

The WestMED Initiative

Boosting the sustainable blue economy in the Western Mediterranean

Technical Assistance Mechanism

June 2025

CINEA/EMFAF/2022-3.5.1/SI2.881692

WESTMED
blue economy initiative

Supported
by the

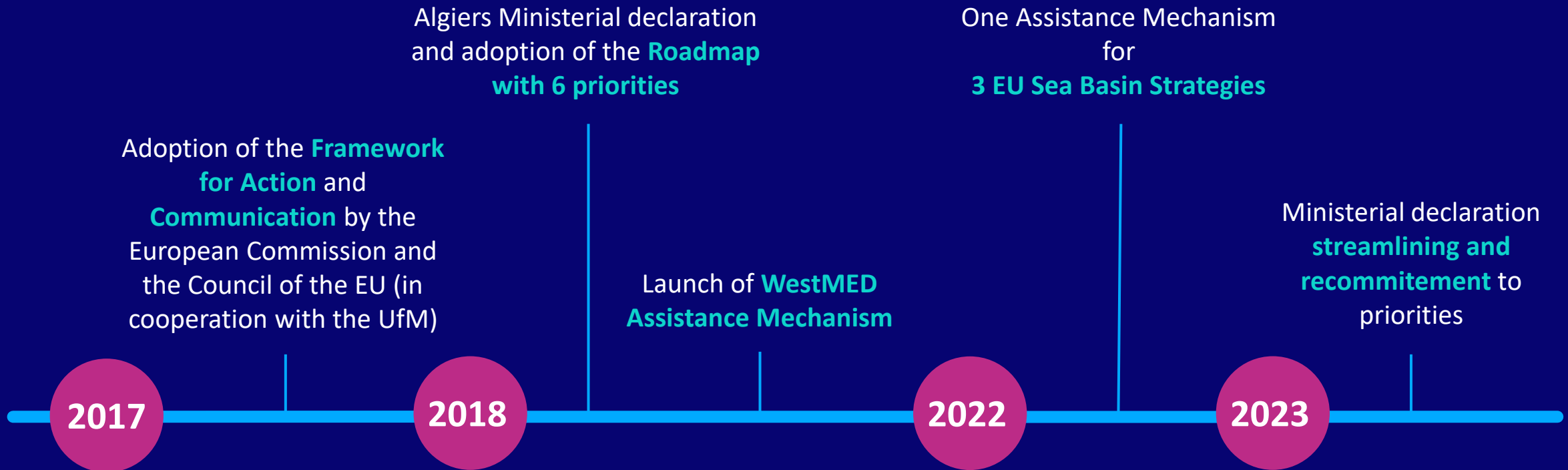


The Initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean

WestMED Initiative

An innovative cooperation instrument between countries, regions and people
of the western Mediterranean to facilitate the blue economy

TIMELINE



ASSISTANCE MECHANISM

WESTMED
blue economy initiative

ATLANTIC STRATEGY
Supporting the Atlantic Action Plan

**Common Maritime Agenda
for the Black Sea**



The Assistance Mechanism is led by Ecorys with AETS and PwC as consortium partners



WESTMED

blue economy initiative

OBJECTIVES



**A safer and more secure
maritime space**



**A smart and resilient
blue economy**



**A better governance
of the sea**

PRIORITIES



**Maritime safety
and security**



**Environment, biodiversity
and climate change**



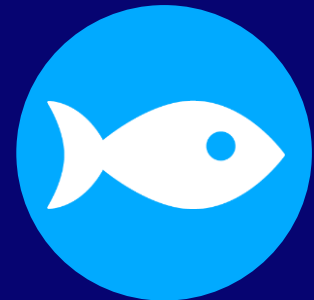
**Maritime clusters
and networks**



**Skills development
and circulation**



**Sustainable tourism, transport and
fight against pollution**



**Fisheries and
Aquaculture**

STREAMLINED PRIORITIES Ministerial declaration: Malta 2023

On 23 June 2023, ministers and high-level representatives from the 10 WestMED countries met in Malta with representatives from the European Commission and the Union for the Mediterranean to reassess and update the priorities set out in the WestMED Framework for Action, as supported by the WestMED initiative.

In particular:

- Supporting the transition of shipping, green shipping and ports to carbon neutrality and zero emissions,
- Turning ports into energy centres
- Innovative and restorative aquaculture and fisheries
- Coastal and maritime eco-tourism.



SOME RESULTS

115

Projects Supported
(and supporting)

45

Projects proposals
awarded for funding

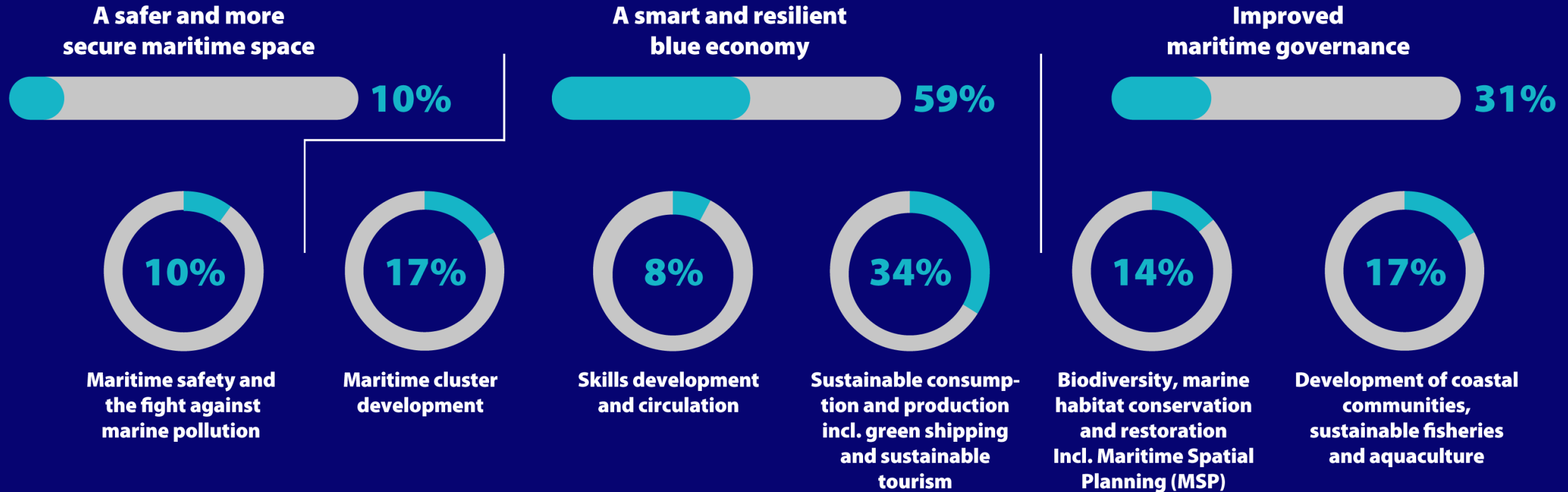
€ 78.1 M

invested in the
sustainable blue economy



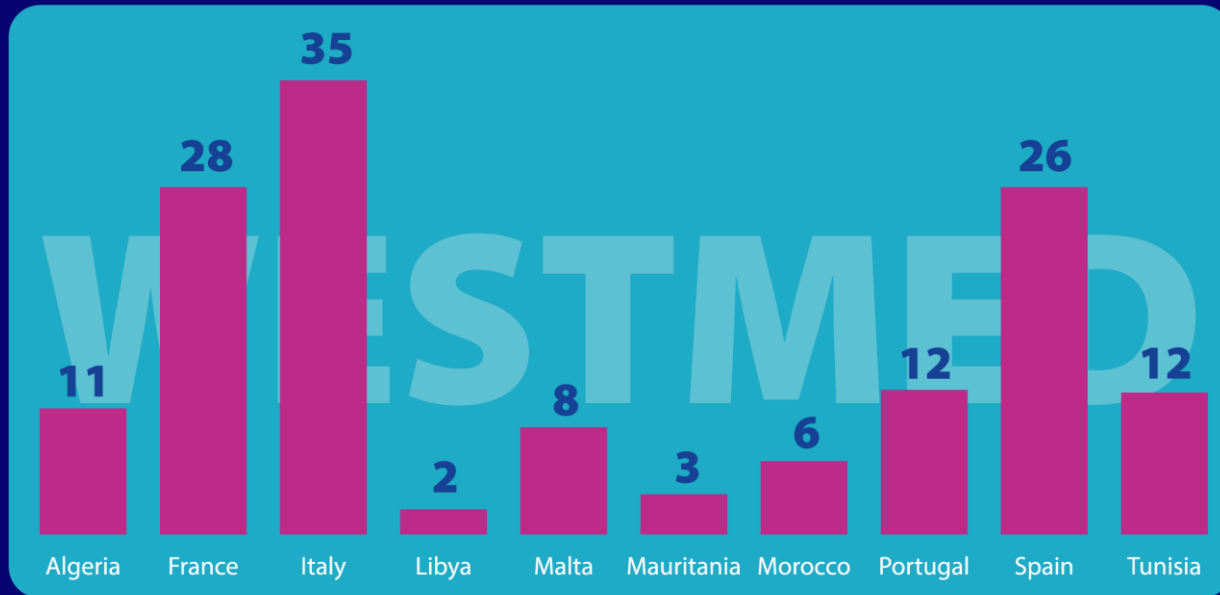
SOME RESULTS

Approved and funded projects/ breakdown by WestMED Goals & Priorities



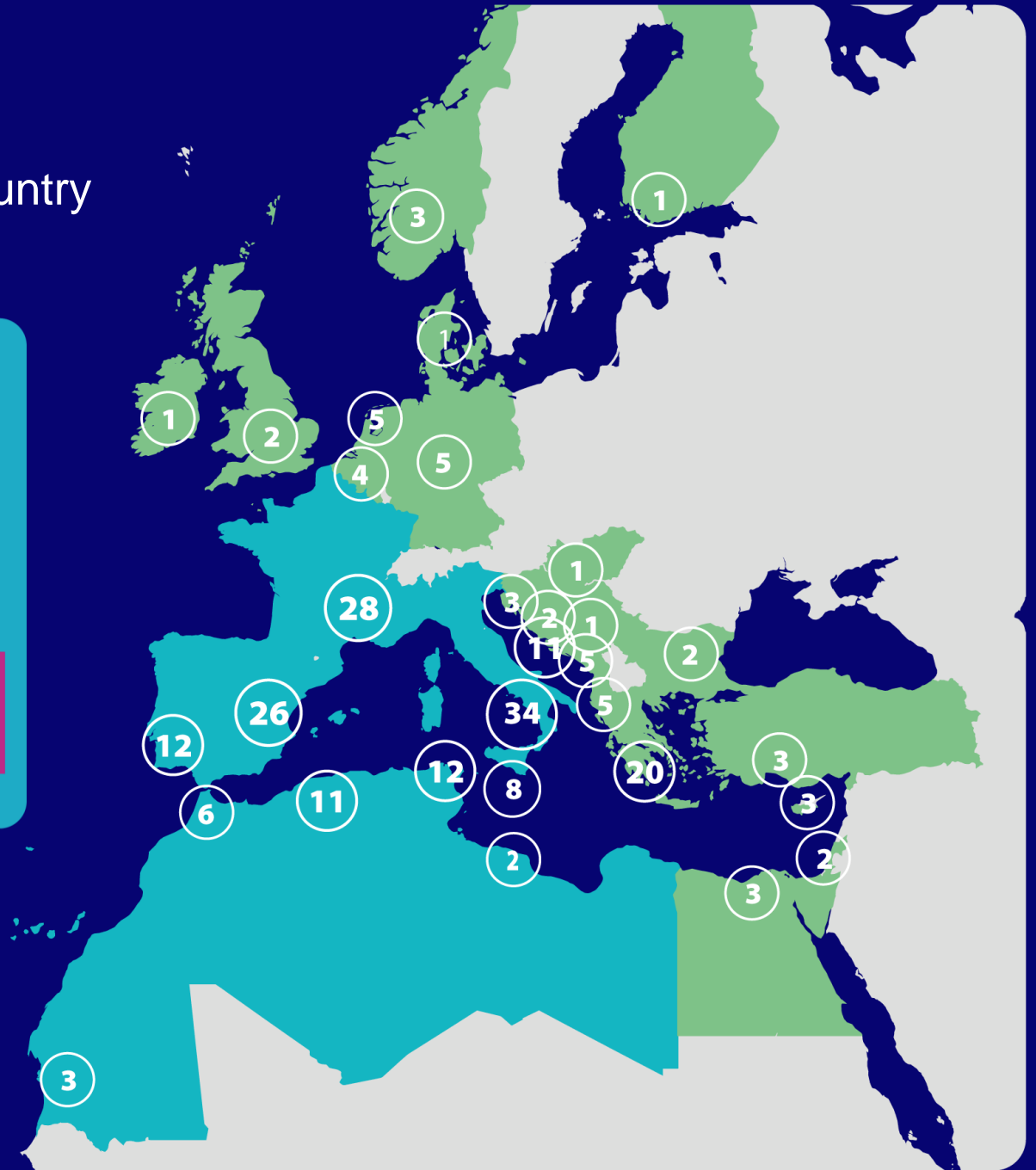
SOME RESULTS

Approved and funded projects/ breakdown by Country



21

Non-WestMED countries also benefitted
Notably Greece (20) and Croatia (11)



SOME RESULTS



Approx **50**/ year WestMED branded events – incl. Stakeholder conferences, Hackathons and Ministerials



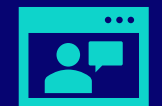
3 countries that have been directly supported with their national maritime/ blue economy strategy (Algeria, Italy, Tunisia - with Libya ongoing)



2 National maritime cluster created with the support of WestMED (Maritime Clusters Alliance) in Mauritania and Libya (assisted by the Italian National Hub). Others are being developed in southern partner countries



2.750 tweets/posts related to news, (funding) calls and events on the website and X (formerly Twitter)



11.4K views on YouTube | **1.670** followers on X (Twitter) | **24.300** website visits/ year (2023)

STRUCTURE

Steering Committee

EC/ UfM/ CINEA/ National Coordinators/ Consortium

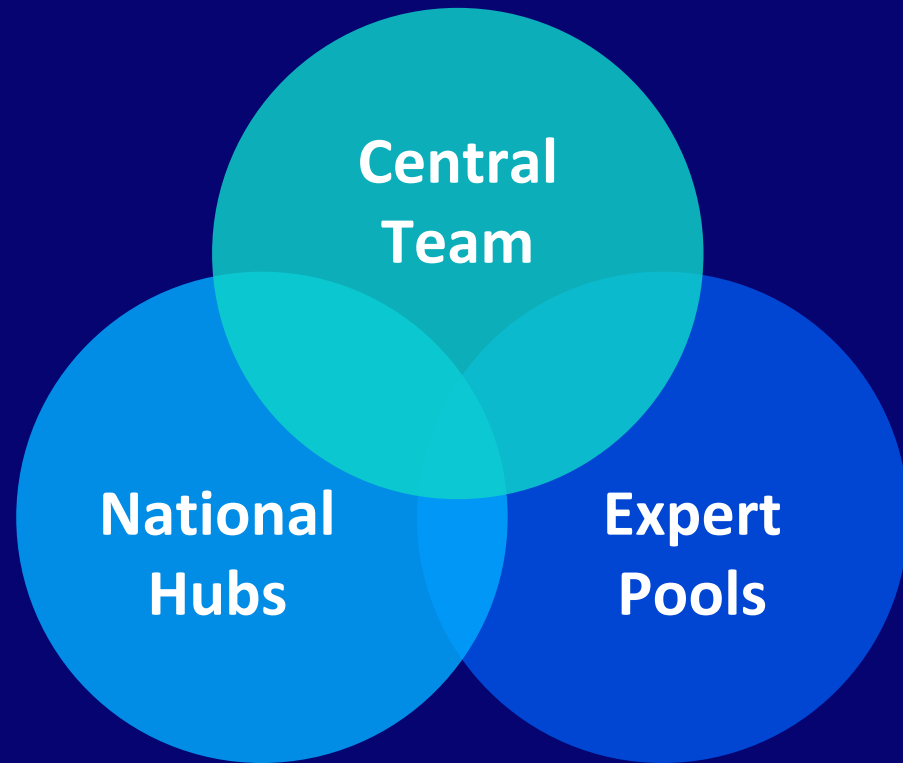
Overall management

CINEA/ EC/ Consortium

Operational Management

Consortium

TEAM



29+ Experts



10 NATIONAL HUBS/ - CENTRES

- Assist blue projects in their search for partners, funding (EU) and capitalization
- Lead discussions on blue themes with stakeholders for sustainable transitions
- Strengthen blue policies at local, national, regional and European levels for greater synergies



Libyan National Coordinator

Ali Shagruni



Libyan National Hub

Masauda
Abuarosha

libya@westmed-initiative.ec.europa.eu



الكتلة البحرية الليبية
LIBYAN MARITIME CLUSTER

WE CAN HELP...

If you have a concrete project, to...

- Identify possible funding opportunities
- Connect with possible partners across the National Hub Network
- Structure your project(idea)
- Provide argued proofreading of technical dossiers and budget proposals for official submissions

If you have expertise, to...

- Connect you with possible projects across the WestMED National Hub Network
- Provide you with a platform to help shape future WestMED developments (stakeholder meetings)

FOR

- Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs)
- Public institutions
- Academia
- Research centres
- Entrepreneurs
- Local communities
- Maritime clusters

IN-PERSON



VIRTUAL



ASSISTANCE





SOME SUPPORTED PROJECTS

SUPPORTED PROJECTS

Maritime safety and the fight against marine pollution



WestMED support | Example funded project

TOUMALI

Prevent Tourism Marine Litter
in Northern Africa

Development of coastal communities, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture



WestMED support | Example funded project

FIUFRA

Fight IUU (Illegal, Unreported
and Unregulated) Fishing
by creating a regional academy

Biodiversity, marine habitat conservation and restoration



WestMED support | Example funded project

ARIBIOTECH

Process organic waste found in the
marine environment to produce new
products using blue biotechnology

SUPPORTED PROJECTS

Sustainable consumption and production



WestMED support | Example Awarded project
GALATEA

Focus on high potential Blue Growth domains: Smart Port, Smart Ship, Smart shipyard and Maritime Surveillance

Maritime cluster development



WestMED support | Example Awarded project
MEDBAN

Build an innovative acceleration ecosystem Based on Med ports as Environmental, Social, Governmental Blue Economy Hubs

Skills development and circulation



WestMED support | Example Awarded project
MARMED

Develop and implement Cluster management e Educational programs and training

The background of the image consists of several Euro banknotes, including 50 and 100 Euro notes, which are slightly out of focus. A semi-transparent blue filter is applied over the entire image. The text "SOME" is positioned in the upper left area of the image.

SOME

FUNDING PROGRAMS

CONTINUOUS SCREENING (non exhaustive)

CALLS/ GRANTS/ TENDERS/ PROPOSALS

CINEA	European Climate Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency
DG MARE	Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
EMFAF	European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund
LIFE	EU Funding programme for the Environment and Climate Action
Horizon Europe	Horizon 2020/ Research and Innovation Programme
Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership	SBEP enables research and innovations that contribute to the transition towards a climate-neutral, sustainable and productive Blue Economy
Cost Action	European Cooperation in Science & Technology
ENI CBC MED	European Neighbourhood Instrument/ Cross Border Cooperation/ Mediterranean
INTERREG	Interreg Next MED, Interreg Euro-MED
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
COSME	Europe's programme for small and medium-sized enterprises
CEF	Connecting Europe Facility (transport, energy and digital projects)
ERASMUS +	EU programme for education, training, youth and sport
CHAFEA	Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency

An aerial photograph of a vast aquaculture facility, likely for salmon farming, in the ocean. The water is a deep blue-grey color. Numerous circular pens, made of dark mesh or netting, are arranged in a grid-like pattern across the water's surface. The pens vary in size and are spaced out across the frame. The text "STAKEHOLDER THEMATIC GROUPS" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font on the left side of the image.

STAKEHOLDER THEMATIC GROUPS

THEMATIC STAKEHOLDER GROUPS



SHIPPING



green shipping and ports



TOURISM



sustainable tourism



AQUACULTURE



AquaWest - sustainable aquaculture



MSP

Maritime Spatial Planning
Community of Practice



CLUSTERS



maritime clusters alliance

GREEN SHIPPING AND PORTS

- **Three EMFAF projects** awarded funding (Green Marine Med, POWER4MED and CALLMEBLUE)
- Follow-up to CETMO reports: The 'Centre d'études des transports pour la Méditerranée occidentale') encouraging cooperation related to transport in the Western Mediterranean
 - **Develop the concept of "connectivity"** (from east to west and towards southern countries)
- **Main priorities:**
 - Technology chain observatory
 - Ports as energy communities
 - Fleet renewal and refitting
- **Other emerging topics: innovation in green public procurement in ports, sustainability in small ports** Synergies permanentes with REMPEC, MEDPORTS, CETMO, technology platform for maritime transport (Waterborne transports)
- **Synergies between WestMED and the Atlantic sea** within the framework of Pillar 1: Atlantic ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy



POWER4MED

local emPOWERment of fuel
transition **FOR** a green
MEDiterranean



WESTMED ASSISTANCE

- Matchmake among stakeholders
- Support partnership building
- Identify funding calls for project proposals

COUNTRIES

Italy
Algeria
Spain
Egypt

Türkiye
Libya (associated)

BUDGET

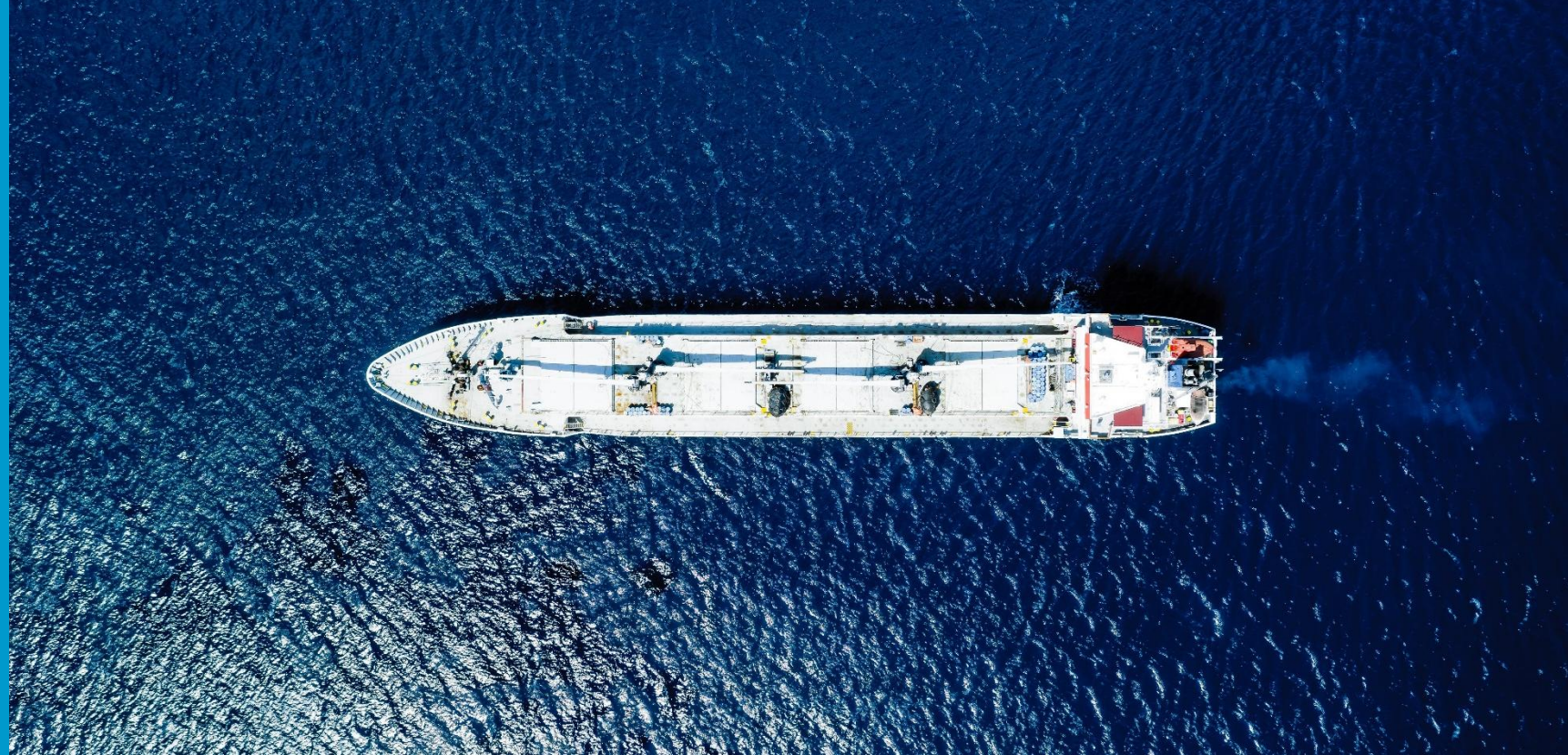
€ 798.043

SOURCE DE FINANCEMENT

EMFAF

Green Marine Med

Mediterranean Green Shipping Network: Linking Ports, Industries, Investment and Innovation for Monitoring and Technology Foresight on Green Shipping in the Mediterranean



WESTMED ASSISTANCE

- Identify/ shaping proposal ideas
- Identify funding calls
- Matchmake among stakeholders
 - Support partnership building

COUNTRIES

Spain	Türkiye
France	Israel
Italy	

BUDGET

€ 1.179.443

SOURCE DE FINANCEMENT

EMFAF

EMFAF Regional Flagship call 2023: Sustainable transport and ports in the Mediterranean

- **GreenMED** - Green Shipping Pathways Towards a Clean Energy Transition in the Mediterranean
- Effectively **support green shipping efforts** in the Mediterranean Sea basin, by **promoting plausible scenario-based decarbonisation pathways**.
- **Comprehension and integration of innovative technologies**, selected on future potentials and various economic, social and environmental criteria. Regional ship energy demands, the fuel supply chains in both shores of the Mediterranean Sea, and the variety of emerging green shipping technologies will be considered.
- **Establishment of a decarbonisation hub: the Mediterranean Sustainable Shipping Observatory (MSSO)**, development stakeholders' network & building knowledge capacity.
- Decarbonisation pathways and options -> **recommendations for policy making and informed investment decisions**.
- **Duration:** 24 months - **EU contribution:** € 740.868

2. EMFAF-2023-BlueCareers

State of Play

- 36 Proposals received – 8 granted
- Project Starting Dates 1 September 2023
- Kick-off meeting in Brussels 22 September 2023

- Sea basins/areas covered: North Sea, Baltic Sea, Atlantic, Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, Outermost regions (indirectly) and EU in general.

BLUE PORTS project

BLUE PORTS	Blue careers in net zero energy ports
Target Sea Basins	Mediterranean and Black Sea
Concept	Aims to develop a new, certified, training program for trainers and final users (professionals and students) to enhance digitalization and greening of port activities.
Activities proposed etc	Set up 'Trainings of the trainers' schemes, ensure dissemination of the most recent available knowledge, technology and practices; design and launch the virtual learning environment; eLearning platform for distance learning and handbook in 5 languages, deliver a mutually acknowledged certification scheme to keep high-quality standards for technologies and policies towards zero emission for ports at EU level and a roadmap for the implementation across the Mediterranean and Black Sea.
Consortium	8 partners (4 EL also coordinator, 1 ES, 1 IT, 1 GE and 1 TN)
EU contribution and duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 937 327 EUR• 24 months

LIFE4MECA: a wake up call for the Mediterranean Supporting Maritime Emission Control Areas

WP1 – Project management, and coordination

PHASE 1

WP2 – Preparatory actions

- Substandard ships
- ATLECA assessment
- Knowledge gathering
- IMO, EMSA

PHASE 2

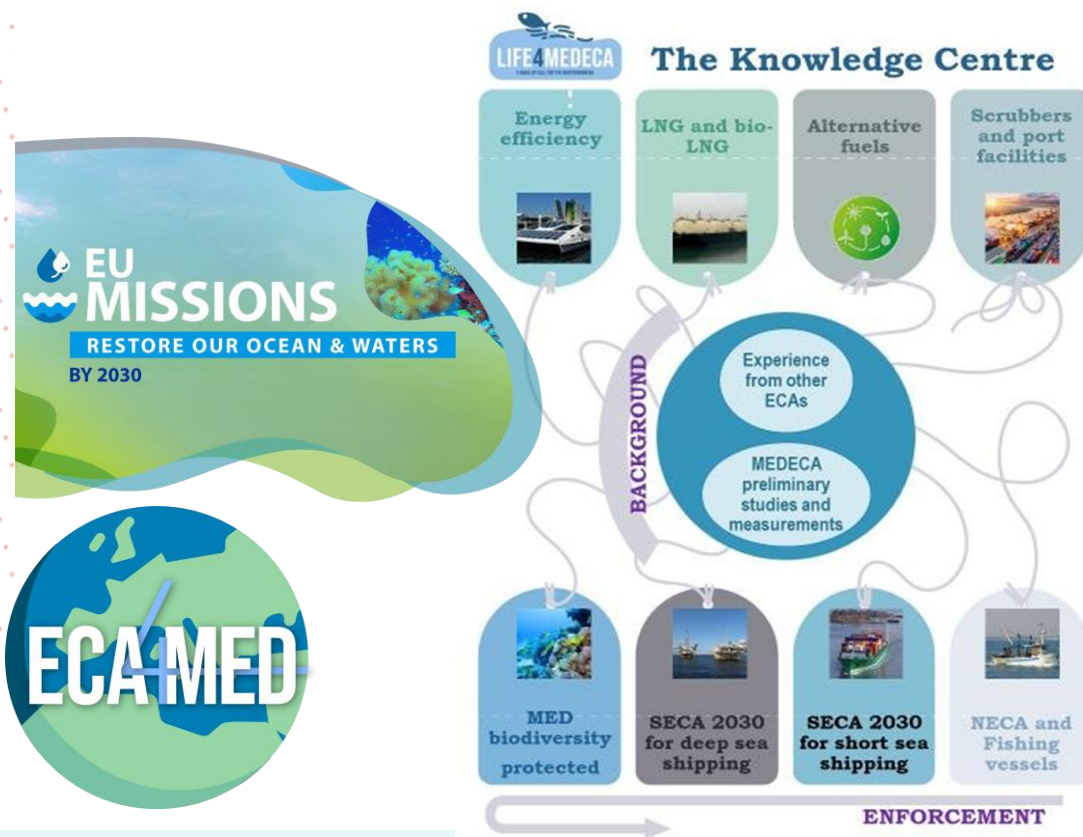
WP3 – Capacity building & support

- Expertise to MEDECA
- ATLECA scenarios
- Access to finance
- IMO, EMSA

PHASE 3

WP4 – Sustainability, replication and exploitation of LIFE4MEDECA+ results

WP5 - Dissemination, communication, stakeholders & networking



S3 partnership: blue economy



7 Regional Bodies
12 Businesses & Clusters
4 Research & Innovation
3 Civil Society
Organisations

AQUAWEST

Promote and accelerate cooperation across the Western Mediterranean to generate innovative solutions for the development of economically and socially sustainable aquaculture

- Launched in 2021
- Led by WestMED's Algerian National Hub
- Main objective: to promote knowledge sharing, facilitate policy development, encourage cooperation between stakeholders and identify funding
- Explore further synergies/opportunities (e.g. SwitchMed in Tunisia, AquaBioTech group, NewTechAqua project, etc.)
- Synergy opportunities with the recently launched Technical Group on Aquaculture in the Black Sea basin
- Synergies with the FAO/GFCM and the EU Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism



MARITIME CLUSTERS ALLIANCE

- Launched in 2021
- Led by Pôle Mer Méditerranée and coordinated by WestMED's National Hubs from Mauritania and Tunisia
- Promotes dialogue between Mediterranean maritime clusters: south south (Tunisian Maritime Cluster) and north-south (Blue Italian Growth), as well as attracting investments (Forum Oceano)
- Focuses on project development, cluster management training, as well as creating project proposals
- 3 projects supported and awarded funding in 2023: MARMED, MEDBAN and CALL ME BLUE



MEANING OF CLUSTERS

- Clusters have been originally defined as “geographically proximate group of interconnected companies, associated institutions and research bodies, in turns linked by commonalities and complementarities” (Porter, 1998).
- Clusters are strongly related to the social and economic history, and therefore to the productive vocation of the territories (historical role of large « national » companies;
- The form of aggregation that a Cluster may adopt are various (association, consortium, federation, foundation, academic centre, ONG etc).
- Transition from the sectoral to the challenge concept.
- Clusters manager may respond to different profiles, according to the goals and the activities of the aggregation (advocacy capacities, recognized sectoral leadership, R&I stimulation, business developer, project manager). He has to know the territory, the sector(s), the international contest.
- 3 main profiles of Cluster Manager: R&I (academic) leader, experienced manager, “animator” (mostly coming from the professional bodies).



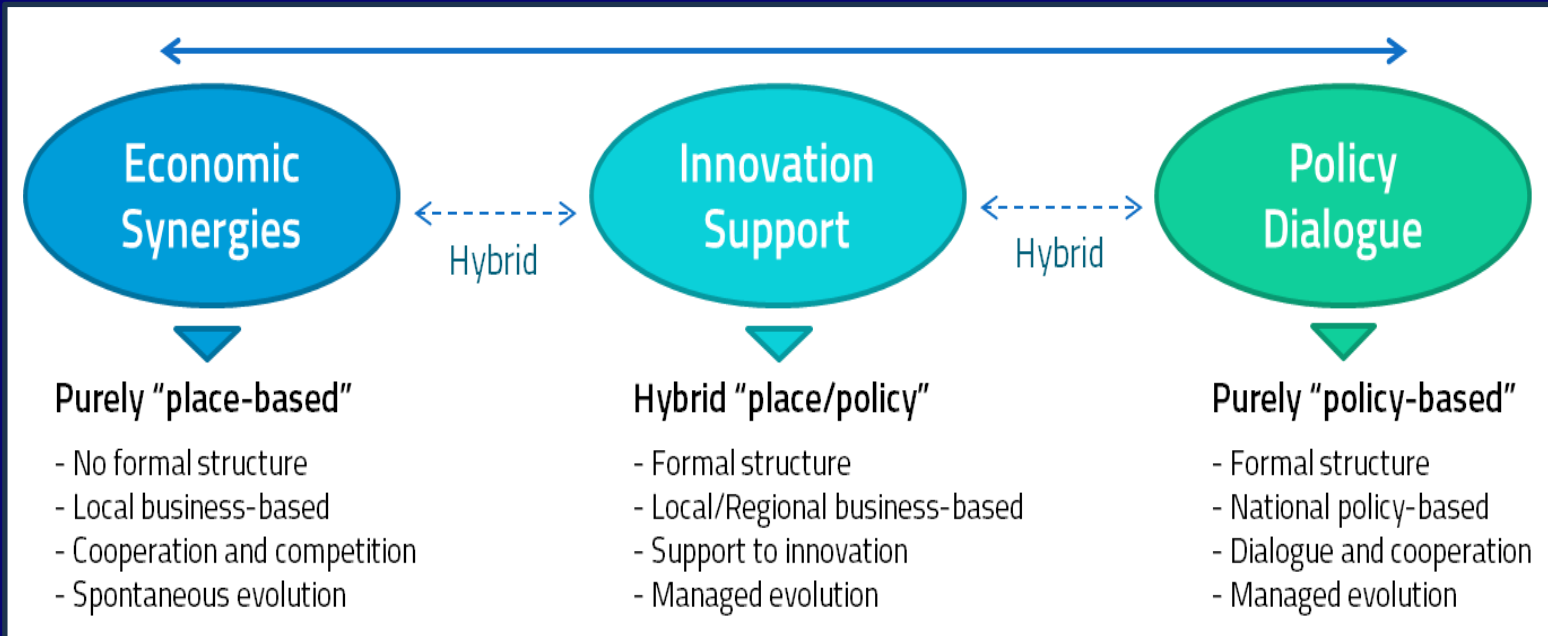
CLUSTERS: TYPOLOGIES AND OBJECTIVES

- Three ideal types have appeared in literature and practices, with an important role for “hybrid” forms.
- These hybrid forms are structured groupings aimed at meeting local needs in terms of innovation, knowledge, financing, etc.
- The development and analysis mainly focused on these (note: existing practices are less clearly attributable to a model)

Clusters:

‘Geographically close groups of interconnected companies, associated institutions and research organisations, linked by commonalities and complementarities’.

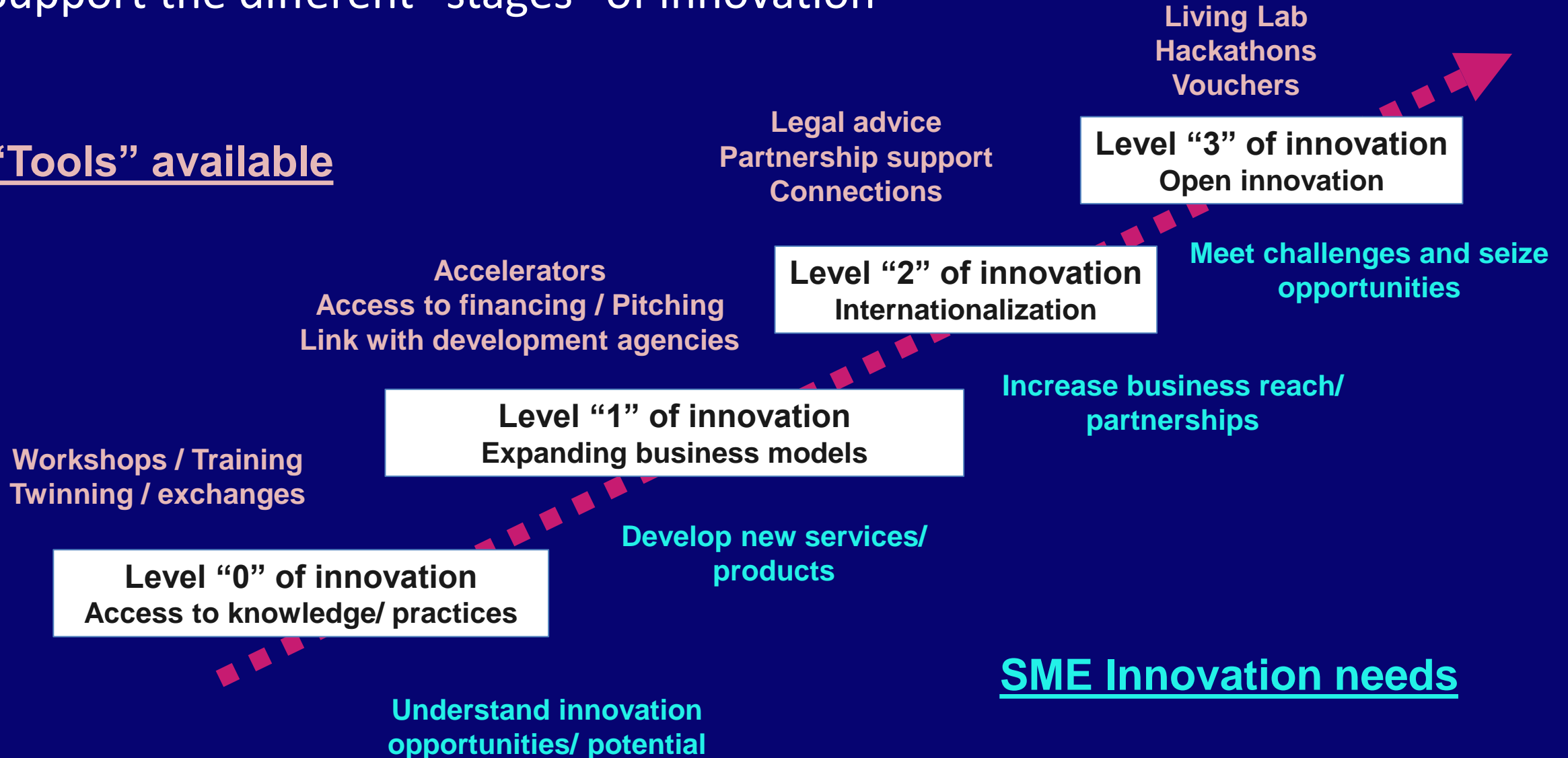
Porter, 1998).



POTENTIALS

Support the different “stages” of innovation

“Tools” available



MARITIME CLUSTERS

AN IDEAL “BROKER” FOR LOCAL SMEs

Bring together and have direct access to a range of local stakeholders

Local and regional authorities

Fishery and
aquaculture

Research Centres

Marine Renewable Energies

**Maritime
Clusters**

Tourism and
leisure

SMEs/ Large companies

Transport and logistics

Port Authorities

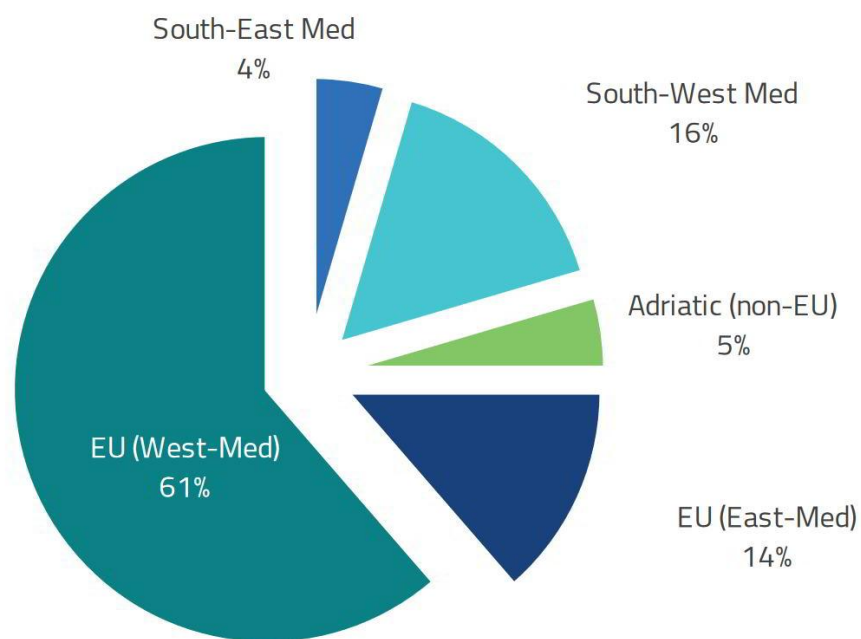
Understanding local value chains and business ecosystems in the SME sector

WestMED

Developed but still needing support

Potential to be further exploited

An effective “platform” for stakeholders is already available



Source: UfM (2019) – Maritime Clusters in the Mediterranean Region

Main characteristics

- June 2021: official launch
- Maritime clusters - strategic actions
- Geographic scope: priority to the north and west of the Mediterranean (but open to clusters of the Eastern part of the Mediterranean)

Main activities

- Dialogue between clusters: Pôle Mer Méditerranée (FR)
- South-South Cooperation: Tunisian Maritime Cluster
- North-South Capacity Building: Italian Blue Growth
- Investment attraction: Forum Oceano (PT)



Expanding membership

- Mauritania
- Libya
- Morocco?

MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING

- The Community of Practice (CoP) on Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) for the Mediterranean was launched on January 26, 2023 by CINEA and DG MARE
- The main objective: establish permanent cross-border dialogue between MSP practitioners (i.e. planners, researchers), to strengthen cooperation between the north and south of the Mediterranean
- Ongoing series of thematic webinars (check European MSP Platform - website)

maritime-spatial-planning.ec.europa.eu/msp-resources/med-msp-cop

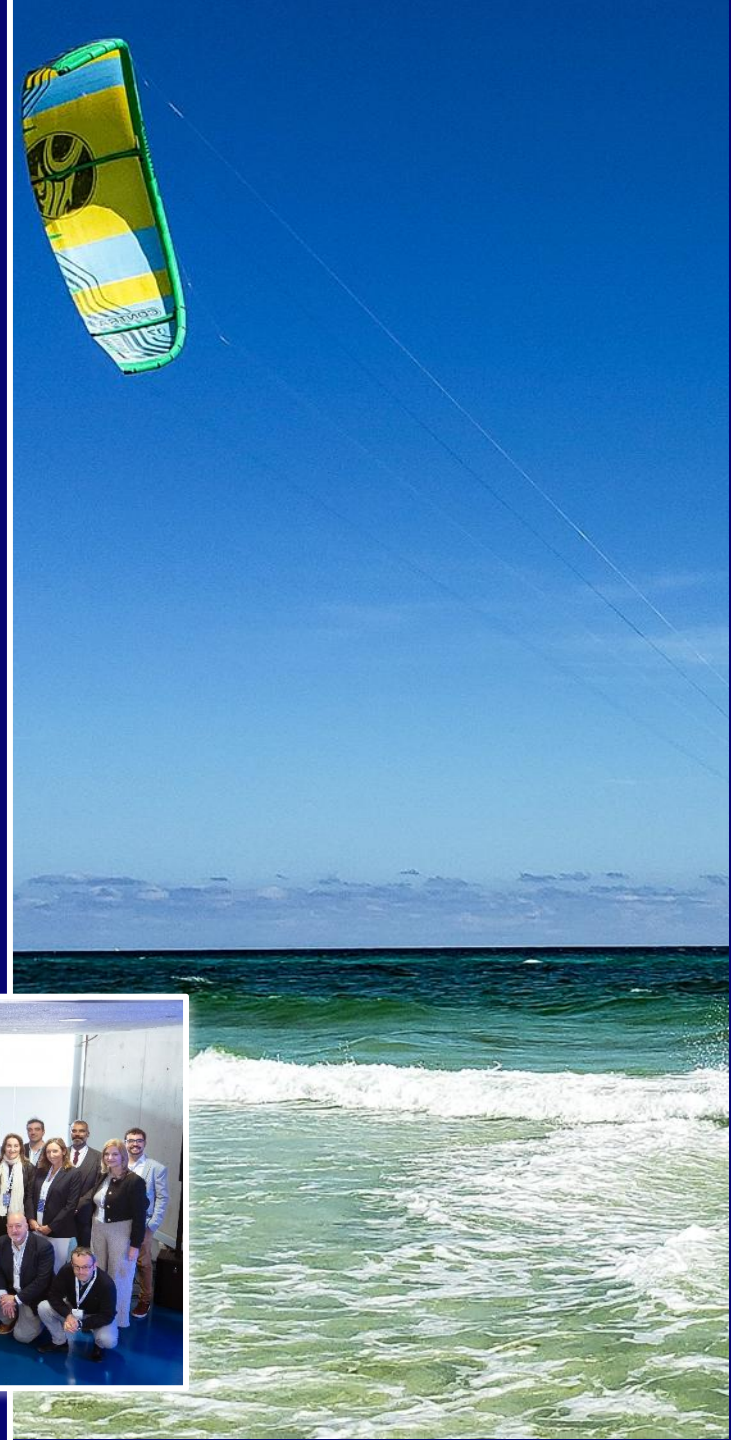


NEW STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Sustainable Coastal Tourism

- The TG serves as an **informal FORUM** where participants can discuss **their needs to advance towards a sustainable tourism within the Western Mediterranean** around the topics already set at EU level with regards to **green transition, digitalization, governance and skills**.
- This TG also focuses on addressing other **policy and regulation topics** that can **help non-EU countries adapt and develop these sustainable tourism practices**.
- **Led by the Spanish National hub and supported by the Maltese National Hub.**

Launched
Sun&Blue Congress, 21 November 2024



STAKEHOLDER EVENTS

(National and international)

Conferences, Hackathons, webinars, back to back events



Knowledge exchange | Project idea development | Networking

WESTMED BEST PROJECT AWARDS

- 4 categories
- A trophy and certificate
- Extra support and promotion
- Next edition 2025 | Watch the website and X (Twitter)



WESTMED 2023
BEST PROJECT AWARDS
★★★★★

[Submit your project](#)



Winner of the 2021 WestMED Award
'Blue Skills and Circulation'

“

The WestMED award was an acceleration springboard for our hub of innovation, apart from the great support we had and the visibility among potential Mediterranean partners.



Nesrine Ziad
Cofounder Leancubator

We are very honored by the trust and recognition that has been given to us allowing us to take part in important consortiums.

WESTMED
blue economy initiative



National Hub

ITALY



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