



The United Nations Ocean Conference

Opportunities for the Natural Heritage Mission

Plan Bleu



ΠΕΡΙΦΕΡΕΙΑ ΚΡΗΤΗΣ
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Mediterranean
Action Plan
Barcelona
Convention



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UNOC main objectives

- UNOC takes place in Nice, France from 9-13 June 2025
- Support the implementation of **SDG 14 Life Below Water**
- Main theme is “Accelerating action and mobilizing all actors to conserve and sustainably use the ocean”
- Several sessions, and panels with a high level segment aim to support further and **urgent action to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development** and identify further ways and means to support the implementation of SDG 14
- Final expected output is the **Nice Ocean Action Plan** (action oriented and intergovernmentally agreed declaration, along with a list of voluntary commitments)



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SDG14 funding is far from what is needed

- SDG 14 – life below water – continues to receive the least funding of any of the SDGs (UNOC 2022)
- The funding gap, according to the estimates presented in Despina F. Johansen, Rolf A. Vestvik (2020), to achieve SDG 14 by 2030 will require US\$174.52 billion per year, while currently US\$25.5 billion is spent annually. This indicates a funding gap of US\$149.02 billion per year.



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The cost of saving our ocean - estimating the funding gap of sustainable development goal 14

Despina F. Johansen , Rolf A. Vestvik 

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The Mediterranean at the UN Ocean Conference

10th June will be the Day of the Mediterranean, which will take place in the Centre Universitaire Méditerranéen on the Promenade des Anglais, and will be made up of 4 segments:

- A high-level meeting to mark the 50th anniversary of the [Barcelona Convention and Mediterranean Action Plan](#) and to revitalize it.
- A Mediterranean Blue Economy event, facilitated by the Union for the Mediterranean.
- A regional gathering of territories and municipalities, facilitated by the Région Sud-Côte d'Azur regional government.
- A Mediterranean Civil Society and Youth forum, facilitated by the Varda Group.



Blue Economy and Finance Forum

Before UNOC kicks off, **the Blue Economy and Finance Forum** will take place from **7-8 June in Monaco** to address the key question of funding, gathering key regional stakeholders and international donors.

7 th June	7 th June	8 th June	8 th June
INVESTING FOR OCEAN HEALTH, PRESERVATION AND RESILIENCE	FINANCING A REGENERATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY	TRANSFORMING BLUE PORTS AND SHIPPING	ENSURING SUSTAINABLE OCEAN GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE
Financial instruments that de-risk investments in ocean preservation; mechanisms for private investor engagement in sustainable marine initiatives.	Exploration of innovative financial products and market-driven approaches to scale investments in sectors such as sustainable maritime transport, renewable energy, tourism, blue agrifoods, and more.	Focus on financing maritime transport decarbonisation, adopting renewable energy, and enhanced port sustainability to mitigate climate change and promote ocean health within global supply chains.	Discussion of policy frameworks and governance mechanisms needed to support and sustain blue economy investments, led by top representatives from governments and organisations.
Read more	Read more	Read more	Read more



What opportunities for the NHM?

The Natural Heritage Mission will contribute to **two different side events** which will take place in the **Green Zone** in the Pavilion called **La Baleine** (the whale) hosted by OFB, CNR and UNESCO-IOC.

This provides us with the following opportunities:

- Promote our **Interreg Euro-MED** projects and partnerships as well as strengthen **synergies with other partners and initiatives**
- Showcase the work done by the **Governance** project and the **Thematic** projects with the support of our **APs network**.
- Shed light on specific **activities and policy recommendations** related to ocean conservation, blue economy, sustainable development.



Side event opportunities for partners

1. Invitation by the JS - Conference for French partners from Interreg Euro-MED projects

As part of UNOC, the Région Sud and the Métropole Nice Côte d'Azur are organising a shared space in the green zone that can be made available to project that has a French partner.

Who: Coordinated by Plan Bleu with the support of PPs

What: Promote the work done by IDP/TCP and TPs of two Missions (Natural Heritage and Sustainable Tourism) related to blue economy/ocean-based activities

When: 10th June from 18:00-19:00 PM CET

Goal: Promote policy recommendations from NHM related to TPs activities





Side event opportunities for partners

2. Side-event “Scaling Up Posidonia Conservation: Insights from Practice and Policy”

Who: Co-hosted by the **ARTEMIS project**, with a Peer Learning Panel featuring contributions from **IUCN, the French Biodiversity Agency (OFB), and the ENGIE Foundation**

What: Focused on policy development for Posidonia restoration

When: 11th June from 13:00 - 14:00 PM CET

Goal: Explore how international frameworks (IUCN - Blue Carbon Framework), national and regional policy efforts (OFB - MPN & Government of the Balearic Islands), and private funding strategies (ENGIE Foundation) can align to drive impactful and coordinated restoration.





- Who will be at UNOC?
- Who would be interested in participating in any of the side events?
- Who would be interested in promoting some of their work?
- What activities of your project are linked to the policy recommendations and could be highlighted ?

ARTEMIS: French partner (Plan Bleu)

COASTRUST: no french partner but potentially interested

GreenList4MMPAs: French partner (IUCN French Committee) + parc marine cote bleue (MPA in France)

MedSeaRise: French partner (Chamber of Commerce and Industry Nice Côte d'Azur)

MPA4Change: no french partner but potentially interested (EuroParc/SP)

TREASURE: French partner (Business and Innovation Sea Cluster – Toulon Var Technologie)

Wetland4Change: French partner (Tour du Valat)

Associated Partners contributions are welcome!

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Mission for Natural Heritage (M4N)

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Supporting the implementation of Target 2 of the Global Biodiversity Framework and the Nature Restoration Regulation in the Mediterranean

Version 31/01/25

Key messages

- 1 **Emphasise the precautionary principle to halt further degradation.** Conservation must take precedence to prevent further loss of biodiversity and degradation of ecosystems. This principle aligns with the EU NRR's non-deterioration clause.
- 2 **Prioritise passive restoration in marine environments.** Reducing pressures such as overfishing and pollution and addressing the root causes of degradation will allow most ecosystems to recover naturally. Active restoration should only be pursued when other approaches prove insufficient, as it is often less cost-effective, overestimated in its effectiveness and scalability and limited by knowledge gaps. Prioritizing passive restoration is both a pragmatic and ecologically sound approach.
- 3 **Promote Nature-based Solutions (NbS).** NbS should be at the heart of restoration strategies: they are cost-effective, respect ecological processes and minimise human intervention.
- 4 **Increase public awareness to build support.** This is particularly important for communities whose livelihoods might be impacted, ensuring they see restoration as an opportunity rather than a threat.
- 5 **Unlock the potential of innovative funding mechanisms.** Payments for ecosystem services, carbon credits, conservation contracts and debt restructuring, among others, can help mobilise adequate funding for restoration projects.
- 6 **Align restoration plans with climate mitigation and adaptation goals.** Restoring wetlands, seagrass meadows and other coastal and marine habitats provides critical ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, flood regulation and disaster risk reduction, contributing to both biodiversity and climate resilience.
- 7 **Foster collaborative governance to overcome institutional and stakeholder fragmentation.** Multi-level governance that engages local, regional and national actors is essential to build trust and align stakeholders. Strengthening sub-national and local capacity is urgently needed, as many authorities and stakeholders lack the resources and expertise required to implement restoration projects effectively.



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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON MARINE RESTORATION

- 1 Emphasise the **precautionary principle** to halt further degradation
- 2 Prioritise **passive restoration** in marine environments
- 3 Promote **Nature-based Solutions (NbS)**
- 4 Increase **public awareness** to build support
- 5 Unlock the potential of **innovative funding mechanisms**
- 6 Align **restoration plans** with climate mitigation and adaptation goals
- 7 Foster **collaborative governance** to overcome institutional and stakeholder fragmentation



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Thank you!

For further information, please contact: natural-heritage@interreg-euro-med.eu



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