

# WestMED Project Awards 2025

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## Guidelines

09 June 2025

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## 1 Introduction

The WestMED Steering Committee, with support from the WestMED Assistance Mechanism, is organising the third edition of the WestMED Project Awards in 2025, after the success of the [first edition in 2021](#) and the [second edition in 2023](#).

This international project competition aims to **showcase and honour outstanding success stories**, which are clearly aligned with the western Mediterranean Framework for Action priorities covering the WestMED initiative's geographic area: Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia.

The WestMED Project Awards will identify **exceptional projects in different areas** which provide innovative and replicable solutions embodying the WestMED initiative's vision for the western Mediterranean.

## 2 WestMED project awards categories

Based on the western Mediterranean priorities set up in the Ministerial Declaration from Malta, 2023<sup>1</sup>, the awards will be aligned to the following categories:

1. **Biodiversity, Marine Habitat Conservation and Maritime Spatial Planning.** This category includes:
  - a. Pollution control at sea and land-based level
  - b. Protection of coastal and marine ecosystems and combating coastal erosion and habitat degradation
  - c. Maritime safety, security, surveillance and governance of the sea
  - d. Promoting Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP)
  - e. Climate change adaptation and coastal resilience solutions
2. **Sustainable Consumption and Production.** This category includes:
  - a. The transition of Maritime Transport, Green shipping, and Ports towards carbon-neutrality and zero emission and ports as hubs for energy as well as marine renewable energy

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<sup>1</sup> <https://westmed-initiative.ec.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/WestMED-2023-Revised-Ministerial-Declaration-Final-Draft.pdf>

- b. Innovative and restorative aquaculture and fisheries, including blue biotechnology
- c. Coastal and maritime eco-tourism

**3. Maritime Clusters.** This category includes:

- a. Promote cross-sectoral collaboration among businesses, academia, public authorities, and civil society, especially involving SMEs and startups
- b. Support the emergence and development of southern clusters, including capacity building and investment-readiness initiatives
- c. Enhance regional integration by connecting maritime actors across borders and sectors

**4. Blue Skills and Ocean Literacy:** This category includes:

- a. Blue skills and jobs: training, education, and workforce development in maritime sectors. This includes upskilling/reskilling for new technologies, promoting maritime careers, enhancing research collaboration, and facilitating mutual recognition of qualifications to boost cross-border mobility.
- b. Ocean Literacy and Youth: education, awareness, and initiatives for the public and youth, that promote conservation, restoration, and sustainable resource use.

The **WestMED Project Awards will be granted to 4 projects** (1 winner per each of the categories listed above).

Applicants are invited to select two categories: a **primary award category**, which should be the most aligned with the project's scope, and a **secondary award category**, to take account of any other category that they believe their project has a direct or indirect impact on.

### 3 How to apply

Interested applicants should submit their application via the online application form through this link: <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/westmed-project-award-2025>

Any questions should be submitted via email ([communications@westmed-initiative.ec.europa.eu](mailto:communications@westmed-initiative.ec.europa.eu))

**Timeline:**

Date	Action
26 June 2025	Launch of the award applications incl online application forms
30 September 2025	Close awards application
15 October 2025	Inform award winners of results

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28 November 2025	WestMED Project Award ceremony at Stakeholder Conference in Tunisia
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The WestMED Award winners shall be contacted by the organisation team of the Assistance Mechanism to prepare the presentation of their project during the conference.

## 4 Project Eligibility

In order to be eligible, projects must:

- **Be delivered within the Western Mediterranean geographical area:** Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia
- **Have been initiated and/or completed during the 36 months prior to the announcement of this call.** Applications may be submitted by any individual, organisation, business, group, network, consortium or institution. Any type of funded project (at local, regional, national, or European level from public and/or private sources) that has been delivered or is being delivered inside the WestMED geographical area is eligible to apply.

Applications should be put forward by individuals or organisations who are project managers or partners of the concerned project.

These may include professionals, entrepreneurs, organisations, centres of excellence/research institutions, maritime clusters, associations and NGOs.

## 5 Evaluation Criteria

Eligible nominations will be assessed against the following set of criteria:

- **Project relevance** with the award categories selected in the application, taking into consideration the WestMED Framework for Action, the Roadmap priorities stated in the WestMED Ministerial Declaration from Malta, 2023<sup>2</sup> and the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy, 2021<sup>3</sup>.
- **Level of innovation** of the project, measured in terms of approach, results and working methods.
- **Impact** or potential impact (social, environmental, economical).
- **Transnational component and involvement of partners from the north and southern shores.** The project encourages collaboration and has a Mediterranean/international dimension.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://westmed-initiative.ec.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/WestMED-2023-Revised-Ministerial-Declaration-Final-Draft.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Declaration-UfM-Blue-Economy-EN-1.pdf>

- **Potential for replicability and transferability** of the project's results across the western Mediterranean sub-sea basin and to other sea basins. Project demonstrates its viability over the long-term, it can be replicated in different territories or localities and/or can be scaled up.

The assessment of nominations will be carried out by the **WestMED Project Awards Jury that consists of Blue Economy experts**. The decision on each of the categories shall be endorsed by members of the WestMED Steering Committee, including National Coordinators and European Commission representatives.

After being selected, awarded projects will be invited to attend the **WestMED Mediterranean Project Awards Ceremony**, to take place during the WestMED Stakeholders Conference in Tunisia. They will be informed in advance of their selection but asked not to make it public until the end of the Conference. That way, it can be festively disclosed during the day itself.

During the Project Awards Ceremony, once the announcement of the 4 awarded projects has taken place, a pitching competition session will be held amongst them. The procedure for this pitching competition will be as follows:

- 4 awarded project's representatives will give a 5-minute speech presenting the highlights of their project in front of the audience, who will be allowed to pose 2-3 questions per project.
- A dynamic, live voting session will then be enabled
- Based on the audience's decision, a "winner-of-winners" will be announced on-site and receive a special award (see section below).

## **6 The Award**

All awarded projects will receive:

- a WestMED certificate and a trophy (the "winner-of-winners" will receive an additional trophy)
- a project pitch opportunity to showcase their project/ organization to the Conference participants
- a dedicated follow-up session with our most relevant National Hub experts focused on further promotion/ expansion of the project – i.e. introduction to relevant events/ meetings where applicable with access to the extensive cross-sea basin network covering the WestMED, Atlantic and Black Sea
- promotion via WestMED's communication channels (web, Twitter, newsletter)
- all travel and accommodation expenses to and from the Conference, to be covered by the WestMED Assistance Mechanism for one representative of each project/initiative