

Roundtable: Blue Skills & Ocean Literacy

Concept Note

EU Sea Basins Assistance Mechanism

11 June 2025 (10:15-11:15)

UNOC Conference, Marseille

Green Zone ('La Baleine'), Pavillon France 3-Océans

UNOC - WestMED Workshop: Blue Skills & Ocean Literacy

Aim of the roundtable

The UN Ocean Conference (UNOC) highlights the need for **blue skills for public and private sectors as critical for balancing sustainable ocean economies and ocean conservation**, while advancing on SDG 14. In line with UNESCO/IOC and Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), they are also essential elements to support coastal communities in the context of the EU Ocean Pact currently under discussion and the foreseen Mediterranean Pact to be promoted under DG MENA, as they are pivotal to address the priorities of a sustainable Mediterranean and its sub-regional strategies (e.g. WestMED and EUSAIR).

For this reason, blue skills and ocean literacy have been pointed out as **common priorities for cooperation in the policy dialogue promoted by the EU Sea-basins Assistance Mechanism**, across the different sea-basin strategies in the WestMED, Atlantic and Black Sea. This workshop offers a **strategic opportunity for the WestMED Initiative, supported under the EU Sea Basin Assistance Mechanism (SBAM), to discuss the state of play of those topics** in the broader Mediterranean region and internationally.

The discussion will inform future work promoted by the WestMED Co-Presidency, to develop specific actions including possible Technical Groups, as well as **cooperation across the EU sea basins and beyond**

Draft agenda for the roundtable

The following speakers and contributions are foreseen as part of the workshop, by discussing the 'relevant experiences, challenges and opportunities for Blue Skills and Ocean Literacy'.

15 mins > SETTING THE SCENE

- **EU Sea Basin Assistance Mechanism** > Introduction and moderation
Mr Javier Fernandez, Project Leader / Mr Matteo Bocci, Deputy Leader & Synergies
- **EC DG MARE** > The new Europe Ocean Pact, setting the scene for the discussion
Ms Delilah Al Khudhairy, Director, DG MARE
- **WestMED Co-Presidencies (PT/TU)** > Introducing the WestMED interest in the areas
Ms Marisa Lameiras da Silva, Director General for Maritime Policy, Portugal
Mr Zied Bouzouita, Director of Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tunisia

15 mins > PERCEPTION FROM ACROSS THE MEDITERRANEAN

- **UfM Secretariat** > Overview of the Ministerial Priorities in those areas and results so far, as emerging from the monitoring exercise of their implementation and their UNOC event
Ms Adriana Salazar Olivan, Blue Economy Expert, Union for the Mediterranean
- **INTERREG NEXT MED** > Overview of regional projects funded and related to those topics
Mr Aldo Puleo, Managing Authority, Interreg NEXT MED Programme

15 mins > EXPERIENCES IN OTHER SEA BASINS AND BEYOND

- **IOC-UNESCO** > Overview of their international experience in ocean literacy and blue skills
Ms Francesca Santoro, Senior Programme Officer, UNESCO
- **Atlantic Pillar II Coordinator** > Insights on Blue Skills of the future and Ocean Literacy priorities in relation to innovative blue economy sectors
Ms Céline Liret, Pillar II Coordinators, Atlantic Strategy

10 mins > Q&A WITH THE AUDIENCE

5 mins > REFLECTION ON THE WAY FORWARD

- **WestMED Co-Presidencies (PT/TU) / EC DG MARE** > Wrap-up and insights for actions in the WestMED and across Sea Basins.