



Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
الاتحاد من أجل المتوسط



13th UfM Working Group on Blue Economy (Brussels - 14 March, 2023)

Monitoring and Reporting by Ministerial priority:
Progress on the Roadmap for the implementation of the 2021 UfM
Ministerial Declaration on SBE – Malta

1. Governance and the future of sea basin strategies in the Mediterranean region

- Participation in international and regional marine and ocean research projects
 - Horizon Europe Partnership
 - Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership
 - BlueMissionMed
- Promote eco-tourism and niche tourism
- Promote fiscal and investment policies to support sustainable coastal and marine tourism
- Grand Harbour Clean Air Project
- Malta Freeport Onshore Power Supply
- Port Reception Facilities



2. Marine research and innovation, skills, careers and employment

- **International and regional marine and ocean research projects**

The Maltese research community has actively participated in international and regional marine and ocean research projects, such as the 'BlueMed initiative' in Horizon 2020, and the 'Joint Programming Initiative Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans' (JPI Oceans)

- **Interreg MED Project**

Another ocean research project is the Interreg MED Project 'Blue Bio Med,' which contributed to the establishment of the Mediterranean Innovation Alliance. Malta has also taken part in the 'BlueBio ERA-NET Cofund,' the 'Joint Action Ecological Aspects of Microplastics,' and the 'ERA-NET Cofund scheme of Horizon 2020, 'MarTERA'' through JPI Oceans.

- **Supporting the local scientific company**

Malta's commitment to supporting the local scientific community has led to providing opportunities for collaborative research in the Sustainable Blue Economy sector, particularly through the co-funded Horizon Europe Partnership, the 'Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership (SBEP),' and annual joint transnational calls. The first call of this 7-year partnership was launched in February 2023.

- **Training**

Vocational training continues to be a priority for the Maltese Government. In the second quarter of 2022, Jobsplus launched a renewed catalogue of training courses. The courses cover various areas and aim to increase skills and employability in various sectors.



3. Sustainable, climate-neutral and zero-pollution maritime transport and ports

- **Grand Harbour Clean Project**

At the moment, some of the most ambitious environmental projects in our country are related to installing systems that allow large vessels, such as passenger or cargo ships, to switch off their engines while they are berthed in our ports. These will instead connect directly to the national grid. This project will help to reduce air pollution and improve the quality of life of people living in the South of our country and around the Grand Harbour. Work on the first phase of the project covering the Northern Part of the Grand Harbour and Boiler Wharf is ongoing and proceeding at a good pace, and is expected to be completed in 2023.

- **Investment Onshore Power Supply**

Similarly, the project of the Onshore Power Supply at Malta Freeport will lead to a drastic reduction in air emissions and even engine noise. Through this Onshore Power Supply project, about 4,000 tons of carbon dioxide will be removed from the air each year. The study showed that with the implementation of this project, the result would be the same as removing 1,900 cars from circulation or as if 130,000 trees had been planted and as much as the decrease of the electricity consumption of 1,200 households



4. Sustainable food from the sea: fisheries and aquaculture

- Malta has implemented satellite monitoring at national level for a number of fisheries to improve control of the sector.
- From the conservation perspective, national management plans were introduced to concretize efforts in the management of this sector.
- Introduced underwater monitoring technologies for the bluefin tuna farming industry to monitor the recovery of this particular stock.
- With the implementation of the Multi-annual National Plan for the development of Sustainable Aquaculture, Malta will address the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainability in order to build resilience to respond to global challenges
- Taking parts in several projects such as PRIMA (Horizon2020), SIMTAP (Interreg VA Italia-Malta) and IMTA.



5. Interactions between marine litter and the blue economy

- **Regional Action Plan on marine litter management in the Mediterranean**

The Maltese Authority responsible for the RAPML was involved during the consultations and eventual final adoption of the updated RAMPL. The Authority also consulted internally and with external entities throughout the update of this plan, noting that various actions under the RAMPL fall within their remits. Various actions referred under this plan addressing the marine environment which are of remit to the Authority are being taken forward under Malta's MSFD Programme of Measures, Conservation objectives and measures for Malta's marine Natura 2000 sites and the update of the monitoring programme of marine litter under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

- **Single-Use Plastic**

Malta's role in transposing of the SUP Directive, and the implementation of a number of measures contained within the SUP strategy, including the introduction of a beverage container recovery scheme for the separate collection of beverage bottles late last year, which will contribute to this objective.

- **Fishing for Litters Scheme**

This scheme is adopted under the Regional Action Plan on marine litter management in the Mediterranean (RAPML) and is also referenced under Malta's MSFD Programme of Measures.

- **Port Reception Facilities**

In terms of implementation, Malta has transposed the Directive on port reception facilities for the delivery of waste from ships. The directive aligns EU legislation with the amended International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) which focuses on operations at sea, to which Malta is a party. Malta has also been adhering to the obligations set within the Directive, which aims to protect the marine environment from the negative effects of waste from ships using European Union (EU) ports, by improving port reception facilities for waste from ships.



6. Coastal and maritime tourism

- **Decarbonising the Tourism Industry Post Covid-19 Support**

Decarbonising the Tourism Industry Post Covid-19 Support DETOCS – is an Interreg Europe funded project which aims facilitate the de-carbonization of the tourism infrastructure, increase their energy efficiency of tourism infrastructure, increase their energy self-sufficiency of tourism sector, promote new and novel types of tourism like “virtual tourism” having low energy consumption and carbon footprint, and assist them to cope with the current energy crisis that increases the share of energy cost in their total operational cost threatening their profitability and economic viability.



7. Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management

- **Enabling the licensing of marine renewable energy systems**

Following the enactment of the Exclusive Economic Zone Act in 2021, local Authorities are in the process of drawing up the necessary legislation to enable the licensing of marine renewable energy systems in the Exclusive Economic Zone considering the necessary environment and safety aspects. It is expected that a tender process will be issued later on this year with licence awards in 2024.



8. Marine renewable energies

- **Offshore Floating Renewable Energy**

As part of Malta's forward outlook and ambition in increasing the share of renewable energy, the Government continues to focus on the development of its offshore (floating) renewable potential. This is being done with a view of establishing the necessary administrative and regulatory frameworks, which will enable the future deployment of larger-scale projects, as these technologies reach market maturity.

Within this context, the Government is also following opportunities for offshore renewable deployment through the support of EU funding instruments which are key to bridging the financial gap and thus enabling the attainment of commercial feasibility.



9. Maritime safety and security of blue economy activities

- **SafeSeaNet**

In 2022, Malta have successfully switched from SafeSeaNet (SSN) V4 to SSN V5. The main objective of SSNafeSeaNet is to provide a European platform for maritime data exchange between maritime administrations in the Member States to ensure the implementation of Union legislation in the area of vessel traffic monitoring. It comprises a network of national SafeSeaNet systems, also having the function of National Single Windows where the mandatory reporting formalities for ships calling or leaving Member States are submitted based on the reporting only once principle in a digital format, in Member States and a central SafeSeaNet system acting as a nodal point, which interacts with the national systems. The new SSNafeSeaNet Vversion 5 also allows EU Member State authorities to include the new waste information in line with the new Port Reception Facilities Directive and adds improvements on the Incident Report information and counting and registration of persons on board passenger ships. Malta's new system will be further enhanced to continue reducing the administrative burden, thereby also increasing efficiency, since various processes concerning ship calls, for example billing, will be centralised.

- **Digital transformation of the Maltese Ship Register and its ancillary services**

Through the digital transformation of the Merchant Shipping Directorate (MSD), new applications shall be introduced which will assist in the daily service workflows, improve time efficiency, accuracy and precision by reducing the incidence of human error in the operations relevant to the Maltese Ship Register. This is of particular importance in cases of vessel inspection where human error may lead to safety and/or environmental incidents at sea. Such applications shall therefore assist MSD to more efficiently adhere to, monitor and regulate environmental legislation and safety standards.



10. Sustainable investments in the blue economy

Main Major Investments:

- Onshore Power Supply
- Grand Harbour Clean Air Project
- National Maritime Single Window

