



**Mediterranean  
Action Plan**  
Barcelona  
Convention



15 April 2021  
Original: English  
UNEP/MED WG.503

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Plan Bleu's National Focal Points Meeting

By videoconference, 19-20 May 2021

**Agenda Item 6.1: Transition towards sustainable development: Blue Economy**

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### Introductory note

This working document presents the mandates received by Plan Bleu/RAC from Contracting Parties up to and during COP21, for activities related **to transition towards sustainable development: Blue Economy**, the up to date achievements of Plan Bleu / RAC to implement these mandates; proposed follow-up activities for the next biennium.

#### Agenda for Plan Bleu's Focal Points meeting:

The Focal Points will be invited to provide comments and suggestions on the next steps during the current biennium up to the COP22; as well as on the proposed activities for the next biennium, in relation with blue economy. The Focal Points might agree on formalized recommendations on this topic as outcomes of the meeting.

### 1. Plan Bleu's mandates

1. The 21st Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019) reaffirmed that "... *the resources of the Mediterranean should trigger economic prosperity and contribute to the stability of the region with green jobs and innovation opportunities for the maritime economy sectors (aquaculture, fisheries, tourism, shipping, ports) and in emerging ones (blue biotechnologies, marine renewable sources, services digitalization), in full respect of the environmental protection, in a circular approach and good governance pattern, supported by the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025*".

2. Plan Bleu / RAC has been working on best practices, identification of promising innovations, capitalization and dissemination for the sustainable development of blue economy for years and even more so during the last biennia in the framework of EU-funded projects such as Med-IAMER, InnoBlueGrowth, BlueTourMed, Sustainable Tourism and Blue Growth.

3. The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention included the following activities in the Programme of Work 2020-2021 adopted during COP21:

- 1.3.3.2 *Continue work on regional tools, including possible guidelines, on sustainable tourism with a particular focus on nautical activities, pleasure boating including cruises / Expected deliverables are Guidelines or voluntary codes of conduct on sustainable tourism developed (with a particular focus on cruise and recreational boating), building on capitalisation activities and methodological compilations produced in 2018-2019, through a participatory process in line with the MSSD 2016-2025 Vision and Objectives, taking into account in particular the SCP/Action Plan, the ICZM Protocol, the SAP BIO and the Marine Litter Regional Plan.*
- 1.4.4.1: *Implement, sustain, and strengthen the mechanism to assist Barcelona Convention implementation with scientific institutions and promote their participation in research and development activities and facilitate transfer of technology. Expected deliverables are: b) Database of scientific community maintained; Stakeholder's mapping updated and further developed; c) Policy papers prepared with communities of stakeholders including scientists, private sector and local governments; and advocated with policy-makers on sustainable biodiversity management, sustainable tourism and/or blue economy; d) Assistance provided to relevant Mediterranean stakeholders, ensuring synergies among this community, and increasing the visibility and impacts of their projects' results towards common identified strategic targets; e) Plan Bleu acting as a Science Policy Practice Interface to foster the exchange of experiences and knowledge sharing, and thus influencing a behavioural and policy change in the Mediterranean region*

- 4.4.1.2 Main activity 2. *Implement the SDG 14 in the Mediterranean by promoting the Blue Economy / Expected deliverables a) Key transitions and corresponding policy instruments to foster the Blue Economy based on local innovations, including innovations identified in case studies in the 2018-2019 PoW (in fisheries and aquaculture, maritime transport and port activities, wind energy, tourism and recreation, biological resources) identified; b) Recommendations for a transition towards a Blue Economy in the Mediterranean, including through the development of financing and economic instruments, and innovative partnerships developed*
- 7.1.1.2 Main activity *Promote the use of alternative, renewable energy resources in the Mediterranean./ Expected deliverables a) State of play on production and use of marine renewable energies (wind power, tidal energy etc.) in the Mediterranean prepared b) Best practices, including BAT and BEP, on marine renewable energies shared c) Priorities for technical assistance and capacity building identified.*

## 2. Elements of context

4. Ocean-related activities in the Mediterranean Sea represent one fifth of the regional economy and 20% of the world's annual "Global Marine Product" (GMP) in an area which makes up less than 1% of the world's ocean surface (WWF, 2017). Today, more than ever, blue economy sectors are important engines for the region's economy, with enormous potential for innovation and sustainable and inclusive prosperity. However, to be environmentally sustainable, the economic opportunities provided by the Mediterranean Sea are closely linked to an increasing need for new management models which respect its ecosystems and are able to maintain and increase their value over time, benefiting local communities.

5. Although blue energy resources in the Mediterranean may be relatively fewer in comparison to "hotspots" such as the North Sea and the Atlantic, there exist numerous locations in the basin with considerable potential. The Mediterranean's milder climatic conditions enable the affordable testing of devices and stimulate the design of efficient technologies. As such, the Mediterranean has potential for both significant Marine Renewable Energy (MRE) production and technological development.

6. Offshore wind is considered as the most promising MRE sector. Other promising MRE sectors include wave and tidal energy, in sites of appropriate conditions, with prototypes and pre-commercial devices already being tested (e.g. Italy, Israel) and progressively entering the commercial phase. Offshore solar, marine biomass and ocean geothermal energy can be considered as emerging MREs. Low-carbon technologies associated with the marine energy sector can also play a significant role in the fulfillment of climate objectives.

7. Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention reaffirmed during the COP21 (Naples, Italy, 2019) their commitment to implement the ICZM Protocol to foster the sustainable development of projects including MREs in the Mediterranean Region.

8. With EUR 40 billion economic impact and 6 million passengers, the cruise sector plays an important role in the economies of the Mediterranean countries. Although it owns high potential in terms of job creation and business opportunities, the prevailing business model adopted by the cruise industry poses serious environmental challenges and social pressures at destination level. A growing number of stakeholders are raising their voice for an innovative and inclusive approach able to increase the sector's environmental and social standards.

9. The recreational boating sector generates revenues and employment with a positive economic impact on local communities, especially in France, Spain and Italy which account for 80% of the total demand in the Mediterranean. However, several issues and common practices of the sector, in particular in the segment of super yachts, keep posing serious threats to Mediterranean marine ecosystems.

10. The continuing development of desalination is considered as a key emerging area within the Blue Economy. There's a growing reliance on desalination technology for fresh water in the Mediterranean basin and a strong growth in the sector is expected over the next few years. Climate change is negatively affecting freshwater availability and desalination is poised to provide a solution to this impending crisis. This practically unlimited resource of water requires energy consumption and results in environmental impacts. These impacts are generated mainly from the concentrate (brine) produced during the desalination, but also from the discharges of chemicals used in the desalination processes. Further, desalination is very energy intensive. Donors are solicited to be financially involved in the development of desalination activities which gain strategic significance in Mediterranean countries such as Morocco, Tunisia or the State of Palestine.

11. Mediterranean countries remain the world's leading tourism destination, with around 30 % of international tourist arrivals and absolute numbers having doubled in 20 years. The coastal and maritime tourism sector is extensively developed in NMCs. With the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism is among the most affected sectors.

### **3. Main achievements in 2020 – 2021**

#### **3.1 Elaboration of guidelines on sustainable tourism with a particular focus on nautical activities, pleasure boating including cruises (Programme of Work item 1.3.3.2)**

12. In the framework of the BlueMed Initiative, Plan Bleu led the Start-up action "BlueBoatsMed" (2018-2021). The project brought together Mediterranean stakeholders with complementary expertise in the domain of cruise and recreational boating with the aim to: i) analyze the prospects for further and sustainable expansion of the two sectors; ii) agree upon main environmental or societal challenges associated to the expansion that the two sectors are expected to experience; iii) identify promising innovations to address such challenges, and the conditions necessary for their scaling up and uptake; iv) help outline guidelines for a Mediterranean transition to sustainable cruise and recreational boating. A total of 25 experts went through these four steps at the occasion of four brainstorming meetings (webinar in April 2019, face-to-face meeting in Genova, Italy in June 2019; face-to-face meeting in Marseille, France in November 2019, webinar in October 2020). The results of the discussions are reflected in a Foresight report<sup>1</sup> available in French, English, Spanish and Italian.

13. Recommendations from InnoBlueGrowth project highlighted the lack of common rules within the cruise and recreational boating sector in the Mediterranean Region, and the need for environmentally sustainable practices. Therefore, in the framework of the 2nd phase – Blue Growth Community project – Plan Bleu committed to produce guidelines for the sustainability of cruises and recreational boating in the Mediterranean region. Based on outputs produced by specific modular projects from three Interreg Med communities dealing with cruise and yachting (Blue Growth Community, the Sustainable Tourism Community and the Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community), the guidelines will also rely on the work done through the project BlueBoatsMed. The Guidelines will provide Mediterranean decision makers and stakeholders with an evidence-based sustainability roadmap to harness the opportunities of both sectors while mitigating their adverse impacts on marine and coastal ecosystems, associated biodiversity, climate, air quality and local communities. A participatory process has been adopted to develop these guidelines and a working group of about 60 stakeholders has been set up by Plan Bleu.

14. On 23 November 2020, Plan Bleu hosted an online call for contributions meeting<sup>2</sup> to inform the preparation of "Guidelines for the Sustainability of Cruises and Recreational Boating in the Mediterranean", in partnership with the Interreg MED projects (2019-2022): Blue Growth, Sustainable

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<sup>1</sup> <https://planbleu.org/en/publications/bluemed-short-foresight-report-on-cruising-yachting-and-recreational-boating-in-the-mediterranean/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://planbleu.org/en/page-actualite/plan-bleu-and-3-interreg-med-communities-host-online-meeting-guidelines-for-the-sustainability-of-cruises-and-recreational-boating-in-the-med-region-23-november-2020/>

Tourism, and Biodiversity Protection Community Horizontal Projects. The meeting's objective was to capitalize on innovative knowledge and experiences addressing the main sustainability gaps of the cruising and recreational boating sectors, while further building upon the dialogue and exchanges on this topic initiated by the BlueBoatsMed project. This call for contributions was answered by a wide range of stakeholders. With representatives of Port Authorities, International Organisations, Think tanks, Cruise Lines and the Boating industry, these topics have drawn experts from all sides.

15. The working group is currently elaborating a common vision for sustainable cruising and recreational boating in the Mediterranean region. Several consultation and online meetings with stakeholders are planned in April and May 2021. Final guidelines should be available end of May 2021 and will be presented during the 2nd Capitalization event of the Blue Growth community in June. These Guidelines should also be brought to the attention of the Contracting Parties at the next Barcelona Convention COP22 (December 2021).

### **3.2. Support to strengthen the interface between science and policy-making through enhanced cooperation with scientific institutions (Programme of Work item 1.4.4.1)**

16. Plan Bleu is partner of the Blue Growth Interreg MED horizontal project<sup>3</sup> (2019-2022), a consortium of 7 partners<sup>4</sup> led by CoNISMa - Consorzio Nazionale Interuniversitario per le Scienze del Mare. This project is the continuation of InnoBlueGrowth Interreg MED horizontal project (2016-2019). In this second phase, Plan Bleu leads the Work Package on Capitalization activities.

17. The Mediterranean Blue Growth community, after laying the foundations for a strong community during the project's 1st phase, comes now to its capitalization phase. It will assist and coordinate the modular/integrated projects dealing with Blue Growth in their communication and capitalization activities, creating and ensuring internal (inter-community) and external synergies, knowledge sharing, transfer and capitalization for policy-making project recommendations take-on by key stakeholders (projects, SMEs, decision-makers, technicians, researchers, etc.).

18. Under the framework of this Blue Growth project, Plan Bleu contributed to the following main activities/outputs:

- Drafting of **Guidelines for the mainstreaming**<sup>5</sup> of the Blue Growth Community (BGC) activities. These guidelines aim to ensure that capitalization activities allow an effective transfer of mature tools and measures developed by 11 projects part of BGC and final uptake by local and regional policy makers (i.e. mainstreaming) to unlock the development potential of blue economy sectors such as maritime surveillance, blue energies and to 'green' the yachting sector. These actions also keep contributing to the sustainable socio-economic development of the Mediterranean area through innovative investments in the blue economy.
- Organization of a **1<sup>st</sup> Capitalization event on Marine Renewable Energies**<sup>6</sup> (online - 10-11<sup>th</sup> November 2020). The first day gathered around 100 stakeholders, such as policymakers, research and academia, SMEs, NGOs and international organizations, from 14 countries. Three main issues regarding MRE development in the Mediterranean region were addressed: the enabling framework (incl. legal & regulatory), the brakes and levers for the development of the sector in the Mediterranean and how to reconcile Renewable Energy with biodiversity and eco-tourism. The second day – an E-

<sup>3</sup> <https://blue-growth.interreg-med.eu/>

<sup>4</sup> Consortium members: National Interuniversity Consortium for Marine Sciences (CoNISMa), Association of Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASCAME), Intermediterranean Commission of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), Plan Bleu, National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), University of Montenegro – Institute for marine biology, IrRADIARE.

<sup>5</sup> Available upon request to Plan Bleu

<sup>6</sup> <https://planbleu.org/en/page-actualite/the-blue-growth-community-is-working-on-the-development-of-renewable-marine-energy-in-the-mediterranean-region/>

Blue Agora, co-organized with the Circle the Med Forum – gathered around 500 participants and was dedicated to SMEs with the presentation of tools, funding opportunities and a matchmaking session in the framework of the 1st BLUE DEAL Business Forum.

- Development of an **inter-community toolbox**, a web platform gathering all transferable tools developed by projects from several communities in order to bridge different thematic and interlinked tools together. The idea is to develop a well-structured and easily accessible toolbox not only based on transferable projects' outputs but also on outputs in the broader communities (including transferable guidelines, labels, technological innovations, governance approaches, policy instruments, monitoring process and indicators, training modules, etc.) to inform potential transfer and mainstreaming "receivers". Tools should be easy to find by sector, objective and type of actors when relevant. Lessons learned and conditions for replications will be analyzed and served as a basis for transfer / adaptation / feeding in policy papers and other mainstreaming products. This Platform will be hosted by the Interreg Med website itself. In April 2020, Blue Growth and Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Communities agreed to co-develop the toolbox in 2021. Terms of reference for this web platform are currently drafted by Plan Bleu.
- Contribution to **strategic liaising activities** with key actors to build a capitalization responsive environment and to strengthen advocacy for policy change thus enhancing internal synergies and creating new connections with all the potential stakeholders, including decision makers.
- Contribution to **advocacy & lobbying activities**: As an example, in March 2021, the Blue Growth Interreg MED project sent a "[Position Paper](#)" with a set of policy recommendations to the main authorities in charge of the maritime spatial plans in Greece, France, Portugal, Italy and Spain, intending to contribute to the constitution of their maritime spatial planning. This initiative aimed to put the knowledge existing in the Blue Growth Community at the service of the EU member states, which are called by the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (MSP2014/89/EU) to frame maritime spatial plans that identify all existing human activities in EU waters by the end of March 2021.

19. The Bureau of Plan Bleu also produced in January 2020 a flyer on Blue Economy: FLYER BLUE ECONOMY, A new frontier for growth and a healthy Mediterranean<sup>7</sup>.

20. Plan Bleu released in September 2020 a report entitled Cahier #19 Blue Economy, [Case studies, lessons and perspectives](#)<sup>8</sup>. The overall objective of the Report is to assess and highlight the current weight and various opportunities provided by the blue economy in the Mediterranean in support of sustainable development and to showcase a range of concrete examples and good practices of how blue economy works in the region.

21. Plan Bleu is also partner of the Sustainable Tourism Interreg MED horizontal project (2019-2022)<sup>9</sup>, new phase of the BlueTourMed project (2016-2019), a consortium of 7 partners<sup>10</sup> led by DIBA - Diputació de Barcelona.

22. The Mediterranean Sustainable Tourism community relies now on 24 thematic projects involving more than 200 organisations (mainly public authorities, universities, NGOs and international organisations) active in 13 European countries to promote sustainable tourism by capitalizing on tools and good practices developed by its projects.

<sup>7</sup> [https://planbleu.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Flyer\\_Blue\\_Economy-1.pdf](https://planbleu.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Flyer_Blue_Economy-1.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> [https://planbleu.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/cahier19\\_Blue\\_Economy\\_EN.pdf](https://planbleu.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/cahier19_Blue_Economy_EN.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/>

<sup>10</sup> Consortium members: Diputació de Barcelona (DIBA), Mediterranean Universities Union (UNIMED), University of Thessaly (UTH), Network of European Regions for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism (NECSTouR), Adriatic Ionian Euroregion (AIE), Regional Development Agency Green Karst Ltd (RDA Green Karst) and Plan Bleu.

23. The main goal of the second phase is to mainstream the results of the projects into European, national, regional and local policies, also having in mind how they can contribute to a green and digital post-Covid tourism recovery and the EU Green Deal challenges by:

- Enhancing attractiveness and tourism offer with alternatives to mass tourism;
- Addressing tourism pressures by reducing the impact of tourism; and
- Strengthening planning and management practices by measuring sustainability.

24. The results and lessons learnt from Community projects represent a unique knowledge asset that can help the transition to innovative tourism policies and practices based on sustainability principles. For this purpose, the community has defined 7 territorial antennas to cover the Mediterranean region and Plan Bleu leads the French territorial antenna.

25. The MED Sustainable Tourism Community counts on a group of 17 Associated partners (networks, actors participating in Mediterranean initiatives, tourism stakeholders, academia) with the role of ensuring links with other initiatives and to enlarge the impacts and the scope of the dissemination, transferring and capitalisation activities. Some of the main inputs of the Sustainable tourism community are as follows:

- Organization and contribution to International events, such as:
  - the European Tourism Convention<sup>11</sup>, on 12th October 2020 to strengthen the common understanding of the challenges for greener holidays through a set of ten actions points<sup>12</sup>, and how to address them with multi-stakeholder partnerships, cross-sector collaborations, public-private alliances, and consumer engagement initiatives for coordinated and joint efforts.
  - The virtual meeting on “Tourism in Next Generation EU and Interreg MED programme 2021-2027”<sup>13</sup> organized by the Sustainable Tourism Community on 14 December 2020 to address the future of sustainable tourism in the Next Generation EU, with a focus on REACT-EU instrument, and the Interreg MED new programming period 2021-27.
  - The online conference “Tourism in the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion and COVID-19 crisis: measures and opportunities towards sustainability”<sup>14</sup> aimed to explore which are the measures taken at different level (such as EU and macroregional level) to mitigate effect of the Covid19 crisis on Tourism and help the sector and its recovery phase.
- Drafting of 4 Policy Factsheets<sup>15</sup>, available in EN, FR, SP, IT, CA:
  - Ensuring an effective monitoring of Tourism Sustainability in the Mediterranean Region<sup>16</sup>
  - Promoting alternative tourism models to reduce pressures in the Mediterranean Region<sup>17</sup>
  - Tourism as a strategic driver for the inclusive, responsible and sustainable growth in the Mediterranean Region<sup>18</sup>

<sup>11</sup> <https://tourism-convention.eu/agenda/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://tourism-convention.eu/workshops/workshop-2-greener-holidays/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/no-cache/news-events/news/detail/actualites/insights-from-the-community-event-tourism-in-next-generation-eu-and-interreg-med-programme-2021-27/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/no-cache/news-events/events/detail/actualites/tourism-in-the-adriatic-ionic-euroregion-and-covid-19-crisis-measures-and-opportunities-towards-su/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/policy-factsheets/>

<sup>16</sup> [https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Sites/Sustainable\\_Tourism/horizontal\\_project/BTM\\_Documents/Policy\\_Factsheets/BTM\\_PolicyFactsheets\\_1\\_EN.pdf](https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Sites/Sustainable_Tourism/horizontal_project/BTM_Documents/Policy_Factsheets/BTM_PolicyFactsheets_1_EN.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> [https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Sites/Sustainable\\_Tourism/horizontal\\_project/BTM\\_Documents/Policy\\_Factsheets/BTM\\_PolicyFactsheets\\_2\\_EN.pdf](https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Sites/Sustainable_Tourism/horizontal_project/BTM_Documents/Policy_Factsheets/BTM_PolicyFactsheets_2_EN.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> [https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Sites/Sustainable\\_Tourism/horizontal\\_project/BTM\\_Documents/Policy\\_Factsheets/BTM\\_PolicyFactsheets\\_3\\_EN.pdf](https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Sites/Sustainable_Tourism/horizontal_project/BTM_Documents/Policy_Factsheets/BTM_PolicyFactsheets_3_EN.pdf)



- Governance as a tool for sustainable and responsible tourism in the Mediterranean Region<sup>19</sup>
  - Drafting of Policy recommendations<sup>20</sup> based on the work done in the policy factsheets, considering key challenges and suggested solutions to contribute to pave the way for a sustainable tourism.
  - Drafting the first edition of the Catalogue of outputs<sup>21</sup> that so far collects 40 results from the most important outputs of the projects implemented within the first phase of the project and which will be updated in the following months.
26. More capitalisation events (regional and national debates) will be organised to capitalise good practices and to improve the transfer of knowledge between science and policy-making.

### 3.3. Elaboration of tools for sustainable blue economy in the Mediterranean (Programme of Work item 4.4.1.2)

27. In the framework of the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work 2020-2021, Plan Bleu was commissioned to elaborate a Roadmap for the sustainable development of the **aquaculture** sector in the Mediterranean (the Roadmap) in partnership with two Interreg Med communities of projects: the Blue Growth community and the Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection community. The elaboration process of the Roadmap is co-financed by the Mediterranean Trust Fund, the European Regional Development fund and the French Development Agency.

28. The Roadmap is expected to be the output of a Pan-Mediterranean debate with a large number of organizations, projects, economic operators and decision makers. A drafting Working Group (~80 members) has been already established. Two webinars<sup>22</sup> were organized in November 2020 in collaboration with FAO/GFCM, West Med and IUCN Med among others in order to: i) agree upon the main governance/environmental/economic/social challenges posed by the aquaculture sector in the Mediterranean; ii) identify for each challenge innovative approaches/tools/ technologies/practices as promising solutions. As for the timeline, the roadmap will be focussing on 2030 as a long-term horizon with a mid-term assessment in 2025, in line with international targets. This will make it easier to generate acceptance among different levels of governments to reach their SDG targets.

29. The Roadmap should be a strategic plan that, based on a regionally shared long-term vision for aquaculture in the Mediterranean (coastal and off-shore), will address crucial sustainability challenges. It will do so by setting tangible and measurable objectives and mid-term milestones to be pursued through available innovations. On that basis, a draft of the Roadmap is being written in collaboration with members of the Working Group.

30. The Roadmap will include indicators for proper monitoring and evaluation as well as criteria to facilitate the transfer and replication of the most promising innovations. In this regard, once the Roadmap validated by the Working Group, Plan Bleu in collaboration with interested parties (such as WestMed or CIHEAM) will develop a **pilot project** with the aim to transfer, adapt and replicate **in the southern Mediterranean** one or more innovative approaches / tools / technologies / practices addressed in the Roadmap.

<sup>19</sup> [https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Sites/Sustainable\\_Tourism/horizontal\\_project/BTM\\_Documents/Policy\\_Factsheets/BTM\\_PolicyFactsheets\\_4\\_EN.pdf](https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Sites/Sustainable_Tourism/horizontal_project/BTM_Documents/Policy_Factsheets/BTM_PolicyFactsheets_4_EN.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> [https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Sites/Sustainable\\_Tourism/horizontal\\_project/BTM\\_Documents/Policy\\_Recommendations/Policy\\_Recommendations.pdf](https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Sites/Sustainable_Tourism/horizontal_project/BTM_Documents/Policy_Recommendations/Policy_Recommendations.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> [https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Sites/Sustainable\\_Tourism/horizontal\\_project/ST\\_Deliverables\\_IP\\_2/ST\\_IP2\\_WP4/4.3.2.Community\\_Catalogue/ CAT\\_ST\\_full\\_35MPs\\_WEB.pdf](https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Sites/Sustainable_Tourism/horizontal_project/ST_Deliverables_IP_2/ST_IP2_WP4/4.3.2.Community_Catalogue/ CAT_ST_full_35MPs_WEB.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> <https://planbleu.org/en/page-actualite/plan-bleu-is-organizing-a-series-of-two-webinars-focusing-on-sustainable-aquaculture-in-the-mediterranean-region/>

31. The Roadmap is expected to be finalized at the end of May 2021. The final draft will be brought to the attention of the Contracting Parties at COP22 of the Barcelona Convention in December 2021.

32. Plan Bleu also supported MedPol in Activity 2.4.3.1(c) to undertake an assessment of the state of play of aquaculture practices in the Mediterranean and its environmental impact, and to identify innovative approaches and measures required to minimize pollution from aquaculture facilities and promote environmentally friendly practices in coastal areas. This is a preliminary work done in preparation of the development of the Regional Plan on Aquaculture Management.

33. Plan Bleu / RAC has initiated a process to develop a partnership for the development of a decision-support tool in terms of sustainable investment in the **desalination** sector in the Mediterranean.

34. With the support of the French Development Agency, Plan Bleu will produce in 2021 a short document to summarize the current situation, the environmental impacts and future trends of desalination activities. A working group of various stakeholders will be set up and several consultations carried out. In the long run, this work should contribute to the emergence of clear regulatory frameworks on investments, and criteria to assess the impacts and sustainability, for desalination projects and strategies.

#### **3.4. Promotion of the use of alternative, renewable energy resources in the Mediterranean (Programme of Work item 7.1.1.2)**

35. In the framework of the Interreg Med Blue Growth project, Plan Bleu is in charge of drafting a report entitled "Towards a sustainable development of Marine renewable energies in the Mediterranean".

36. This report should capitalize, but not only, on results and tools developed by three Modular projects of the Blue Growth Community (MAESTRALE, PELAGOS, BLUE DEAL) dealing with marine renewable energies, and complements a technical factsheet produced by the Biodiversity Protection Community on best environmental practices in the blue energy sector. This document will include the following parts:

- A State of play on production and use of marine renewable energies (wind power, tidal energy etc.) and the growth opportunities in the Mediterranean region;
- An analysis of the policy framework of the sector;
- A collection of best available technologies on marine renewable energies;
- Identification of levers and recommendations to foster the implementation of innovations.

37. This capitalisation report is currently being finalized and should be brought to the attention of the Contracting Parties at the next Barcelona Convention COP22 (December 2021).

#### **4. Proposals of activities 2022 – 2023**

38. Under the Programme of Work 2022-2023, Plan Bleu / RAC proposes to build on activities implemented during the 2020-2021 biennium, but also on the opportunities offered in the framework of the Blue Growth and Sustainable Tourism Interreg projects, which are planned to end by mid-2022.

39. Under the programme 1: *Towards a pollution and litter free Mediterranean Sea and Coast embracing circular economy / Promote sustainable desalination sector in the Mediterranean* Plan Bleu proposes to produce, in partnership with MEDPOL:

- a State of play of desalination in the Mediterranean made available through maps or publication;
- Recommendations elaborated in a decision support tool to assist sustainable investment decision-making & dissemination of the tool through participation in events;
- Regional standards and guidance on desalination technologies; Best practices to minimize environmental impact of desalination compiled and shared through a Regional Meeting.

40. Under programme 4. *Towards the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources including by the promotion of circular and blue economy, Outcome 4.2. Sustainable Blue and Green Economy tools and approaches in the context of Sustainable Development and MSSD implementation, Activity 1 Promote the use of alternative, marine renewable energy resources in the Mediterranean* Plan Bleu proposes to work on two activities a) Production of a policy paper on marine renewable energy sector in the Mediterranean. B) Environmental benefits and potential risks from different types of marine renewable energies assessed, taking into consideration socioeconomic elements, and disseminated.
41. Under the same programme and outcome, under *Activity 2: Support Contracting Parties' engagement into concrete actions to better balance economic development and environmental protection in the coastal tourism sector*, Plan Bleu proposes to work on a) State of play of coastal tourism and ecotourism in the Mediterranean; b) Best practices on sustainable tourism; c) A workshop to capitalise good practices and concrete actions.
42. Under the same programme and outcome, under *Activity 3 Boost targeted actions for a sustainable and inclusive Blue economy transition in the Mediterranean*":
- In partnership with SCP/RAC and CPMR, Plan Bleu will produce a report on Circular economy in the Blue economy sector including a set of recommendations (December 2022). This activity is part of Interreg Med Blue Growth project and SWITCHMED II project;
  - Plan Bleu proposes to organize, in partnership with SCP-RAC, a MedForum on Blue economy in 2023 to capitalize on all work done these past few years and disseminate our main recommendations in different sub-sectors (aquaculture, cruise, port, marine renewable energies, circular economy);
  - Plan Bleu also proposes to follow-up on the road map for a sustainable aquaculture in the Med region currently developed through the promotion and the implementation in South Med countries of innovative approaches in aquaculture already identified (projects will be elaborated in partnership with WestMed);
  - Plan Bleu proposes to initiate a preliminary work on a promising topic: digitalization in the blue economy sector by producing a State of play of use of digital innovation for blue economy. Digital transformation has a great potential for boosting Blue economy sectors such as maritime transport (e.g. Digital twin), aquaculture or tourism and is key for maintaining international competitiveness. For instance, Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered marine technologies are fueling the blue economy by bringing the capacity of gathering, processing and providing more accurate, real-time data from the oceans and coasts.
43. Under the Outcome 4.4. *To develop a circular economy within global value chains enabling a more conducive policy framework for sustainable economic development*, Plan Bleu, in close collaboration with SCP / RAC, proposes to promote the implementation of circular economy principles in the water sector through the production of a publication and the organization of a regional workshop.