

Charting the Path towards a Sustainable Blue Economy: The Mediterranean Leading the Way

Context

- The Mediterranean boasts a dynamic and diverse Sustainable Blue Economy (SBE) community, strengthened by the collective ambition and cooperation of its stakeholders. Over the past decade, momentum across the sectors and activities of the SBE in the Mediterranean has been particularly strong, building on the wave of commitments marked by the 2nd UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy, adopted by the 43 Union for the Mediterranean Euro- Med countries in early 2021.
By now, the Declaration, the related Roadmap on SBE, and the associated set-up for its implementation stand as a model of action-oriented, integrated, and multisectoral cooperation across a wide range of sectors and priorities of joint interest, and represent an extraordinary effort by the Euro-Med countries to continue raising the level of collective ambition at Mediterranean level.
- Translating political commitments into impactful actions requires inclusive participation and targeted financial strategies. The Mediterranean's coordinated efforts integrate public and private sector engagement and innovative financing mechanisms as essential tools to generate tangible benefits for people, economies, and ecosystems, serving as a global model for replicable success.
- Recognizing the value and potential of the activities promoted under the sustainable blue economy in the Mediterranean, a close alignment with funding programs and IFIs have progressively built a critical and diversified mass of opportunities for the entire basin. Among others, a specific multi-donor and multi-partner financial instrument launched with the goal of mobilizing investments - the Blue Mediterranean Partnership (BMP) - has been created for the South and Eastern Mediterranean, supported by UfM DG MARE, EBRD, EIB, AFD, KfW, CDP and donor countries. Counting with Egypt, Jordan, Morocco among the initial beneficiary countries, the Partnership is open to the wider region. By ensuring solid prefeasibility and feasibility studies on SBE, the Fund will act as a key conduit to unlock and mobilize public and private financing, enabling large-scale SBE investments in line with the ten priorities of the 2021 UfM Ministerial.
- By fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships and aligning strategies with SDG 14 (and many more), the European Green Deal, BBNJ, the outcomes of the UN COPs on climate change and biodiversity, the UN Ocean Decade, the UN Decade for Ecosystem restoration, the international Plastic treaty currently in-the-making and more, the Mediterranean sets a benchmark for sustainable, inclusive, scalable, and impactful blue economy initiatives addressing the 'blue and green' transition; the decarbonization and circular economy; protection and restoration of the marine and coastal ecosystems; and leveling the playing field on fairer, more resilient, and healthier livelihoods across the basin.

Objectives

1. **Promote Multi-Stakeholders Governance and Cross-Sectoral Policy Integration:** Strengthen the alignment of Sustainable Blue Economy (SBE) initiatives with global commitments (BBNJ, UNFCCC and CBD, Plastic Treaty and more), ensuring an integrated approach, policy coherence and participatory mechanisms.
 2. **Acceleration of SBE investments:** Make specific SBE projects bankable and ready to be funded by major international financial institutions based on coordinated partnership among IFIs and donors.
 3. **Catalyze Replication in Other Regions of the World:** Showcase the Mediterranean as a leader in sustainable blue economy models, offering actionable solutions for other regions in other regions of the world.
 4. **Accelerate Resilience and Ecosystem Restoration:** Prioritize SBE solutions that enhance resilience to climate change impacts, aligned with COP29, and ecosystems restoration with policy tools such as marine spatial planning (MSP), thus addressing COP16 commitments.
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Moderator / Master of ceremonies: Mr Chris Burns, journalist

14h00-14h20 - |High-Level Session: Welcome and Opening remarks

Opening

- EU Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans, His Excellency (H.E.) Mr Cóstas Kadis
 - High-Level Jordan Co-Presidency - His Excellency (H.E.) Prof. Aiman Soleiman, Commissioner for Environmental Affairs and Protected Areas at the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA)
 - Third Vice-President of the Government of Spain and Minister for the Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge, Her Excellency (H.E.) Ms Sara Aagesen
 - *Signing ceremony of the Spanish contribution to the Blue Mediterranean Partnership*
 - UfM Secretary-General, His Excellency (H.E.) Amb. Nasser Kamel
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14:20-15:05 | Session 1: Mobilizing Blue Finance (UfM Panel 1)

Key Themes:

- **Blue Investments and Blue Entrepreneurship (Panel)**
 - *The Blue Mediterranean Partnership (BMP) - First BMP Investment Projects in Egypt, Jordan and Morocco*
 - *BlueInvest and BlueInvest Africa*
 - EC Directorate General on Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) - Ms Delilah Al Khudhairi, Director for Maritime Policy and Blue Economy
 - European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) - Ms Camilla Otto, Director, Donor Partnerships
 - European Investment Bank (EIB) - Mr Jasper Personn, Head of division, Co-financing and Partnerships
 - French Development Agency (AFD) - Ms Veronique Voulard-Aneini, Deputy Executive Director of Geographies
- **Featured grant programs (Lightning Round)**
 - *Interreg EuroMed*, Ms Sophie Scarvelis, Head of Project Unit, Interreg Euro-MED Joint Secretariat
 - *Interreg Next Med*- Mr Aldo Puleo, Program Manager
 - *EMFAF-funded Project GreenMarineMed* - Ms Lisa Simone de Grunt, Director of Programmes, World Ocean Council

15:05-15:55 | Session 2: Innovation and technology as catalyst and accelerator for Sustainable Blue Economy

- **Innovation and technology across maritime sectors**
 - **Ministerial priorities (Panel 1)**
 - ✓ **Blue skills, careers, and employment**
 - *Portugal* - Ms Marisa Lameiras da Silva, Director-General for Maritime Policy and WestMed Co-Chair
 - *Algeria* - Ms Ziad R. Nesrine, Co-Founder, Leancubator
 - ✓ **Aquaculture and Fisheries**
 - *Morocco* - Ms Meryem Lhamzr, Senior Engineer, National Agency for the Development of Aquaculture (ANDA)
 - *Malta* - Mr Gilbert Balzan, Director Fisheries, Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture
 - **Ministerial priorities (Panel 2)**
 - ✓ **Maritime Clusters**

- *Tunisia*- MsEmnaSohlobji, President, Tunisian Maritime Cluster
- *Italy* - Ms Laurence Martin, Secretary-General, Federazione del Mare
- ✓ **Marine Renewable Energies**
 - *Spain* - Mr Juan Ramón Ayuso Ortiz, Head of Wind & Marine Energy Department, Institute for Energy Diversification and Saving, Ministry for the Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge
 - *WWF Med* - Mr Mauro Randone, Coordinator
- **Ministerial priorities**
 - ✓ **Decarbonization of the maritime sector - (Panel 3)**
 - *Greece* - Mr Antonis Avranas, Maritime Transport Attaché, Permanent Representation of Greece to the EU and Lt. Cmdr.(HCG) (Legal) Ms Elizabeth Batsara, Ministry of Maritime Affairs & Insular Policy, Directorate for Shipping
 - *Egypt*- Admiral Tarek Abdallah, President of Maritime Transport Sector
 - *Türkiye*- Ms Özlem Mulun Akpınar, Coordinator of the Maritime Environment Department, Directorate General for Maritime Affairs of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure
 - *France* - Mr Robin Guillon, Head of European and International Affairs, Port of Marseille
 - ✓ **Pollution, restoration, and circularity (Lightning Round)**
 - *BLUE MISSION MED* - Ms Elisabetta Balzi, Head of Unit 'Ocean, Seas and Waters', EC Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD)
 - MedECC - Dr Katarzyna Marini, Lead Science Officer, MedECC Secretariat
 - *Marine Litter/Plastic Busters* - Prof. Cristina Fossi, Professor at the University of Siena

Closing of the session: Video of Plastic Busters

Key Outcomes

- The Mediterranean as replicable model for SBE: governance, technical and financial mechanisms and solutions in action and in line with the international commitments (SDGs; COPs; BBNJ; Plastic Treaty; etc.).
- Increased financial commitments through BMP and other mechanisms.
- Strengthened international, regional and local partnerships as part of an integrated, participatory, multisectoral approach.