

**WestMED Maritime Initiative – Maritime Clusters Alliance:**

# **Achievements and Evolutions Towards a Richer Panorama of Sustainable Blue Economy Initiatives**

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## **Meeting Minute**

June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Hybrid

## Maritime Clusters Alliance – Achievements and Evolutions Towards a Richer Panorama of Sustainable Blue Economy Initiatives

### Attendees

Name	Organisation	Email
Daniele Bosio	Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, WestMED National Coordinator	daniele.bosio@esteri.it
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Adriana Salazar Olivan	Union for the Mediterranean	adriana.salazar@ufmsecretariat.org
Shaun Patrick Ebejer	Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects, WestMED Initiative co-Presidency	shaun-patrick.ebejer.1@gov.mt
Hamadi BABA HAMADI	President Mauritanian Maritime Cluster	hbhamadi@gmail.com
Emna Sohlobji	Cluster Maritime Tunisien	sohlobji.e@gmail.com
Giovanni Caprino	Cluster Blue Italian Growth	giovanni.caprino@cetena.it

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Laurence Martin	Federazione del Mare, ENMC	segretariato@federazionedelmare.it
Antonio Novo Guerrero	European Clusters Alliance	Antonio.Novo@idia.es
Axelle Salvage	ENMC	axelle.salvage@enmc.eu
Walter Wassallo	Blue Marina Awards	waltermassallo75@gmail.com
Thanos Smanis	WMAM	thanos.smanis@westmed- initiative.ec.europa.eu
Leonardo Manzari	NH Italy	italy@westmed-initiative.ec.europa.eu

## Maritime Clusters Alliance – Achievements and Evolutions Towards a Richer Panorama of Sustainable Blue Economy Initiatives

### Online attendees

Name	Organisation	Email
Manuel Pleguezuelo	European Commission - DG MARE	Manuel.PLEGUEZUELO-ALONSO@ec.europa.eu
Anja Detant	CINEA	Anja.DETANT@ec.europa.eu
Mario Mattioli	Federazione del Mare	mario.mattioli@scini.com

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# Agenda

Date	Time	Title	Presenter / Lead
June 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	9,00	Registration	Leonardo Manzari
	9,30	Welcome greetings:	Daniele Bosio, Luca Palazzo
	9,35	Introduction	Manuel Pleguezuelo, Adriana Salazar Olivan, Shaun Patrick Ebejer
	9,50	Main Achievements of the WestMED Maritime Clusters Alliance and its members	Anja Detant, Hamadi BABA HAMADI, Emna Sohlobji, Ruben Eiras, Laurence Martin, Thanos Smanis

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	Established cooperation agreements and synergies	Antonio Novo Guerrero, Axelle Salvage, Walter Wassallo
11,30	Open discussions about further progresses on the main goals of the WM MCA	Thanos Smanis
12,30	Closing	Giovanni Caprino, Mario Mattioli

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## **Maritime Clusters Alliance – Achievements and Evolutions Towards a Richer Panorama of Sustainable Blue Economy Initiatives**

### **1 Meeting purpose and Objectives**

With the support of WestMED and the Italian national clusters CTN BIG and Federazione del Mare, objective of this meeting has been to make an intermediate balance of the cooperation among maritime clusters of the WM MCA after two years: various submitted and awarded projects; a remarkable impact on the southern shore dynamics, thanks to the proactivity of the Cluster Maritime Tunisien and the establishment of the Mauritanian Marine and Maritime Cluster; the Italian-Portuguese cooperation; the inclusive approach of CTN BIG and Federazione del Mare towards the Mediterranean ecosystem.

### **2 Main Meeting Minutes**

#### **2.1 Welcome greetings and Introduction**

Daniele Bosio and Luca Palazzo, WM NCs for Italy have remarked the importance of this Alliance towards the creation of a real Mediterranean ecosystem, particularly for a country like Italy, currently engaged in the preparation of its first strategic “Piano del Mare”, as the main move after the establishment of the Ministry of the Sea and Civil Protection.

This Ministry is going to coordinate the competencies currently spreading over 13 ministries. Also the inclusive role of Italy during its WM co-presidency was underlined, particularly for its embedding effort, to let regional and INTERREG managing authorities adopt WM priorities in the new 2021-2027 programmes and workplans.

Manuel Pleguezuelo reminded the priority given by DG MARE to the Maritime Cluster, considering the already achieved results, highlighting the work of the dedicated WM WG and the role to include the outcomes within the recent EMFAF call, expired in late January 2023.

Adriana Salazar Olivan presented the role of the Union for the Mediterranean role in support of the WestMED Initiative, putting in evidence the impact that the



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results achieved are having on the broader scenario of the whole Basin. This is witnessed by the involvement of Turkish, Greek, Egyptian, Jordan, Croatian etc organizations within the partnerships supported by the WMAM.

This has confirmed the validity of the Assistance Mechanism concept, as a “bottom-up” team, supporting and staying beside stakeholders instead of above.

Shaun Patrick Ebejer has confirmed the importance that the Maltese co-presidency is giving to the topic of clusters, also for the benefit of its small but vital ecosystem. Not for a case, the interaction with the Italian clusters is growing and the two countries are possibly joining forces for a common national event in October.

## **2.2 Main Achievements of the WestMED Maritime Clusters Alliance and its members**

Among the multiple achievements of the WestMED Maritime Clusters Alliance, Anja Detant remarked the attention that the European Commission and CINEA paid to the opening the EMFAF calls to third countries, particularly those of the WestMED sub-basin, and to the priorities of the WM TGs and WGs.

Hamadi BABA HAMADI, has summarized the process and the importance for his country towards such a move, as a starting point to fully integrate Mauritania in the common ecosystem and tighten cooperation with northern and southern WM countries. The centrality of the Fishery sector, of Maritime Transport and of Blue Skills are indicated as priority for Mauritanian dynamics and networking activities with the Mediterranean stakeholders.

On June 9th in Rome, the president of the Mauritanian Marine and Maritime Cluster has signed an MoU with the Italian national clusters, aiming at a closer cooperation, including the research activities.

Emna Sohlobji, in her position of secretary general of the CMT (but also as elected Leading Woman in African Blue Economy) has witnessed the boost that her cluster gained in EU funded projects, but also in the capacity to provide

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internationalization opportunities to their associated members, for the benefit of the national Blue Economy. A bright example was illustrated as the MEBLEUE 2022 speeded up this process, with the concrete cooperation cases fostered among training institutes, research institutes, ports etc.

Ruben Eiras, secretary general of Forum Oceano and NH for Portugal, presented the Hub Azul Dealroom a comprehensive digital stakeholders' platform, at service of the larger Portuguese strategy for the Blue Economy and the need to enable a faster matchmaking between innovators, policy makers, promoters and investors. The Dealroom must be considered as a tool at disposal of the WM MCA, for its capacity to enlarge networks and foster new knowledge and partnerships. Laurence Martin and Thanos Smanis, reported the launch of the European Blue Forum, during the recent EMD in Brest, and the key role that maritime clusters are going to play there too.

As concrete projects assisted by the WMAM and submitted (most of them also approved) ERASMUS+ - MARMED and MAQUAM, COSME Euroclusters – MedBan, IKAT and ELBE Alliance, EMFAF Women in Blue Economy – WINBIG, EMFAF Maritime Clusters CALLMEBLUE and Green Marine MED, EMFAF Ports & Maritime Transport POWER4MED were shortly described by ForMare, Forum Oceano, CTN BIG, Strategis Cluster, SGD4MED, Federazione del Mare, Pole Méditerranée, also in the perspective of possible capitalization actions.

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### **2.3 Established cooperation agreements and synergies**

The efforts undertaken by the WM MCA in liaising with leading aggregations of clusters, like European Clusters Alliance, and with European Network of Maritime Clusters have been represented by Antonio Novo Guerrero, founder and president of ECA, and by Axelle Salvage (ENMC).

Indeed the fruitful exchanges with ECA are encouraging to integrate the reciprocal networking agendas, to enlarge cross-sectoral exchange opportunities for WM MCA members, to put at ECA's disposal the Blue specialization of the WM MCA ecosystem. ENMC on its side, witnesses the centrality that an heterogeneous contest like the Mediterranean, to tackle this opportunity of interaction with the WM MCA and its members.

Finally Walter Wassallo, promoter of the Blue Marina Award, recognizing the Italian marinas according to their coherence with SGD objectives, presented the second edition to be held in Trieste in 2023 and already looking at its cross-border Mediterranean scope from 2024 on, thanks to the technical assistance of the Italian NH and the NH colleagues of the other WM countries.

### **2.4 Conclusions**

Conclusions were then summarized by the intervention of Giovanni Caprino, President of CTN BIG, and the remote intervention of Matteo Bocci, who coordinates the WM MCA together with the Italian NH.

Along these conclusions also the opportunities represented to increase exchanges with Black Sea and Atlantic Sea Basins' stakeholders have been underlined, as a further contribution to the internationalization strategies and synergies of our "WM MCA community".