

29 September 2020

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Editorial

Salem Miladi, our National Tunisian Hub answered to our questions.

The elaboration of the blue economy strategy in Tunisia is based on the relaunch of traditional sectors and the promotion of emerging industries

Tell us about yourself and how did you come to be National Hub?

I started my professional career at the European Commission Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development in charge of preparing the reform plans of the different economic sectors and overseeing their realisation in the context of maintaining macroeconomic balances.

I contributed to the elaboration of the structural adjustment programme in 1986 whose objective was to reinforce these reforms towards more performance and encouragement to exportation. My engagement as a temporary teacher at the Tunis university, since 1983, has enriched this sectoral experience and reinforced our conviction to promote emerging sectors such as the knowledge economy, the aquaculture, cruises, etc...

My participation in 2013 as a regional coordinator to the European project "Integrated Maritime Policy" constituted the starting point of my work in the Blue Economy domain between the countries of southern shore of the Mediterranean, the central team of the project and the European Commission. This operation fostered the assessment of blue economy sectors in these countries, including Tunisia, and allowed us to exchange on other programs and projects considered, in coordination with the politics and goals of the European Commission in this domain. Made strong by this experience, I thus agreed to be member of the WestMED assistance mechanism, in order to pursue this project, which is part of Tunisia's priorities for the resilience of its economy.

How does the National Tunisian Hub support the blue economy?

The role of the National Hub is to coordinate the objectives of the WestMED project and the national programmes in the field of the blue economy in Tunisia, by associating the national and regional authorities, but also associations, companies and university researchers.

The contact with the national Coordinator and the National Commission on the Blue Economy is permanent, in the purpose of achieving the elaboration of the national strategy and its roadmap. The goal is to take advantage of all the activities related to the sea, while preserving ecological balances on a national level and ensuring cooperation, especially at the regional level.

The research of partners with the other national hubs are part of our priorities to achieve partnerships and form synergies between the Tunisian actors and their European and Maghrebian counterparts concerned by the WestMED project. The priority is to raise awareness among these stakeholders and associations on the fact that Tunisia can take advantage of all sectors of the sustainable blue



economy.

How do you see the future of the blue economy in Tunisia?

Tunisia has many maritime assets, including more than 1300 km of coastline, nearly 95% of foreign trade transiting by the sea, an important infrastructure in commercial and fishing ports, a very active fishing fleet, a highly developed seaside activity, quite varied maritime and port professions and a fairly elaborate maritime regulatory framework based on international conventions for marine and maritime activities. With a maritime surface of 135,000 km², or nearly 80% of the country's territory, Tunisia has a large reservoir of activities and jobs that can be exploited. The sustainable development and exploitation of this maritime space constitute an opportunity for technological innovation, trainings and a source of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The blue growth gives a new vision on the riches of the sea and the development prospects of traditional sectors such as maritime transport and port activities, shipbuilding, tourism and fishing. The knowledge of the maritime and marine environment allows the development of promising sectors in terms of innovation and the creation of highly skilled jobs such as biotechnology, marine energy, deep seabed mining, aquaculture and cruise tourism.

However, it is important to reconcile the procedures to make the blue economy a vector of sustainable development on inclusive and sustainable bases. Thus, it matters to also keep an eye on the preservation of biodiversity and specific ecosystems, and to develop the maritime space planning.

Whether in Tunisia or via the WestMED initiative, the blue economy is therefore a chance and an opportunity to seize with attention.

News

WestMED National Event in Mauritania helps concretise the Blue Economy concept

On 30 June 2020, more than 20 stakeholders from Mauritania gathered online to discuss the Blue Economy concept. This national event was organised by the WestMED Assistance Mechanism in cooperation with the National Coordinator in Mauritania of the WestMED Initiative at the Mauritanian Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy.

[More](#)

2020 WestMED National Event Malta: government commitment, expert views and citizen engagement

On 4 September 2020, the WestMED Maltese National Hub and National Coordinator, in collaboration with Horizon Europe Oceans Mission and Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST), organised a virtual National Event which brought together almost 50 stakeholders from the various sectors of the blue economy.

[More](#)

WestMED Initiative contribution to 4HELIX+ webinar: It's time for the Blue Economy

Ten partners, 30 months duration, Euro 480.000 vouchers allocated to selected BLUE MED MSMEs and START-Ups for implementing their innovation projects under the guidance of Knowledge Providers, are the main indicators of a success.

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What's next for the future of our ocean? EU launches consultation on international ocean governance

The European Commission and the European External Action Service have launched a targeted consultation to assess development needs and options for the EU's international ocean governance agenda.

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Events

The effects of climate change in marine spatial planning: pathways and solutions | 1 October 2020 | online

As marine spatial planning (MSP) operates in a changing ocean, properly addressing and integrating climate effects is vital. However, few marine spatial plans properly or explicitly consider climate change. This is a complex topic, full of intricacies, dimensions, and challenges (scientific, socioeconomic, and political), and multiple solutions will be needed. This webinar highlight ways forward, based on real examples around the globe, on how climate change can be integrated into MSP. Links with global ocean governance goals and sustainable development will be explored.

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Tourism – towards a recovery and growth path | 14 October 2020 | online

The objective of this workshop is to provide an opportunity for stakeholders (destination management organisations, Member States, regional and urban public authorities, tourism businesses and SMEs) to exchange their experiences – successful tools and lessons learned in addressing this unprecedented crisis and its impacts on tourism and, more importantly, to discuss the recovery strategy in the context of the long-term sustainable and digital transformation of

European tourism.

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Publications

Mission Starfish 2030: Restore our Ocean and Waters

Inspired by the shape of the starfish, the Mission has five overarching objectives for 2030: Filling the knowledge and emotional gap, regenerating marine and freshwater ecosystems, zero pollution, decarbonising our ocean, and waters revamping governance. These five objectives are mutually supportive and taken together, the Mission Starfish 2030 will enable the restoration of the water cycle as a whole.

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Calls

EASME | Synergies and Clustering Between Maritime Projects | 5 October 2020

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Study for the implementation of regulation (EU)2015/757 | 16 October

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EEA Grants Portugal | Blue Growth call #4 Research | 30 October 2020

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C-Voucher | Second Adopters Open Call | 30 October 2020

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