of the sustainable blue economy.

These projects illustrate how important it is to integrate this economy into a transnational logic such as, for example, maritime spatial planning and tourism. The example of the network of maritime occupations could help to develop joint training programmes and joint innovation and research programmes.

The second idea concerns the need to build a solid technical assistance structure that helps define and implement projects and respond effectively to tenders. The third idea concerns the need for connection

⁷ <http://www.westmed-initiative.eu/events/>

⁸ <https://ufmsecretariat.org/ufm-regional-conference-blue-economy/>

and coherence between the countries concerned and the EU; there is scope for expanding these synergies with UNEP, GEF or World Bank programmes. The last idea relates to the differences that may exist among European programmes that sometimes have different timetables, conditions of eligibility and governance. As a matter of fact, to be completely effective, it is possible to envisage an integrated maritime policy in the Mediterranean or in each maritime basin that will require the establishment of a fund (financial instrument) dedicated exclusively to this integrated basin policy.





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