

# Working Group on Aquaculture - AQUAWEST

Key summary points

Last update: December 2024

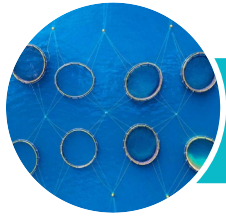
CINEA/EMFAF/2022-3.5.1/SI2.881692

**WESTMED**  
blue economy initiative

Supported  
by the



# WestMED Technical / Working Groups (TGs)/ Community of Practice (CoP)



**Sustainable Aquaculture**



**Maritime Clusters**



**Maritime Spatial Planning**



**Green Shipping and Ports**



**Sustainable tourism**



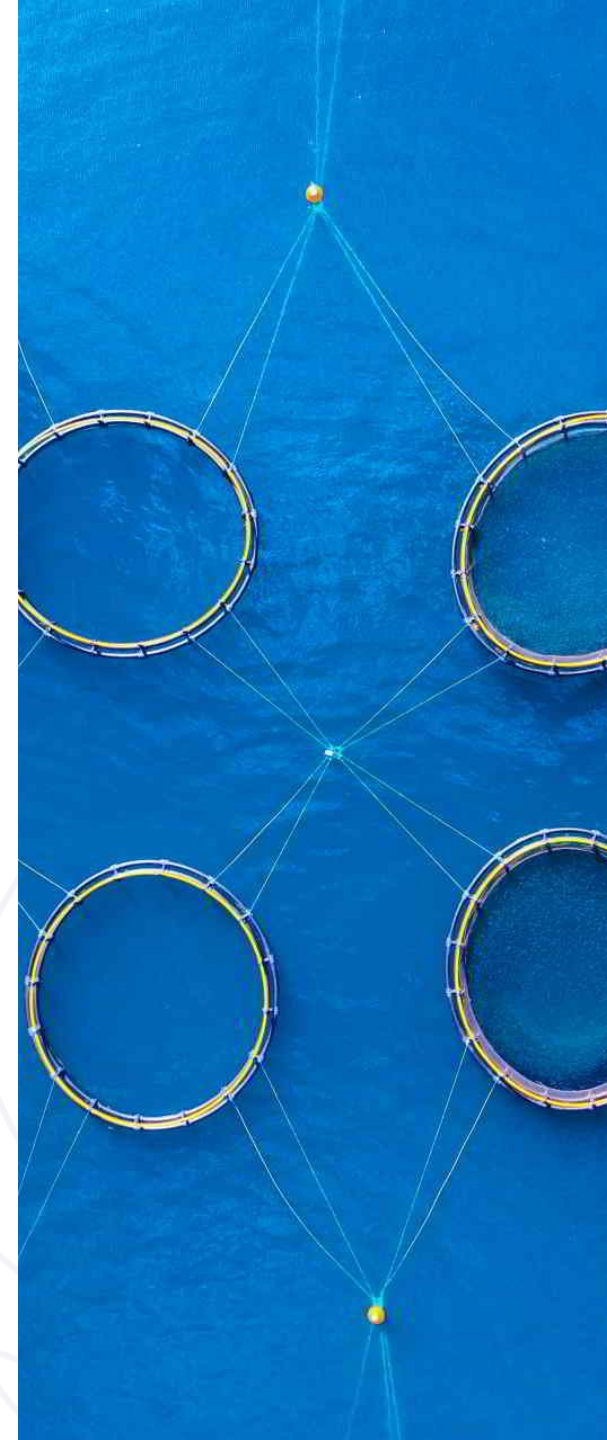
# Content

- Context
- Aim of the Technical Group
- Structure of the Technical Group
- Key activities of the Technical Group
- Synergies
- Latest news of the Technical Group



# Context (I)

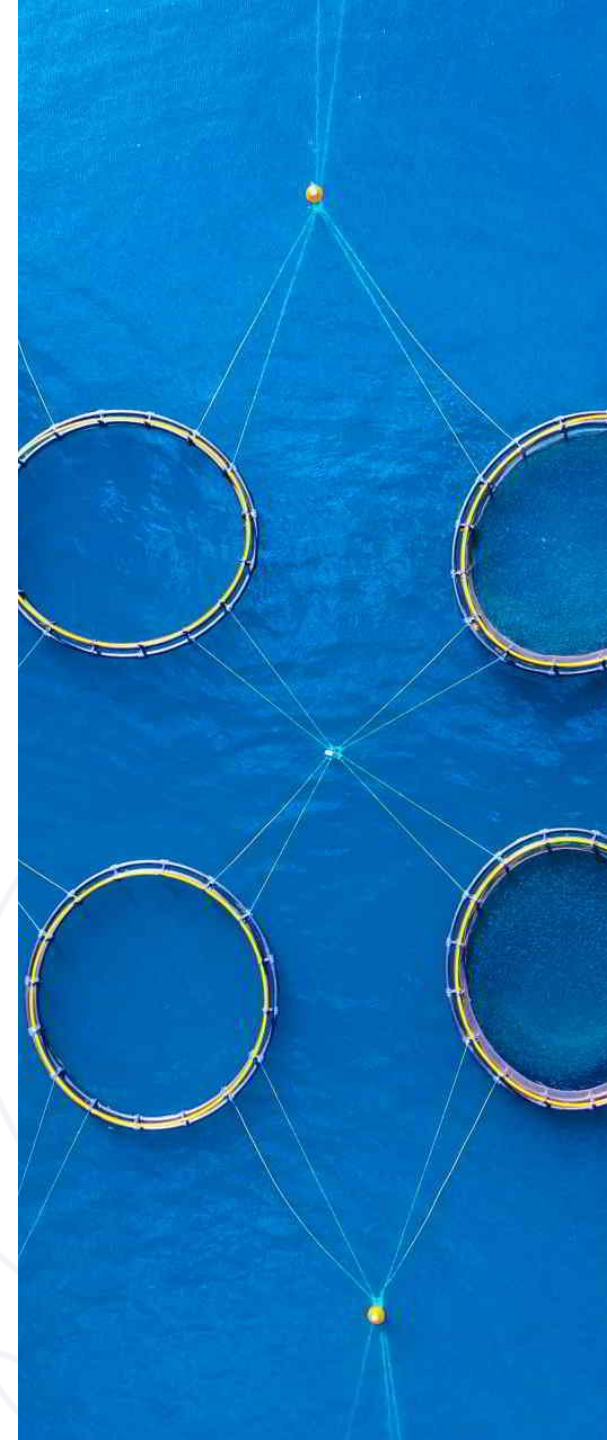
- The EU is the eighth largest producer of fishery and aquaculture products, accounting for around 2% of global production. In the Mediterranean, fisheries and aquaculture are essential drivers for the blue economy.
- Over the years, aquaculture has become more efficient and economically significant, growing steadily since 2011 despite a decline during 2019-2021 due to COVID-19 impacts. It now contributes significantly to food security, employment, and economic development in the region. In the Mediterranean, the aquaculture sector has reached a total production of over 675.000 tonnes, generating revenues of around EUR 10.5 and supporting over 250 thousand jobs along the full value chain.
- According to the latest BlueInvest report, the aquaculture sector is one of the most dynamic sectors of the Blue Economy. It generated a relatively high number of deals (i.e. investment actions) and receives more growth-stage investments aligned with the recognised growth potential of SMEs in this high-profile sector. It also gathers the second highest number of investors. Due to its strong potential, the sector is seeing an encouraging influx of young companies, which is reflected in the growing share of early-stage financing.





# Context (II)

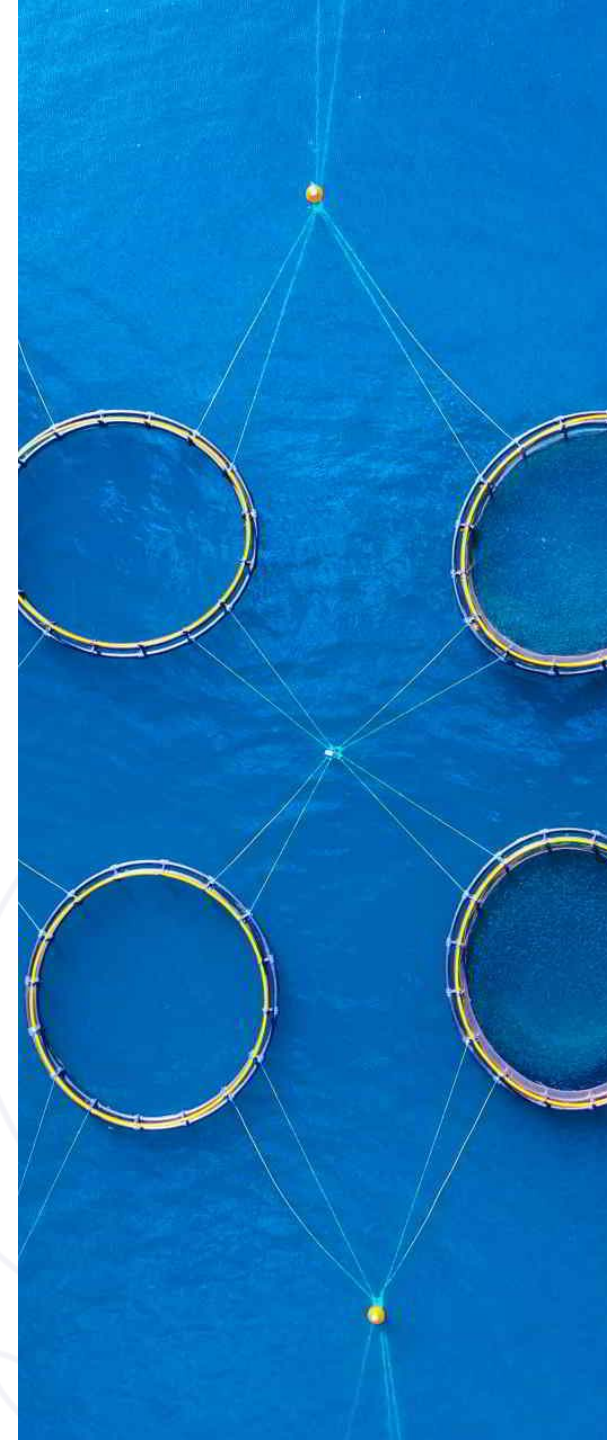
- Aquaculture is a rapidly expanding activity in the western Mediterranean. Particularly in the countries of the Southern rim who have embarked on very ambitious policies and strategies for its development.
- In 2021, the WestMED Initiative established a technical group on sustainable aquaculture, [AquaWest](#) , to support the adoption of innovative, eco-compatible sustainable and restorative aquaculture practices, and the needs and opportunities of the Southern countries to benefit from existing innovative practices in the region. This Technical Group consist of a number of high-level policymakers and stakeholders from the aquaculture sector within the Western Mediterranean and beyond.
- Ensuring the sustainable development of aquaculture involves innovation, digitalisation, ecosystem-based approaches, circular business models and diversification in production, management, and supply chains to enhance its contribution to sustainable food systems and economic value while reducing environmental impact.



# Context (III)

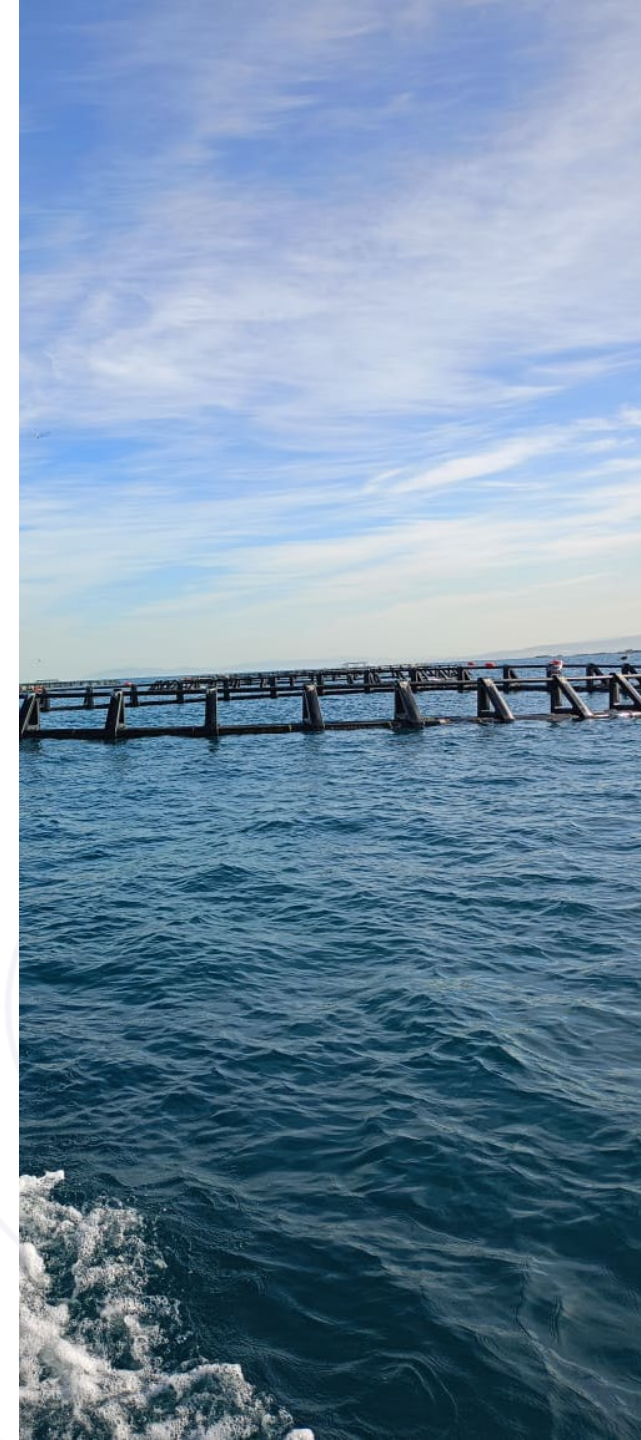
The development of aquaculture in the WestMED region must also take into account national, regional (the WestMED Roadmap adopted in Algiers in December 2018, GFCM, UfM, UNEP/MAP) and global (SDGs) objectives to ensure in particular the following:

- Food safety and protection of the marine and coastal ecosystem;
- The development and creation of value and employment along the value chain to improve conditions in coastal communities;
- Integrating the aquaculture value chain into the local economy to ensure complementary activities and diversification of opportunities at local level;
- The circular economy and innovation in maritime aquaculture practices and products;
- Reducing aquaculture's footprint and emissions in line with global (SDGs) and regional commitments;
- The integration of climate change issues and measures and actions to adapt to their negative effects.



# Aim of the Technical Group (I)

The **general objective** of the "[AquaWest](#)" TG within the WestMED initiative is to encourage and promote, through innovation, the development of sustainable, eco-compatible aquaculture that meets the needs of food security and adaptation to climate change in the countries of the southern western Mediterranean. It builds on cooperation throughout the region by supporting exchanges and the sharing of experience in the development of sustainable aquaculture, taking into account regulatory, institutional, technical and scientific aspects as well as the resilience of these activities to human activities and climate change.

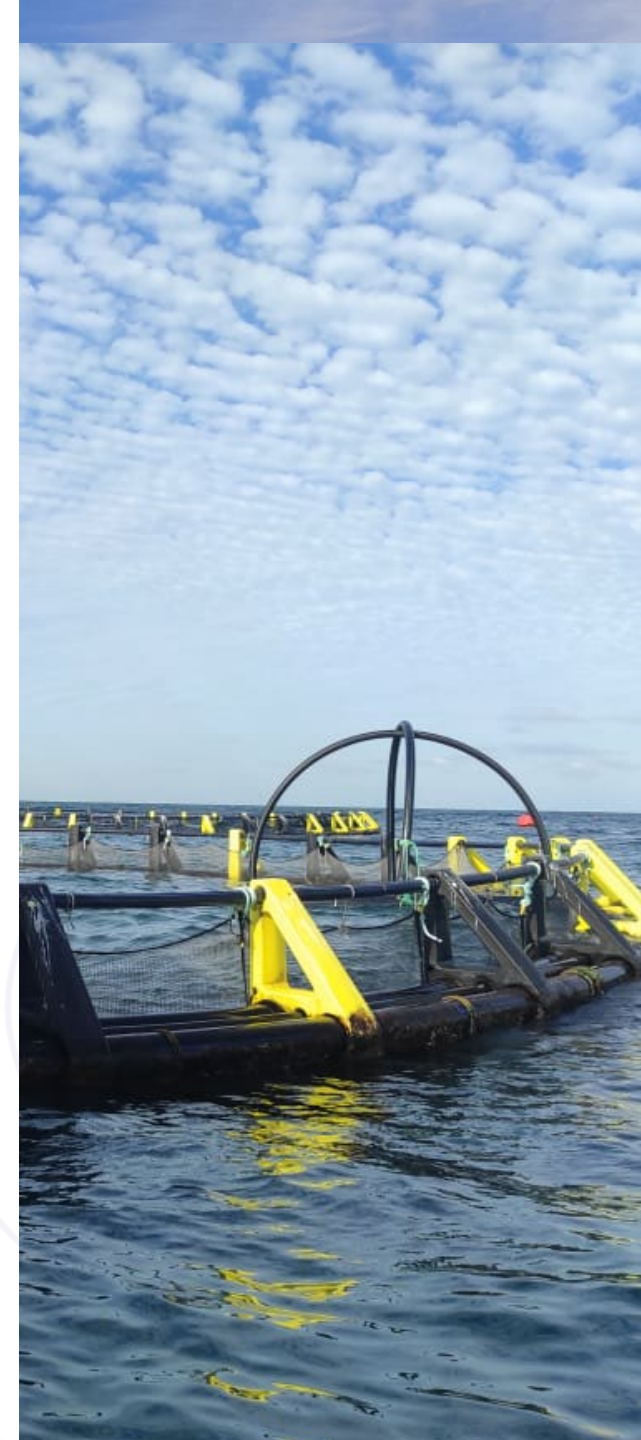




# Aim of the Technical Group (II)

## Specific objectives:

- Identify and share relevant knowledge on innovation and the development of sustainable aquaculture
- Facilitate contact and exchanges between national and regional institutions responsible for aquaculture development
- Connect stakeholders in the aquaculture sector, by identifying, sharing and promoting the best sustainable aquaculture practices and promoting the establishment of scientific partnerships between aquaculture research centres and companies in the South;
- Identify the funding available at national level (particularly in southern countries) and how to support cooperation between southern countries and innovative practices the West Med basin
- Create an exchange and sharing platform on aquaculture (ideally co-financed by southern countries and existing regional funding - e.g. [Interreg NEXT MED](#)).



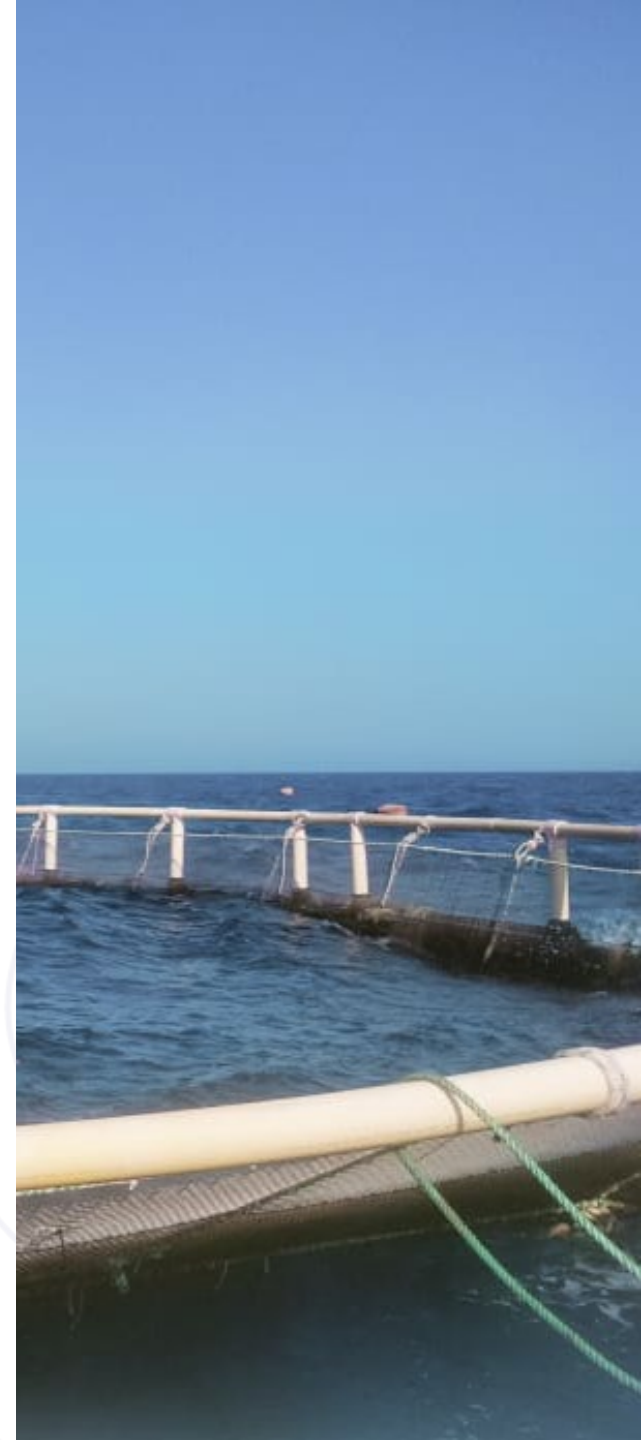


# Structure of the Technical Group (I)

At the WestMED initiative steering committee on 16 December 2020 and following the webinar organised by the WestMED mechanism, it was decided to propose the terms of reference for the establishment of a technical group to support the adoption of innovative, eco-compatible sustainable aquaculture practices in the Western Mediterranean, focusing on the needs and opportunities of the southern WestMED countries to benefit from existing innovative practices in the region.

The Technical Group may, at the discretion of its members, invite representatives of companies, NGOs or international organisations (e.g. FAO/GFCM) for specific purposes. In order to meet the needs of southern countries, it is envisaged that southern countries provide strong leadership for the work. Northern countries' contributions to this WG mainly focus on sharing their good practices (e.g. innovative private aquaculture companies) or their experience in terms of support and organisation (e.g. sectoral agencies, clusters or other relevant bodies).

The TG is currently managed by the Algerian National Hub.



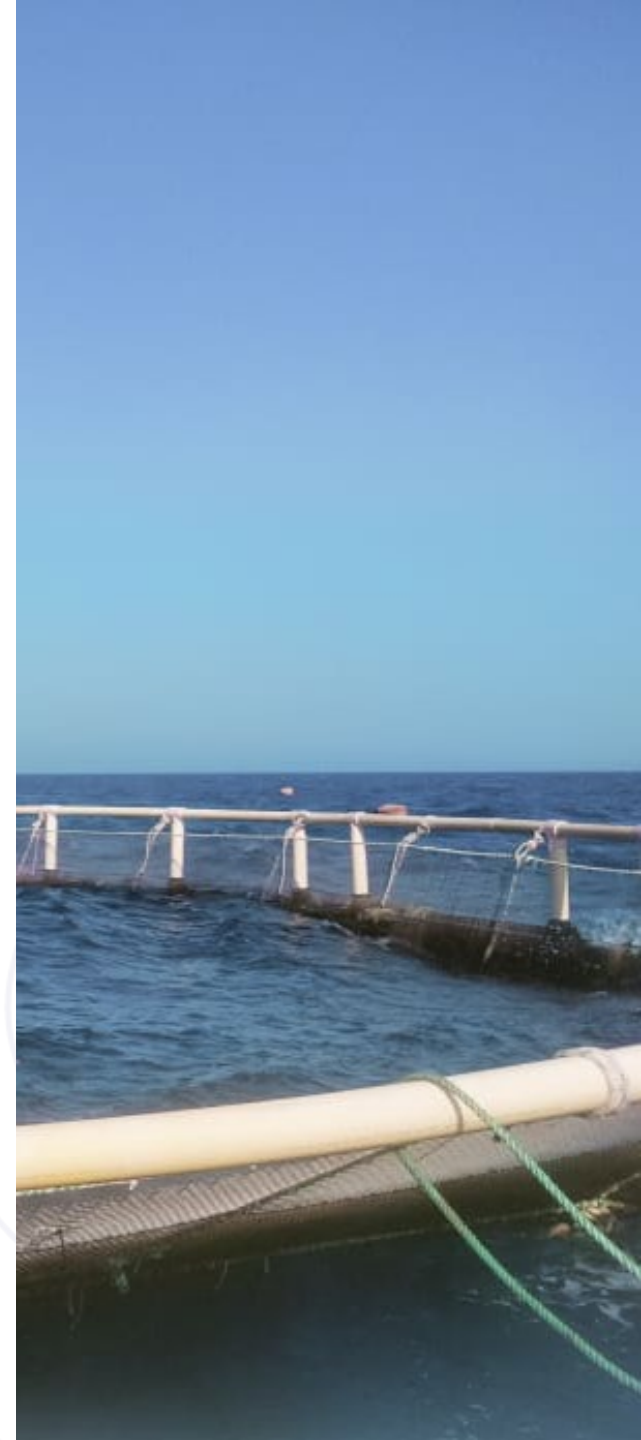
# Structure of the Technical Group (II)

## AquaWest - National Experts representatives

- Centre National de Recherche et de Développement de la Pêche et l'Aquaculture (CNRDPA)
- École Nationale Supérieure des Sciences de la Mer et d'Aménagement du Littoral (ENSSMAL)
- Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer (IFREMER)
- University of Bologna
- CIHEAM-IAM Bari
- ASSOITTICA ITALIA
- International Ocean Institute of Malta
- Aquabiotech
- Agence National de Développement d'Aquaculture (ANDA)
- Institut National de Recherche Halieutique (INRH)
- S2AQUA – CoLab
- IEO
- REMA- APROMAR
- Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer (INSTM)

## Regional observers

- IUCN
- WWF
- FAO/GFCM
- UfM
- EMFAF
- INTERREG NEXT MED
- Plan Bleu
- CHIEAM
- MedPAN
- Italian Development Cooperation
- France Expertise
- EC Delegations for their respective countries



# Key activities of the Technical Group (I)

1. **Support projects' ideas development, establishment of consortia and search of funding opportunities as well as support funded projects and awarded projects by WestMED.**

For example, NewTechAqua is a pioneering research project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 program that embarked on a mission to revolutionize aquaculture. The work done was recognised with two awards: WestMED's Best Project award 2023 in the category Sustainable fisheries, aquaculture and coastal community development, and the MedFish4Ever award on innovative practices in aquaculture for the work carried out on salt water aquaponic systems (By IRTA).





# Key activities of the Technical Group (II)

## 2. Establishing synergies with key institutions such as FAO/GFCM and EU Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism

In April 2024, the WestMED's Aquaculture Technical Group [AquaWest](#) met with the EU Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism and the FAO/GFCM with the aim of identifying synergies and intensifying cooperation to drive progress and achieve shared goals. The meeting generated valuable insights, discussions, and opportunities to further advance sustainable aquaculture practices across the WestMED Region. The importance of collaboration, knowledge exchange, and the integration of innovative technologies, such as GIS, in identifying allocated zones for aquaculture was widely shared. Joint projects, knowledge-sharing activities, and participation in relevant and each others' workshops/ conferences were highlighted as a means to further develop.



# Key activities of the Technical Group (III)

## 2. Establishing synergies with key institutions such as FAO/GFCM: Participation on panel session on "Promoting Responsible Investment for a Thriving Aquaculture Sector"

Key discussion points :

- How WestMed Initiative can balance economic growth with ecological responsibility
- Funding opportunities for sustainable aquaculture projects
- Technical group AquaWest that support both aquaculture development and marine ecosystem preservation





# Key activities of the Technical Group (IV)

## 3. Establishing synergies with the aquaculture private sector

[AquaWest](#) TG organised a site-event, back-to-back to the WestMED Stakeholder Conference on June 23, 2023, at the AquaBioTech Group in Malta. The event focused on addressing the specific challenges of the Mediterranean sub-regions, exploring innovation perspectives, and establishing synergies between business ecosystems, academia, research performing organizations, and regulatory frameworks.





# Synergies

- The European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)
- FAMENET
- FAO/GFCM
- EU Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism
- Black Sea Common Maritime Agenda
- Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)
- AquaBioTech Group
- Assoittica Italia
- MED MSP CoP



# Latest news of the Technical Group

- 4-5 December 2024. [The Regional Aquaculture Conference “Shaping the future of sustainable aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea](#)
- 9 October 2024. [WestMED Hackathon 2024: Crafting Sustainable Blue Economy Projects](#)
- July 2024. [WestMED Success Story. Sustainable aquaculture. Meet NewTechAqua – the European aquaculture innovators](#)
- 29 April 2024. [WestMED’s Aquaculture Technical Group AquaWest intensifies cooperation with the EU Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism and FAO/ GFCM](#)
- 23 February 2024. [Joint FAO/GFCM-WestMED event during SIPA2024 on Climate Change Resilient Aquaculture](#)
- 9 October 2023. [Samir Bachouche \(WestMED National Hub\) presenting ‘the development of aquaculture in Algeria’ at the University of Chlef](#)

# Thank you for your support!

Algeria National Hub: [algeria@westmed-initiative.ec.europa.eu](mailto:algeria@westmed-initiative.ec.europa.eu)

[Westmed-initiative.ec.europa.eu](https://westmed-initiative.ec.europa.eu)

 [#WestMedStrat](https://twitter.com/WestMedStrat)

CINEA/EMFAF/2022-3.5.1/SI2.881692

**WESTMED**  
blue economy initiative

Supported  
by the

