



D3.3 TOOLKIT TRAINING BUSINESS ACTIVITIES FOR EMERGING MARITIME CLUSTERS, LESSONS LEARNED.

Task 3.3

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Summary CallmeBLUE Project

Deliverable: D3.3 TOOLKIT TRAINING BUSINESS ACTIVITIES FOR EMERGING MARITIME CLUSTERS, LESSONS LEARNED. Task 3.3; Version: Final Version; Date: January 31st, 2026.

The role of maritime clusters is increasingly important in the process of connecting public and private entities working in all transversal sectors related to blue economy at both national and Mediterranean level. Maritime clusters are indeed crucial facilitators of networking, technology transfer, internationalization and innovation between SMEs, large companies, research centers, universities etc., and they act as key actors to promote sustainable investments of the blue economy.

CALLMEBLUE aims to strengthen existing clusters alliances in the Mediterranean area to accelerate north-south regional cooperation processes towards the emerging of strategic maritime clusters in North Africa (south-south cooperation). CALLMEBLUE will aim to create a strategic vision and transferable models of interregional cooperation.

In particular, CALLMEBLUE will aim to implement concrete actions at both local and regional level to raise awareness on the relevance of Maritime clusters as key actors for a sustainable blue economy policy.

The project will indeed promote exchange of best practices and knowledge transfer between north and southern area, including piloting learning activities aimed at offering a transferable training “Toolkit”, addressed to future maritime clusters in the southern area to be prepared on the legal, structural, administrative and management aspects for a concrete creation of future maritime clusters.

CALLMEBLUE ambition is to set-up and strengthen maritime clusters alliances (North-South cooperation) – particularly targeting southern Mediterranean countries (South-South cooperation) but also allowing to enhance regional dialogue and more advanced services offered to Cluster Mediterranean ecosystem. At this aim, CALLMEBLUE offers its role as an accelerator for the policy goals set by relevant regional initiatives such as the UfM Ministerial Declaration for sustainable blue economy and the WestMED Initiative.



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Executive Summary

This deliverable (D3.3) presents the design and implementation of Task T3.3 – Organizing Advanced Learning Labs for Emerging Maritime Clusters. Its objective is to provide a transferable “Business Learning Labs” toolkit that can be used by maritime cluster managers across the Mediterranean and other sea basins.

The Advanced Learning Labs, also referred to as Online Business Trainings, were piloted between October and December 2025. The initiative brought together 85 selected participants, primarily from the Maghreb region. The programme consisted of six structured sessions addressing key topics, including core concepts, legal and regulatory frameworks, cooperation models, leadership skills, practical case studies, and cluster networking.

Key outcomes of the Advanced Learning Labs sessions:

- Conception of a sector strategy (Session-07)
- Public-private collaboration strategy (Session-08)
- Develop a business model (Session-09)
- Funding & Financing mechanisms (Session-10)
- Strategy implementation (Session-11)
- Communication / marketing (Session-12)

The sessions aimed to strengthen regional cooperation and accelerate the emergence of strategic maritime clusters in North Africa, thus supporting sustainable growth of the Blue Economy.

They were designed for future maritime cluster stakeholders, with the aim of strengthening their business development capacities to support the effective establishment and management of maritime clusters.

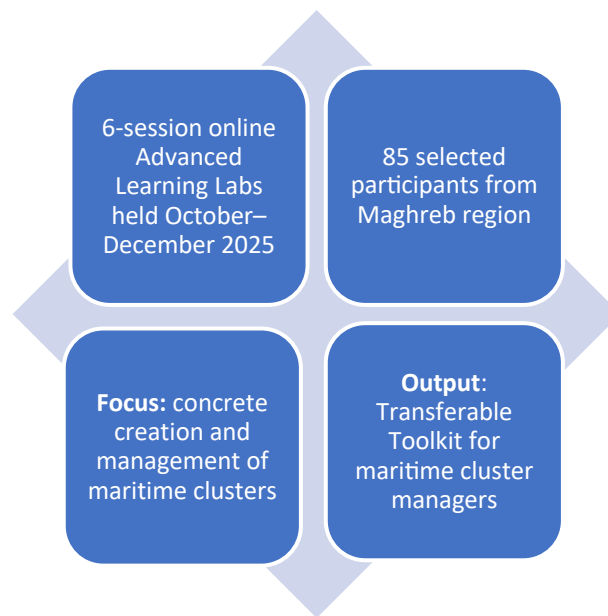
Key Highlights

- 85 participants from southern Mediterranean countries effectively engaged in six tailored sessions.
- Advanced Learning Labs provided a structured pathway by experts sharing experiences in developing business strategy to help future clusters to present a development plan for the members business growth. The format of the sessions was experts’ presentations followed by Q&A sessions.
- The sessions were designed to foster both North-South and South-South cooperation: a group of 85 participants was selected and followed the



D3.3 Toolkit Training Business Activities for Emerging Maritime Clusters, Lessons Learned. Task 3.3 full cycle of online trainings, and the Q&A sessions also favoured exchanges between participants.

- Toolkit components were designed for use in other sea basins
- Outputs aligned with the objectives of the CallMeBLUE project (Cluster Alliance MED Blue) under the EMFAF-2023-PIA-FLAGSHIP call.



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Introduction

The role of maritime clusters is increasingly important in the process of connecting public and private entities working in all transversal sectors related to blue economy at both national and Mediterranean level. Maritime clusters are indeed crucial facilitators of networking, technology transfer, internationalisation and innovation between SMEs, large companies, research centres, universities etc., and they act as key actors to promote sustainable investments of the blue economy.

CallMeBLUE (Cluster Alliance MED Blue), an EMFAF-2023-PIA-FLAGSHIP project co-funded by the European Union aims to strengthen existing cluster alliances in the Mediterranean area and to accelerate north-south regional cooperation towards the emerging of strategic maritime clusters in North Africa area (south-south cooperation).

CALLMEBLUE aims to create a strategic vision and transferable models of interregional cooperation. In particular, the project implements concrete actions at both local and regional level to raise awareness on the relevance of Maritime clusters as key actors for formulating and implementing policies for a sustainable blue economy.

The project also promotes exchange of best practices and knowledge transfer between north and southern areas, including piloting learning activities aimed at offering a transferable training “*Toolkit*”, addressed to future maritime cluster managers in the southern area. To this end, the project carries out tasks 3.1 and 3.2.

Task 3.3 “**Advanced Learning Labs**” was carried out during last semester 2025 with the aim to raise awareness on the relevance of Maritime clusters and address emerging cluster leaders interested in gaining experiences on business activities.

It represents an advanced follow up activity dedicated to tailor made learning labs with the aim to offer a second transferable “**Toolkit**” addressed to future maritime cluster actors to be prepared on the legal, structural, administrative and management aspects for a concrete creation of future maritime clusters.

These **FREE “Advanced Learning Labs Workshop”** are designed for existing and prospective maritime cluster stakeholders, with the objective of strengthening their business development capacities to support the effective creation and management of maritime clusters. It aims to support a group of professionals capable of leading the establishment and long-term management of maritime clusters across the Mediterranean region.

- One of the key benefits of participating in the Advanced Learning Labs is gaining an introduction to the Mediterranean maritime cluster ecosystem.

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Cluster alliances have demonstrated that operating as a sea-basin community can significantly enhance the effectiveness of complex networking processes. as in the case of the creation of maritime clusters in Mauritania, Libya, the definitive scale-up in Algeria, the support of the ongoing process in Morocco and the pioneering Maritime Cluster of Tunisia (CMT - Cluster Maritime Tunisien).

- In this context, it is essential to encourage stakeholders committed to the social and economic development of their regions to assess their regional economic strengths and to mobilize, through the maritime cluster, all relevant actors contributing to the ecosystem. This includes fostering cross-sectoral dynamics, strengthening dialogue with local and national authorities, and highlighting the specific characteristics and strategic priorities of the region..

The **“Advanced Learning Labs for Emerging Maritime Clusters”** workshop consists of six sessions, each lasting two hours. The structure of the Learning Workshops is outlined below::

Session-07: How to conceive your sector strategy

Session-08: Public-private collaboration strategy to serve your cluster strategy

Session-09: Develop your business model by developing the business of your members

Session-10: Funding & Financing mechanisms

Session-11: Implement your strategy

Session-12: Communication / Marketing

The online programme of the **Advanced Learning Labs for Emerging Maritime Clusters**, comprising the six sessions described above, was delivered between 10 October and 11 December 2025. It brought together a group of 85 selected participants, primarily from the Maghreb region.

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Deliverable D3.3 presents the results of Task 3.3, detailing the design and implementation of the tailor-made pilot **Advanced Learning Labs for Emerging Maritime Clusters**, delivered online to a group of professionals mainly from the southern shore of the Mediterranean. It also describes the structure and content of the transferable Toolkit, intended for professionals who may lead the establishment and management of maritime clusters in the region. This toolkit constitutes a replicable training model that can also be adapted for use in other sea-basin contexts

Toolkit for capitalization and replication of the learning labs

This document is aimed at inspiring maritime cluster supporters and practitioners to develop similar capacity building programs. Its features include:

- A practical, modular training framework to support the creation and development of clusters in particular for business development.
- Consolidated essential knowledge provided by the Advance learning labs, operational tools and networking resources to be reused and transferred.
- Recommendations for strengthening capacities and contributing to the long-term sustainability of maritime clusters through capacity building.

Methodology

Task 3.3 links to other Tasks & Work Packages of CMB (CallmeBLUE)

Task 3.3 is part of one of the core work packages of the CallmeBLUE project, WP3 on **“Empowerment towards setting up and strengthening emerging maritime clusters ecosystem”** comprised three tasks:

- **T3.1** “Awareness & Matchmaking Local Workshops”
- **T3.2** “Organizing Learning Labs for Emerging Maritime Clusters”
- **T3.3** “Advanced Online Learning Labs on Business Activities for Advanced Maritime Clusters”

The objectives of WP3 are:

- **Objective 1:** Raise awareness and promote the role of clusters and their impact on a territory, based on experience exchanged
- **Objective 2:** Prepare the legal, structural, administrative and management aspects for the creation of future maritime clusters
- **Objective 3:** Strengthen the robustness of clusters and promote a sustainable blue economy strategy to obtain impact at territorial level
- **Objective 4:** Enable the sharing of best practices and strategies for better management and development of emerging maritime clusters (North-South cooperation).

WP3 contributes toward the fulfillment of CMB **SO2**: “Promote empowerment of embryonic & emerging maritime clusters ecosystem (internationalisation, sustainable blue economy sector specialisation, cluster management)”.

Task 3.1 “AWARENESS AND MATCHMAKING LOCAL WORKSHOPS (PILOTING)”, which focuses on objectives #1 and #2 of WP3, was carried out during months M06-M14 of the project with the aim to raise awareness on the relevance of maritime clusters as

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key actors for a sustainable blue economy as well as to enhance cooperation between actors from the south and north.

In the framework of Task 3.1, the two main activities are:

- **Piloting activities:** Three tailormade face-to-face workshops were organized in *Algeria, Tunisia* and *Mauritania* respectively by Leanovator, CMT, CMMA, to raise awareness about the role of Maritime Clusters for a sustainable blue economy. These workshops aimed at sharing experience between clusters (North-South cooperation): e.g., on how clusters have achieved results; What are the benefits of a cluster in a region, social - economic - employment - sector positioning; How can the participation and integration of women and young in the blue economy and opportunities for the younger generation in this sector, be enhanced. Deliverables D3.1, D3.2, D3.3 summarize the outcome of the “awareness and matchmaking local workshops (piloting)” organized in Algeria, Tunisia and Mauritania, respectively.
- **A Feasibility Study** on embryonic local clusters. CMMA was responsible to investigate on embryonic emerging clusters in *Morocco*, and *Egypt*. Dedicated actions have been performed to mobilize key stakeholders of local territories identified under WP2. A strategic plan was acted thanks to the crucial role of Advisory Board and Associated partners to engage local territories and give a clear picture of economic and social impact for a maritime cluster’s activation. Deliverable D3.4, presents the results of the Feasibility Study.

Task T3.2 “ORGANIZING LEARNING LABS FOR EMERGING MARITIME CLUSTERS”, focuses primarily on the Objectives #2, #3, and #4 of WP3, complementing the raising of awareness actions performed in the context of Task 3.1.

Building upon outcomes of WP2 and Task 3.1, this activity represents a follow up dedicated **to tailor made learning labs** with the aim to offering a transferable “**Toolkit**” addressed to future maritime cluster actors to be prepared on the *legal, structural, administrative and management* aspects for a concrete creation of future maritime clusters, and educating a group of professionals who could lead the establishment and management of maritime clusters in the region (a transferable training model applicable also in other sea basin area).

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This task was led by Strategis with the support of CMT and all partners.

Piloting learning activities (involving the main actors and dynamics emerged from the needs assessment WP2 and Task 3.1) were performed online with tailored made learning program and dedicated working groups.

The target of the piloting learning activities was to design and deliver an online workshop consisting of **6 sessions of 2-hour** duration each to be offered to a group of at **least 10** professionals from Southern countries.

Deliverable D3.2, “TOOLKIT: Training Activities for Emerging Cluster, Lessons Learned” summarizes the outcomes of Task 3.2, presenting the design and development of the tailor-made pilot **“Learning Labs for Emerging Maritime Clusters”** which was held from May to July 2025, and delivered online to a group of professionals, mainly from the southern shore of the Mediterranean; and, the composition of the transferable “Toolkit” addressed to professionals who could lead the establishment and management of maritime clusters in the region (a transferable training model applicable also in other sea basin areas).

The Objectives and Outcomes of Task 3.3

Task T3.3 “ORGANIZING LEARNING LABS FOR EMERGING MARITIME CLUSTERS”, focuses primarily on the Objectives #2, #3, and #4 of WP3, complementing the raising of awareness actions performed in the context of Task 3.1 and 3.2.

This activity represents a follow up of Task 3.3 dedicated **to tailor made advanced learning labs** with the aim to offering a transferable **“Toolkit”** addressed to future maritime cluster actors to learn how to develop a business strategy to help future clusters to present a development plan for the members business growth. educating a group of professionals who could lead the establishment and management of maritime clusters in the region (a transferable training model applicable also in other sea basin area).

This task is led by ANIMA Investment Network with the support of CMT and all partners.

Advanced learning activities were performed online with tailored made learning program and dedicated working groups.

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Learning activities were designed and delivered as an online workshop consisting of **6 sessions of 2-hours** duration each to be offered to a group of professionals from Southern countries: academics, clusters, territorial organisations, business support actors, all interested in the Blue economy.

Deliverable **D3.3, “TOOLKIT: Training Activities for Emerging Cluster, Lessons Learned”** summarizes the outcomes of Task 3.3, presenting the design and development of the tailor-made pilot **“Advanced Learning Labs for Emerging Maritime Clusters”** which was held from October to December 2025, and delivered online to a group of professionals, mainly from the southern shore of the Mediterranean; and, the composition of the transferable “Toolkit” addressed to professionals who could lead the establishment and management of maritime clusters in the region (a transferable training model applicable also in other sea basin areas).

List of KPIs

Below is an overview of the expected KPIs for Task 3.3 and the corresponding results achieved.

Table 1 - List of KPIs

| Task | KPI | Country / Region | Expected results | Results reached |
|----------|--|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Task 3.3 | Identification, assessment and acceptance of at least 10 professionals, mainly from the southern coasts of the Mediterranean and related to the Blue Economy sector, for participation in the pilot program <i>“Advanced Learning Labs for Emerging Clusters”</i> , which was held online from October to December 2025. | Maghreb & MENA | 10 | 85 |
| | Design, develop and deliver a pilot, tailor-made <i>“Advanced Learning Labs for Emerging Maritime Clusters”</i> online workshop consisting of 6 sessions of 2-hour duration each to be offered to a group of at least 10 professionals from Southern countries. | Maghreb & MENA | 1 | 1 |
| | Offering a transferable “Toolkit” addressed to future maritime cluster actors to be prepared on the legal, structural, administrative and management aspects for a concrete creation of future maritime clusters and educating a group of professionals who could lead the establishment and management of maritime clusters in the Mediterranean region (a transferable training model applicable also in other sea basin areas). [DELIVERABLE 3.3] | Mediterranean basin | 1 | 1 |

Design & Planning of the Learning Labs

The Curriculum of the “Learning Labs”

Based on the needs-gap analysis of the Blue Economy sector in the Southern countries conducted in the framework of WP2, and presented in the deliverable D2.1 “MARITIME CLUSTERS BLUE ECONOMY REPORTING” and building upon the outcomes of Task 3.1, a tailored made curriculum was developed for the “Learning Labs” addressed to future maritime cluster actors aiming at educating a group of professionals who could lead the establishment and management of maritime clusters in the region (a transferable training model applicable also in other sea basin area).

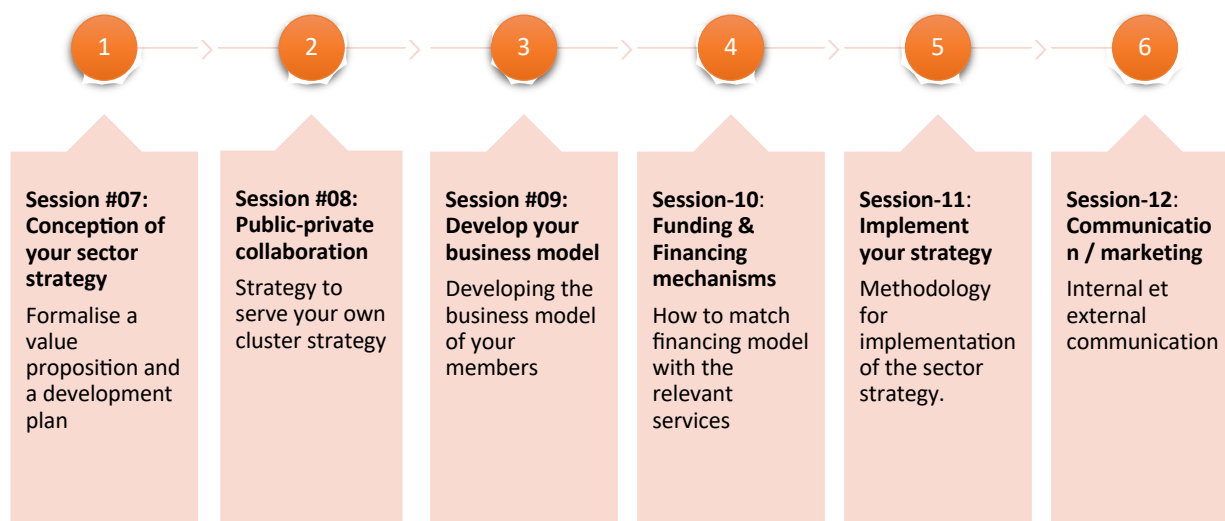
The curriculum was designed taking into consideration the required skills and capabilities for the profile of the future maritime cluster actors as outlined in the work of WP2 and the piloting activities of Task 3.1, but also by analysing similar programs offered by other European research projects like the **MarMED** “Maritime Cluster Management Education Development” < <https://marmedeuproject.eu/> >.

The Learning Objectives that this program addresses are:

- How can a Cluster be prepared on sector strategy and business development aspects for a concrete creation and management of future maritime clusters.
- Increase the leadership and management skills for Cluster Managers
- Sharing best practices & experience between clusters [south – south and north-south cooperation]

The objectives of the six sessions comprising the online “Advanced Learning Labs” workshop are shown below.

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The objectives of the six sessions of the Learning Labs

The final curriculum of the “Advanced Learning Workshops”, developed through the collaboration of CallMeBLUE partners contributing to WP3 under the coordination of ANIMA Investment Network, is presented below.

This curriculum served as the foundation for the development of the content of the six sessions forming the Advanced Learning Labs training programme.

| Advanced Learning Labs | Topics |
|--|--|
| Session #7 Conception of your sector strategy | a. Identify the expertise and business needs of the cluster members b.Strategic watch and benchmark c.Formalise a value proposition and a development plan for the members business growth |
| Session# Public-private collaboration strategy to serve your cluster strategy | a. Identify your value for your territory b. Collaborate with the local and national authorities c. Collaborate with international institutions Concrete example of an international public/private collaboration |
| Session#9 | a. Build your value proposition for the cluster members business development |

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| | |
|--|---|
| Develop your business model | b.Transform the value proposition into services |
| | c.Revenue model for the cluster services |
| Session#10 Funding & Financing mechanisms | a. Sources of revenues for clusters |
| | b. Which financing model for which services |
| | Experience sharing on funding & financing mecanism |
| Session#11 Implement your strategy | a. Methodology for implementation of the sector strategy |
| | b. Monitoring, follow-up, KPI (including Gender / Young generation) |
| | c. Gouvernance and role of stakeholders in the implementation and follow-up |
| Session#12 Communication / marketing | a. Internal communication among members: messages and tools |
| | b. External communication and branding for the cluster |

Once the curriculum for the Advanced Learning Labs had been finalised, the WP3 partners proceeded with the development of an assignment framework and a detailed timeline covering content development, review and validation, as well as the delivery of the six online sessions.

The detailed schedule for content creation, validation and delivery, together with the allocation of responsibilities among partners in their respective roles as content creator, reviewer and presenter, was confirmed by the CallMeBLUE consortium on 9 July 2025 and is presented below.

Learning Labs: Content Development, Review and Delivery schedule

| | Content | Review | Deadline for DRAFT ppt | Approved/Locked for the ONLINE Session |
|--------------------|---|-------------|------------------------|--|
| Session #7 | ANIMA, Mecatronic Tunisie | Strategis | 19-sept | 29-sept |
| Session #8 | ACIO, Cluster Big, ADEC | Polemer | 02-oct | 10-oct |
| Session #9 | ANIMA, CMMA, Cluster MENARA | Strategis | 17-oct | 24-oct |
| Session #10 | ANIMA, Polemer Méditerranée, Egypt for Industry | CMMA | 31-oct | 06-nov |
| Session #11 | Strategis / poloformare | Cluster big | 14-nov | 21-nov |

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| | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------|---------|--------|--------|
| Session #12 | Forum Oceano | Formare | 28-nov | 05-déc |
|--------------------|--------------|---------|--------|--------|

Announcement of the “Learning Labs” program

The announcement of the Learning Labs workshop and the call for participants were published on the CallMeBLUE [website](#) and disseminated through multiple communication channels, including the project’s own platforms, partners’ networks, Advisory Board members, the Union for the Mediterranean, and the WestMED Initiative.

The cohort of participants in the Online “ADVANCED LEARNING LABS”

These BUSINESS TRAINING LABS workshops are addressed to future maritime and blue economy cluster actors to be prepared on the business development strategy of the cluster: sector positioning and strategy, members' services and business model, fund raising and marketing to serve the commercial and technology partnerships of the cluster members.

Cluster professionals and industry experts share their experience and guide the participants in developing their strategies throughout the BUSINESS TRAINING LABS workshops.

Targeted participants are management team and companies involved in the development of clusters in the blue economy sectors.

The objective was to select a group of at least 10 participants from Southern countries to take part in the online learning workshops scheduled between October and December 2025.

Participants were required to:

- be over 18 years of age;
- have a good command of the English language; and,
- have previous/current experience in any sector of the blue economy or are currently pursuing a higher education-related program.

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The priority was given to qualified candidates from the Maghreb region following the main purpose of CallmeBlue project.

A total of 85 applications were received through the application form by the end of September 2025. Of these, 79 were submitted before the initial deadline of 31 August 2025. This deadline was subsequently extended to September to strengthen the promotion of the *Call for Participation* and reach a broader range of stakeholders from the cluster ecosystem as potential candidates for the Learning Labs. 33 of these participants already participated to the T3.2 Learning Labs and registered to the T3.3 Advanced Learning Labs.

An Excel file containing the applicants' details and short biographies was shared with the consortium members involved in the candidate assessment process.

The country of origin of these applicants is presented below

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| Algeria | 15 |
| Egypt | 15 |
| Spain | 7 |
| France | 1 |
| Greece | 4 |
| Italy | 9 |
| Lebanon | 4 |
| Malta | 2 |
| Morocco | 11 |
| Palestine | 4 |
| Pays bas | 1 |
| Portugal | 2 |
| Tunisie | 10 |
| Total | 85 |

Country of origin of the Learning Labs candidates

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Applicant Eligibility Check & Admission Decision

The majority of applications were submitted by candidates from Southern Mediterranean countries. The eligibility of these countries was verified in accordance with the applicable rules.

According to Article 6 of the call for proposals Regional Flagship Projects Supporting the Sustainable Blue Economy in EU Sea Basins (EMFAF-2023-PIA-FLAGSHIP), the eligible non-EU countries covered by the sea-basin strategies and/or regional cooperation frameworks targeted under this call, for Topic 4, are: Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Turkey, Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

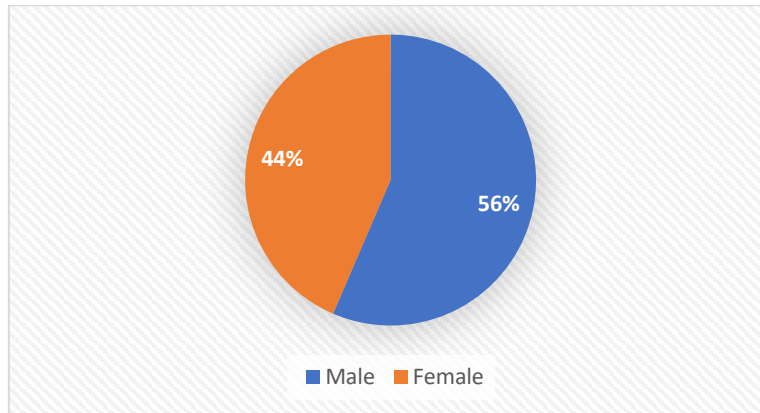
ANIMA made the final screening of all applications, checked the qualification of the candidates [August 2025 and September 2025], and prepared the final list of ACCEPTED & REJECTED applications. Of all submitted applications, very few was rejected due to the fact that the applicant was from a non eligible country.

The lists were validated by the consortium during the monthly meeting of September 11, 2025.

- A group of **85 applicants** was finally Accepted and Confirmed their participation in the ‘Learning Labs’.

The gender profile of the Learning Labs cohort is presented below.

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Gender profile of the Learning Labs cohort

Online Learning activities

Once the curriculum for the “Learning Labs” was formalized, the WP3 partners proceeded with the development of an assignment rubric and the schedule for the content creation, review & validation, and delivery of the six online sessions of the Learning Labs.

The specific timetable for the content creation, validation, and delivery along with the assignment of tasks to partners under the roles of “content creator”, “reviewer” and “presenter”, which were confirmed by the CMB consortium are shown below.

| | Content | Review | Deadline for DRAFT ppt | Approved/Locked for the ONLINE Session |
|-------------|---|-------------|------------------------|--|
| Session #7 | ANIMA, Mecatronic Tunisie | Strategis | 19-sept | 29-sept |
| Session #8 | ACIO, Cluster Big, ADEC | Polemer | 02-oct | 10-oct |
| Session #9 | ANIMA , CMMA, Cluster MENARA | Strategis | 17-oct | 24-oct |
| Session #10 | ANIMA, Polemer Méditerranée, Egypt for Industry | CMMA | 31-oct | 06-nov |
| Session #11 | Strategis /Polo ForMare | Cluster big | 14-nov | 21-nov |
| Session #12 | Forum Oceano | Formare | 28-nov | 05-déc |

LEARNING LABS FOR MARITIME CLUSTERS

The Learning Labs workshops brought together prospective maritime cluster leaders from across the Mediterranean to explore the key principles of cluster business development, covering topics from strategic design to innovation ecosystems and blue economy trends.

It was held online from October 02 until December 11, 2025.

The Learning Labs primarily contribute to the achievement of Objectives 2, 3 and 4 of WP3, as outlined below.

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">01</p> <p>Objective 1: Raise awareness and promote the role of clusters and their impact on a territory, based on experience exchanged</p> | <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">02</p> <p>Objective 2: Prepare the legal, structural, administrative and management aspects for the creation of future maritime clusters.</p> | <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">03</p> <p>Objective 3: Strengthen the robustness of clusters and promote a sustainable blue economy strategy to obtain impact at territorial level</p> | <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">04</p> <p>Objective 4: Enable the sharing of best practices and strategies for better management and development of emerging maritime clusters (North-South cooperation).</p> |
|--|---|--|---|

Objectives of the online piloting Learning Labs

Cluster professionals and industry experts have shared their experience and guided the participants in developing their strategies throughout the BUSINESS TRAINING LABS workshops. Targeted participants are management team and companies involved in the development of clusters in the blue economy sectors.

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We also invited participants from clusters from non-maritime sector as well as experts from other sector to enhance the experience of participants.

Below are the expert's information for each session.

Session #7 - Conception of your sector strategy

- ◆ Emmanuel Noutary from [ANIMA Investment Network](#)
- ◆ Amine Sellami from [Mecatronic Tunisia](#)

Session#8 - Public-private collaboration strategy to serve your cluster strategy

- ◆ Emma Vendrell from [Agency for Business Competitiveness \(ACCIO\)](#)
- ◆ Sara Tedesco from [Cluster BIG - Blue Italian Growth \(BIG\)](#),
- ◆ Adriana PERETTI from [AGENCE DÉVELOPPEMENT ECONOMIQUE DE LA CORSE\(ADEC\)](#)

Session#9 - Develop your business model by developing the business of your members

- ◆ Elizabeth Chapman from [Clúster Marítimo Marino de Andalucía](#)
- ◆ Kawtar El Filali from [Cluster MENARA](#)

Session#10 - Funding & Financing mechanisms

- ◆ Andy Ramorasata from [ANIMA Investment Network](#)
- ◆ Colin RUEL from [Pôle Mer Méditerranée](#),
- ◆ Muhammad Said Saad from [Egypt for Industry](#)

Session#11- Implement your strategy

- ◆ Gregory Yovanof from [Strategis](#)
- ◆ Valentina Di Carlantonio - [Poloformare](#)

Session#12 - Communication / Marketing

- ◆ Joao Perreira from [Fórum Oceano](#)

SESSION #07: Conception of your sector strategy

On October 02, 2025 the first session of the Advanced Learning Labs under the [CALLMEBLUE - Cluster Alliance Med Blue](#) project was held online.

This first session focus was to **identify the expertise and business needs** of the cluster members, **organised a strategic watch and benchmark** and finally **formalise a value proposition and a development plan** for the members business growth.

Through interactive discussions and expert-led presentations by Emmanuel Noutary ANIMA, Investment Network and Amine Sellami from Cluster Mecatronic Tunisie, the session explored key issues such as:

- Is there a methodology or mistakes to avoid identifying the expertise and business needs of the cluster members?
- Strategic watch and benchmark: how to elaborate business intelligence methodology and conduct a good benchmark
- What is a good value proposition and a development plan for the members business growth, and how to achieve this result
- Presentation of CallmeBlue platform by Forum Oceano:

Key Insights – Session 7

For emerging clusters in the Southern Mediterranean, an effective sector strategy must be built around the concrete needs of member companies through a structured participatory process. Successful clusters focus on a limited number of high-impact services — such as business development, innovation support, market intelligence, and access to funding — and progressively convert activities into measurable business value. Trust, transparency, and continuous member engagement are critical to securing buy-in and long-term sustainability, while the cluster’s role should remain that of a value-chain platform driving competitiveness rather than a simple networking or advocacy structure.

Key Success Factors (Session #7)

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Emerging clusters should prioritise:

1. Member-driven strategy
2. Participatory roadmap design
3. Focus on a limited number of services
4. Tangible business value
5. Collaborative market intelligence
6. Trust-based culture
7. Continuous feedback and testing
8. Value-chain approach rather than networking logic

1) Start with members' real business needs — not institutional priorities

Why it matters: Many emerging clusters fail because strategies reflect donor or public agendas rather than company challenges.

Key lessons

- Conduct direct consultation:
 - Workshops
 - Interviews
 - Company visits
- Identify:
 - Market access needs
 - Innovation gaps
 - Skills shortages

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- Financing constraints.
- Use participatory roadmap design — members must co-create the strategy.

From the presentation

- The roadmap should be built by listening first, then structuring actions.

Practical tip: Prioritise: *What will help companies grow in the next 12–24 months?*

2) Use a structured co-creation process (Form → Storm → Norm → Perform)

Why it matters: Emerging clusters need a simple but disciplined methodology.

Recommended approach

- Form: Select a representative group of engaged members (diversity, motivation).
- Storm: 3–4 workshops to generate ideas (SWOT, open discussions).
- Norm: Prioritise actions (importance vs complexity) and balance:
 - Quick wins
 - Long-term structuring actions.
- Perform: Implement, monitor, communicate results.

Takeaway

Strategy should emerge from collective intelligence, not top-down planning.

3) Focus the strategy on a small number of high-impact service areas

The Cluster Mechatronic Tunisia roadmap (2024–2026) illustrates a focused approach.

Priority action streams

- B2B collaboration

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- Innovation support
- Green transition / certification
- Funding support

Lesson: Emerging clusters should avoid dispersion and concentrate on 4–5 core services directly linked to competitiveness.

4) Translate achievements into concrete member value

Why it matters: Strategy is credible only if companies see tangible benefits.

Examples of value creation:

- Market watch and intelligence
- Business matching and leads
- Project support
- Innovation desk
- Training
- Fund hunting
- Certification support

Principle: Move from activities → to services → to measurable business value.

5) Develop a collaborative market intelligence function

Why it matters: SMEs in Southern Mediterranean countries often lack strategic information.

Recommendations

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- Set up a market watch system
- Use collaborative contributions from members
- Keep it lightweight and iterative
- Reduce management effort through shared tools.

Impact

Improves:

- Strategic positioning
- Export readiness
- Investment decisions.

6) Build trust as a strategic asset

The presentation highlights core values needed for cluster sustainability:

- Transparency
- Respect
- Sharing (give & get)
- Commitment/passion

Lesson: In emerging ecosystems, trust and reciprocity are more critical than formal structures.

7) Ensure member buy-in for the value proposition

Main challenge identified :

- Are members willing to use — and pay for — services?

Mitigation

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- Build a simple business plan and share it
- Test services through surveys and pilot actions
- Organise individual meetings
- Use CRM and feedback tools.

8) Clarify what a cluster is — and what it is not

The presentation stresses:

Clusters are not:

- Lobbying organisations
- Business clubs
- Closed networks

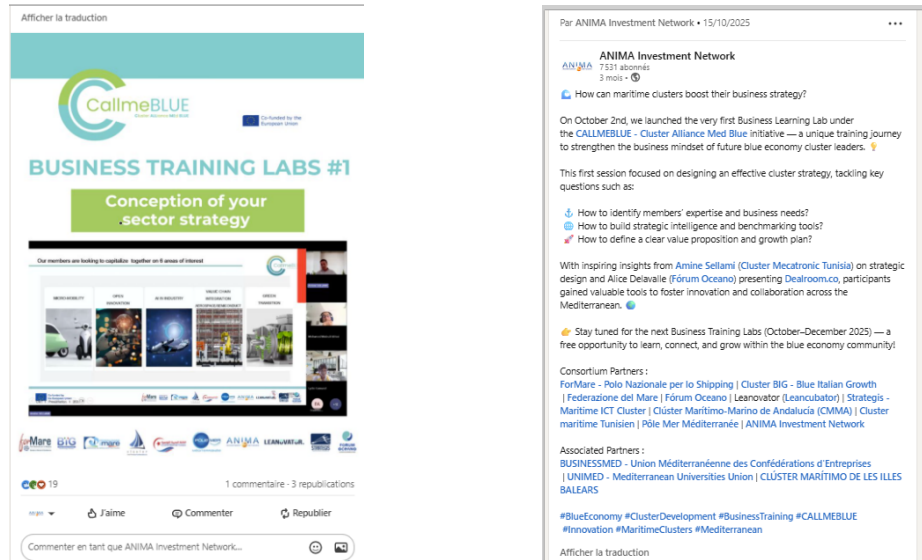
Clusters are:

- Value-chain ecosystems
- Platforms for collaboration and competitiveness (Porter definition).

Lesson: Focus on economic value creation, not representation or networking alone.

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After the end of Session #07, a LinkedIn post on the CallmeBLUE page announced the completion of the session and its availability online for future access.



LinkedIn post about Session 07 [October 02, 2025]

SESSION #08: Public-private collaboration strategy to serve your cluster strategy

Session #08 focuses, held on October 16, 2025 on the **practical aspects of how to collaborate with the local and national authorities and international institutions.**

A case study of the ADEC (L'Agence de développement économique de la Corse) provides a concrete reference point following the insights provided by Sara Tedesco, Senior Program Manager at Cluster BiG, that was reflecting on:

- How to identify the good value for your territory and what is this good value, why is it so interesting
- How to collaborate with the local and national authorities. What are the difficulties you had to deal with?

The session concludes with a review of challenges specific to the Corsican region and strategies for achieving long-term growth and sustainability of blue economy clusters. After the end of Session #08, a LinkedIn post on the CallmeBLUE page announced the completion of the session.

Key Insights – Session 8

Emerging clusters in the Southern Mediterranean can achieve sustainability by focusing on a clear territorial value proposition, establishing private-led governance supported by public authorities, investing in professional cluster management, and delivering concrete collaborative projects. Their role should evolve from networking platforms to strategic intermediaries that connect industry, research, and policymakers. International cooperation, diversified funding, and regional alliances are essential to overcome limited resources and achieve critical mass at the Mediterranean scale.

Key Success Factors

Emerging clusters should prioritise:

1. Clear territorial value

2. Private-led governance
3. Professional management
4. Policy engagement
5. Concrete collaborative projects
6. International partnerships
7. Diversified funding
8. Regional alliances

1) Start from a clear territorial value proposition

Why it matters: Public support, member engagement, and funding all depend on demonstrating relevance.

Key lessons

- Identify your **unique territorial assets**:
 - Strategic location (ports, coastal areas)
 - Existing industries or value chains
 - Universities, research centres, or skills base
- Focus on **economic transformation**, not just networking.
- Align your positioning with:
 - National development priorities
 - Smart Specialisation or sector strategies
 - EU/Mediterranean agendas (Green transition, Blue Economy).

Practical advice

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- Produce a short “Cluster Value for the Territory” note (jobs, innovation, investment potential).
- Use it systematically for ministries, donors, and members.

2) Build public–private governance early

Why it matters: In emerging contexts, clusters often start as public initiatives—but sustainability requires private ownership.

Key lessons

- Recommended model: **Public impulse → Private leadership.**
- Ensure:
 - Companies involved in strategic decisions
 - Public authorities in **support/advisory roles**, not operational control.
- Create basic governance structures:
 - Board with industry majority
 - Clear roles between cluster management and public partners.

Risk to avoid

- Cluster perceived as a government project → low business engagement.

3) Invest first in professional cluster management

Why it matters: Capacity building is the main bottleneck in emerging clusters.

Key priorities

- Dedicated cluster manager (not part-time or purely administrative).
- Core skills:

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- Partnership development
- Project design (especially EU/donor projects)
- Stakeholder facilitation
- Communication and visibility.
- Develop simple tools:
 - Annual action plan
 - Member database
 - Activity monitoring.

Insight from the presentations: Professionalisation is the strongest predictor of long-term sustainability.

4) Position the cluster as a policy interface

Why it matters: Southern Mediterranean ecosystems often suffer from fragmented governance.

Cluster role

- Translate industry needs into policy recommendations.
- Participate in:
 - National consultations
 - Sector working groups
 - Strategy design processes.
- Provide evidence:
 - Sector mapping

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- Skills gaps
- Investment barriers.

Impact

- Increases legitimacy
- Improves access to funding and programmes.

5) Move quickly from networking to concrete projects

Why it matters: Members stay engaged when value is tangible.

Priority actions

- Small collaborative projects:
 - Pilot demonstrations
 - Training programmes
 - Joint market studies
 - Innovation partnerships.
- Encourage:
 - Research–industry collaboration
 - Start-up support
 - Technology transfer.

Principle

Collaboration multiplies value only when it leads to implementation.

6) Use international cooperation as a growth accelerator

Why it matters: External partnerships compensate for limited local resources.

Opportunities

- EU programmes (Horizon Europe, Interreg, etc.)
- Mediterranean initiatives and alliances
- Peer learning with established clusters.

Benefits

- Funding access
- Knowledge transfer
- Visibility and credibility
- Market access.

Advice

Start with:

- Twinning or mentoring with a mature cluster
- Participation in regional cluster alliances.

7) Build sustainability through diversified resources

Early-stage funding mix

- Public operational support (initial phase)
- Project-based funding (EU, donors)
- Gradual introduction of:
 - Membership fees

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- Paid services (training, internationalisation support).

Long-term objective: Reduce dependency on a single public source.

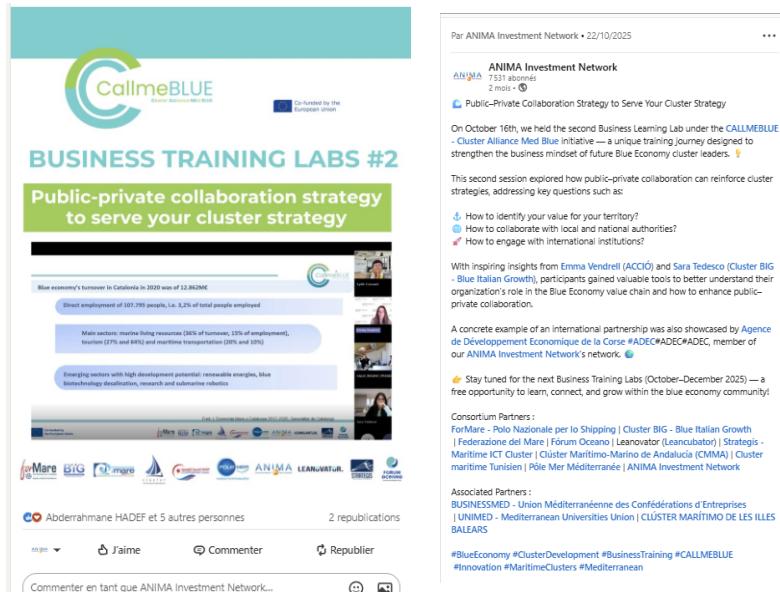
8) Strengthen regional and Mediterranean cooperation

Why it matters: Individual clusters may lack critical mass.

Actions

- Develop **inter-cluster collaborations**
- Share:
 - Best practices
 - Training resources
 - Joint project proposals.
- Create regional platforms to increase:
 - Visibility
 - Bargaining power
 - Policy influence.

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LinkedIn post about Session 08 [October 16, 2025]

SESSION #09: Develop your business model by developing the business of your members

On October 30th 2025, the 3rd session of the [CALLMEBLUE - Cluster Alliance Med Blue](#) Advanced Learning Lab was held, focused on the **business model development**.

Led by Elizabeth Domínguez Chapman from CMMA and Emmanuel Noutary, General Delegate of ANIMA, the session explored how to develop a business model by developing the business of cluster’s members in the Blue Economy, tackling key questions such as:

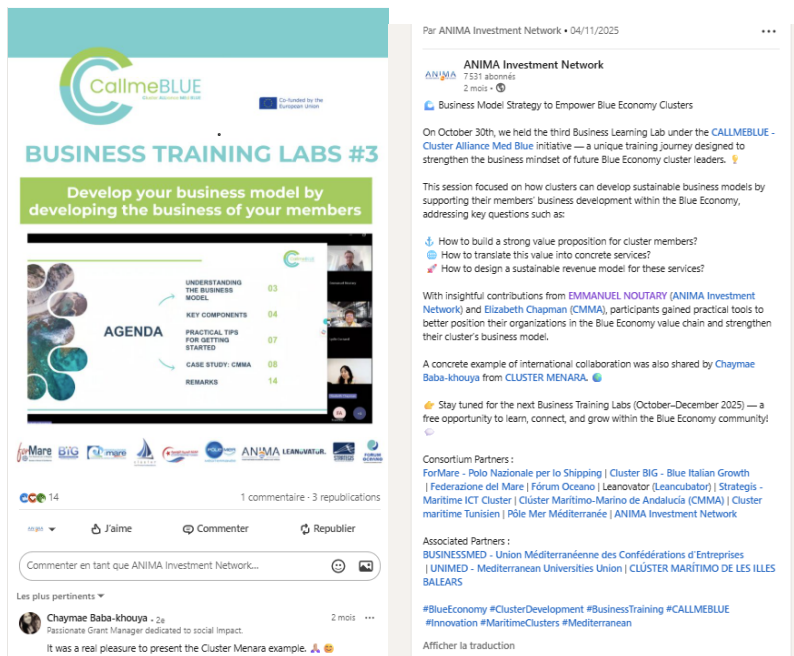
- How to build a value proposition for the cluster members business development?
- How to transform the value proposition into services?
- How to build a revenue model for the cluster services?

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With inspiring insights from Emmanuel Noutary (ANIMA) and Elizabeth Domínguez Chapman (CMMA) participants gained valuable tools to understand better their organization’s role in the Blue Economy value chain and how to enhance a business model.

A concrete example of an international collaboration was presented by Chaymae Baba-Khouya from Cluster Menara.

After the end of Session #09, a LinkedIn post on the CallmeBLUE page announced the completion of the session.



LinkedIn post about Session 9 [October 30, 2025]

Key Insights – Session 9

For emerging clusters in the Southern Mediterranean, a sustainable business model must be built around the economic development of member companies and translated into concrete, high-value services such as market access support, innovation assistance, certification, and investment facilitation. Financial sustainability requires a gradual transition from initial public support toward a diversified mix of project funding, membership contributions, and service-based revenues. Successful clusters position themselves as trusted intermediaries between companies, public authorities, donors, and investors, using collaborative projects as key drivers of both impact and financial viability.

Key Success Factors

Emerging clusters should prioritise:

1. Member business growth as the core objective
2. Clear value proposition translated into services
3. Hybrid funding (public + private + project-based)
4. Progressive development of paid services
5. High-value offerings (market access, certification, investment support)
6. Positioning as a trusted intermediary
7. Project-based growth and visibility
8. Professional management aligned with financial sustainability

1) The cluster business model must be built around members' business growth

Core principle:

The cluster's business model is sustainable only if it creates measurable economic value for its members.

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Session #09 stresses that the objective is to develop the business of members, then derive services and revenues from this value.

Implications

- Start from companies' needs (markets, innovation, funding, compliance).
- Measure success through:
 - New contracts or markets
 - Innovation projects
 - Investment or financing accessed.

2) Transform the value proposition into concrete services

A business model is operational only when value is translated into services.

Examples from Cluster MENARA :

- Training and capacity building
- Coaching and technical support
- Sector studies and market intelligence
- Collaborative projects
- Certification and accreditation support (ISO standards)
- Participation in international exhibitions
- Matchmaking and supplier search
- Technical support for industrial setup.

Lesson : Prioritise services that:

- Solve immediate business constraints

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- Can progressively generate revenue.

3) Diversify revenue sources from the beginning

Session #09 identifies four main funding pillars:

A. National public resources

- Grants from ministries or regional programmes
- SME and innovation support schemes

Key lesson: Position the cluster as a policy implementation tool (innovation, employment, sustainability).

B. International public resources

- EU programmes, development banks, cooperation agencies

Key lesson: Frame the cluster as a regional cooperation platform with strong impact.

C. National private resources

- Membership fees
- Sponsorship
- Paid services

Key lesson: Financial autonomy requires service-based income.

D. International private resources

- Impact investors, climate finance, foundations

Key lesson: Develop investment-ready projects with measurable impact.

4) Move progressively from public funding to mixed financing

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Cluster MENARA's model illustrates a hybrid structure:

- State grant (initial stability)
- Membership fees (engagement)
- Value-added services (long-term sustainability)

Lesson : A realistic trajectory:

1. Public support (start-up phase)
2. Project funding (growth phase)
3. Service revenues (maturity phase)

5) Focus on high-value, paid services rather than basic networking

MENARA's revenue-generating services include:

- Certification and compliance support
- Export and exhibition services
- Technical project studies
- Support for foreign investors establishing locally.

Insight : Companies pay for:

- Market access
- Regulatory compliance
- Cost savings
- Investment facilitation—not for networking alone.

6) Build the cluster as a trusted intermediary

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Session #09 emphasises positioning the cluster as:

- A trusted interface for public programmes
- A project aggregator for donors and investors
- A credible partner for companies and international actors.

This trust is critical to mobilise:

- Public funding
- Private investment
- International partnerships.

7) Use projects as business model drivers

Both presentations show that:

- Collaborative innovation projects
- Pilot initiatives
- Sector platforms (e.g. MENARA's CAIAC innovation centre)

They can generate:

- Funding
- Services
- Visibility
- Member engagement.

Lesson: Projects are not only activities — they are business model engines.

8) Align governance and team capacity with the business model

MENARA's structure:

- Board (strategic oversight)
- Small operational team (director, project manager, finance)

Lesson

A viable business model requires:

- Professional management
- Financial monitoring
- Project and service delivery capacity.

SESSION #10: Funding & Financing mechanisms

Session 10 of the Advanced Learning Labs series held on November 13, 2025, focuses on **clusters sources of revenues**.

This session explored specific **funding & Financing mechanisms** for clusters tackling key questions such as:

- What is a good methodology at national and international level to find sources of revenues
- Which financing model for which services
- How to mobilise internal and external expertise for fundraising?
- How to match financing model with specific services?

Key Insights – Session 10

For emerging clusters in the Southern Mediterranean, financial sustainability depends on building a diversified funding ecosystem combining national support, international cooperation projects, and progressively increasing private contributions. Successful clusters position themselves as strategic intermediaries that design and implement collaborative projects aligned with public policy priorities and regional development objectives. European and Mediterranean programmes represent a major opportunity to finance pilot actions, innovation, and cross-border cooperation, while long-term viability requires strong project engineering capacity, early partnership building, and a gradual transition toward a balanced public-private funding model.

Key Success Factors

Emerging clusters should prioritise:

1. A diversified funding mix
2. Strong project engineering capacity
3. Alignment with public and donor priorities
4. Progressive shift toward mixed public-private funding
5. Active participation in EU and Mediterranean programmes
6. Early partnership building
7. Positioning as a regional innovation hub
8. Continuous monitoring of funding opportunities
9. Demonstrating sector-wide economic and policy impact

1) Think in terms of a funding ecosystem, not a single source

The presentations show that cluster financing relies on combining multiple instruments:

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- Cooperation funding (Interreg, NEXT MED)
- Innovation funding (EMFAF, Horizon Europe)
- Investment and blended finance (InvestEU, EIB)
- National public support
- Private resources

Session #10 highlights that **Euro-MED + NEXT MED + DG MARE + NDICI** together form a **complete Mediterranean funding architecture**.

Lesson: Financial sustainability depends on combining grants, projects, services, and private resources.

2) Use projects as the primary entry point to funding

Both presentations show that successful clusters act as **project generators and facilitators**.

Pôle Mer's model includes:

- Partner identification
- Call analysis
- Proposal structuring
- Technical assistance
- Certification and quality review
- Connection with funders.

Result: 73% of certified projects obtain funding.

Lesson

Clusters should develop internal capacity for:

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- Project engineering
- Consortium building
- Proposal writing
- Compliance and monitoring.

3) Position the cluster as a strategic intermediary for public policy

A key success factor is alignment with public priorities.

Pôle Mer receives operational support because it contributes to:

- Innovation
- Industrial competitiveness
- Sector development
- Regional economic strategies.

Session #10 similarly stresses that EU programmes target:

- Green transition
- Digitalisation
- Skills
- Governance and cooperation

Lesson: Frame the cluster as a **policy implementation tool**, not just a business network.

4) Move toward a balanced public–private financing structure

Pôle Mer’s business model evolved from **100% public funding to a 50/50 balance**

Private resources include:

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- Membership fees
- Paid services
- European projects
- Expertise and training
- International development services
- Seconded staff

Lesson

A realistic trajectory:

1. Public funding (start-up)
2. Project funding (growth)
3. Mixed public-private model (maturity)

5) Leverage European cooperation as a growth accelerator

Session #10 highlights major opportunities for Southern clusters:

- **Interreg NEXT MED** (up to 90% co-financing)
- **EMFAF** for blue economy innovation
- **NDICI – Global Europe** (€79.5B framework)
- Horizon Europe and LIFE

Why it matters

EU cooperation enables:

- Pilot projects
- Networking

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- Technology transfer
- Cross-border business models.

Lesson: International cooperation is often the **main source of strategic funding** for emerging clusters.

6) Build strong partnerships early

Funding success depends heavily on partnerships.

Recommended actions :

- Identify partners early
- Join thematic communities
- Use cluster networks
- Collaborate North–South and South–South.

Lesson: Consortium capacity is a key competitive advantage.

7) Position the cluster as a regional “Blue Hub”

Session #10 identifies new strategic roles for clusters:

- Innovation intermediary
- Pilot project leader
- Demonstration platform
- Regional hub connecting EU and Southern partners.

Lesson: Funding increasingly targets **platform organisations**, not isolated actors.

8) Invest in continuous funding intelligence

Operational recommendations :

- Monitor open calls regularly
- Register on the Funding & Tenders Portal
- Engage with EU and UfM platforms
- Maintain relations with contact points.

Lesson: Funding success depends on **permanent monitoring and early positioning**, not opportunistic applications.

9) Develop sector structuring activities to unlock funding

Pôle Mer attracts funding by delivering strategic services such as:

- Open innovation programmes
- Skills and workforce planning
- Sector roadmaps
- Export support
- Support to public authorities.

Lesson: Funding follows clusters that demonstrate **system-level impact**, not only project activity.

SESSION #11: Implement your strategy

This session held on December 04, 2025, explored how to **implement a strategy** in the Blue Economy, tackling key questions such as:

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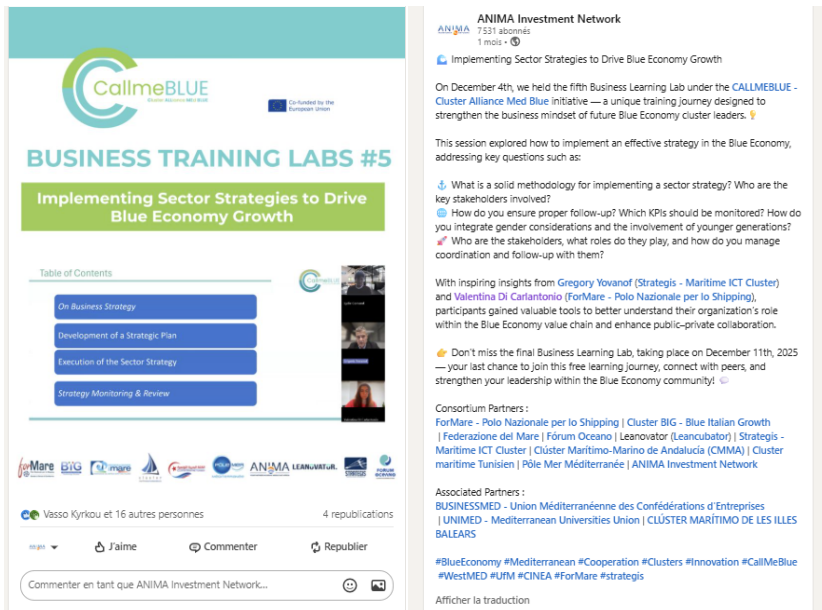
What is a methodology for implementation of the sector strategy? Who are the stakeholders?

How do you follow up the implementation? Which KPI do you use? Do you highlight the gender? Do you include young generation?

Who are the stakeholders? What are their roles and importance? How can you manage the follow up with them?

With inspiring insights from Gregory Yovanof (Strategis) and Valentina Di Carlantonio (Poloformare) participants gained valuable tools to understand better their organization’s role in the Blue Economy value chain and how to enhance public-private collaboration.

After the end of Session #11, a LinkedIn post on the CallmeBLUE page announced the completion of the session



LinkedIn post about Session 11 [December 4, 2025]

Key Insights – Session 11

For emerging clusters in the Southern Mediterranean, the main challenge is not strategy design but effective implementation. Successful clusters translate vision into concrete action plans with clear responsibilities, resources, and performance indicators, and adopt a phased development approach aligned with their organisational maturity. Continuous stakeholder engagement is essential to identify real business needs, build trust, and ensure legitimacy through a bottom-up approach. Professional management structures and regular monitoring processes enable clusters to adapt over time and progressively achieve financial and operational sustainability.

Key Success Factors

Emerging clusters should prioritise:

1. Clear value proposition and measurable objectives
2. Concrete action plans with responsibilities and budgets
3. Simple strategic structure focused on a few priorities
4. Phased development aligned with maturity
5. Professional governance and dedicated management
6. Continuous stakeholder engagement and co-creation
7. Direct identification of ecosystem needs
8. Stakeholder-driven innovation and sustainability
9. Bottom-up legitimacy and trust building
10. Regular monitoring and strategy adjustment

1) Strategy implementation starts with a clear definition of value

A strategy is defined as **an integrated set of actions to achieve a sustainable competitive position.**

Key lesson

- The hardest step is defining the value the cluster creates for its members.
- Implementation should answer four questions:
 1. Where are we now?
 2. Where do we want to go?
 3. How will we get there?
 4. How will we measure progress?

Without clear value and measurable objectives, strategies remain declarative.

2) Translate vision into a structured action plan

The ForMare presentation stresses that **vision and strategy must become a concrete action plan.**

Learning Labs on Business Activities

A robust action plan should include:

- Duration and update frequency
- Sector priorities
- Stakeholder mapping
- Areas of intervention
- Activities and responsibilities

- Resources and budget.

Lesson

Implementation fails when roles, resources, and timelines are not explicitly defined.

3) Build implementation around a simple strategic architecture

The STRATEGIS “strategy pyramid” highlights the execution logic:

Purpose → Vision → Strategy → Drivers → Enablers → Actions → KPIs

Operational implications

- Focus on **3–5 strategic drivers** only.
- Identify enablers (skills, systems, partnerships).
- Monitor through performance indicators.

Clarity and simplicity are more important than complex planning.

4) Use phased development rather than ambitious one-step growth

STRATEGIS implemented a **12-year phased strategy**:

1. **Foundation** – governance, team, initial services
2. **Expansion** – partnerships, funding, market development
3. **Global positioning** – scale and international visibility

Lesson

Emerging clusters should adopt a **progressive maturity model**, aligned with their resources.

5) Build a professional governance structure for execution

Effective implementation requires clear governance roles :

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- General Assembly: strategic decisions and validation
- Board: oversight and compliance
- Cluster Manager: operational leadership and coordination
- Supporting organisation: administrative and financial continuity.

Lesson

Strategy execution depends on a **professional management function**, not only volunteer engagement.

6) Engage stakeholders continuously — not only at the design stage

Stakeholder engagement is defined as a **dialogue process that supports decision-making and implementation**.

Learning Labs on Business Activ...

Key functions:

- Anticipate risks and conflicts
- Build trust and legitimacy
- Align business priorities with societal needs.

Stakeholders include:

- Companies
- Research and education
- Public authorities
- Investors
- Civil society.

7) Identify needs directly from the ecosystem

Stakeholder needs should be captured through:

- One-to-one meetings
- Surveys and interviews
- Industry networking

Learning Labs on Business Activities

Lesson

Only industry actors can identify real business gaps.

A practical example shows how a technical environmental issue (sediment management) was turned into a **new service and business opportunity**.

8) Use stakeholder engagement to drive innovation and sustainability

Stakeholders:

- Share knowledge and technology
- Improve efficiency and innovation
- Increase business creation
- Support environmental and social objectives.

Learning Labs on Business Activities

Lesson

Stakeholder engagement is not only governance — it is a **business development tool**.

9) Adopt a bottom-up approach to legitimacy and long-term support

CSR initiatives and cluster actions developed with stakeholders are:

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- More relevant
- More legitimate
- More sustainable.

Lesson

Move from **top-down planning to co-creation.**

10) Monitor performance and revise strategy regularly

STRATEGIS applies:

- **Annual strategy review** with KPI assessment
- **Major revision every 4 years**, validated by the General Assembly.

Lesson

Strategy implementation is a continuous learning process.

SESSION #12: Communication / Marketing

This session held on December 11, 2025, highlighted the importance of communication and marketing

It explored how to drive a good communication & marketing in the Blue Economy, tackling key questions such as:

What are the main differences between internal et external communication? Why is it important to communicate in a different way?

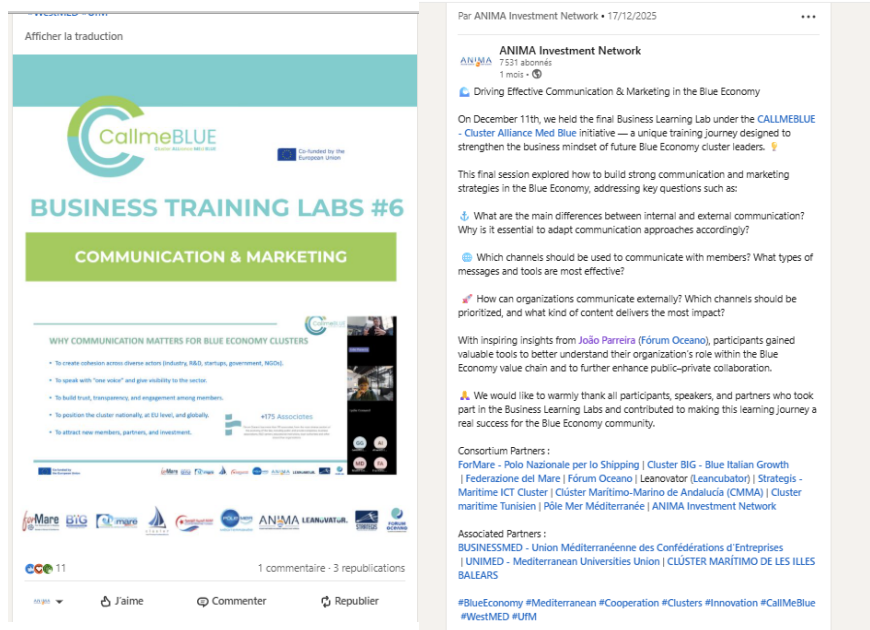
Which channel should be used to communicate with your members? Which type of messages & tools should be considered?

How to communicate externally? Which channel should be used? Which type of content of messages should be considered?

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With inspiring insights from Joao Parreira (Forum Oceano) and participants gained valuable tools to understand better their organization’s role in the Blue Economy value chain and how to enhance public–private collaboration.

After the end of Session #12, a LinkedIn post on the CallmeBLUE page announced the completion of the session and its availability online for future access.



LinkedIn post about Session 12 [December 11, 2025]

Key Insights – Session 12

For emerging clusters in the Southern Mediterranean, communication should be managed as a strategic function supporting member engagement, visibility, and institutional credibility. Effective clusters differentiate internal communication—focused on actionable opportunities and alignment—from external communication aimed at positioning the cluster as a credible partner and thought leader. Segmented messaging, consistent branding, and impact-oriented storytelling are essential to demonstrate value, attract partners and funding, and strengthen international visibility. By communicating clear results and member success stories, clusters can build trust and reinforce their role as key ecosystem coordinators.

Key Success Factors

Emerging clusters should prioritise:

1. Strategic (not ad hoc) communication management
2. Clear separation between internal and external communication
3. Segmented messaging for different audiences
4. Actionable, opportunity-focused information for members
5. Regular and consistent communication rhythm
6. Clear external positioning and narrative
7. Impact-oriented messages (results, not activities)
8. Strong and consistent branding
9. Storytelling based on member success
10. Communication to support international visibility and partnerships

1) Treat communication as a strategic function, not a support activity

The presentation defines cluster communication as the **strategic management of information and relationships** among members, stakeholders, and external audiences.

Why **it** **matters**

Communication helps clusters to:

- Build cohesion across diverse actors
- Speak with one voice for the sector
- Build trust and transparency

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- Increase visibility and credibility
- Attract members, partners, and funding.

Lesson

Communication is a core tool for growth, legitimacy, and resource mobilisation.

2) Clearly differentiate internal and external communication

The presentation stresses that **internal and external communication serve different objectives.**

Internal communication

- Audience: members and partners
- Content: detailed, operational, opportunity-focused
- Objective: engagement and alignment
- Tools: newsletters, working groups, meetings, collaboration platforms.

External communication

- Audience: public authorities, investors, media, international partners
- Content: strategic, simplified, impact-oriented
- Objective: reputation, positioning, credibility
- Tools: website, social media, press, events.

Lesson

Emerging clusters should avoid using the same messages for all audiences.

3) Segment communication according to stakeholder needs

Clusters serve heterogeneous audiences:

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- Large companies
- SMEs and startups
- Research institutions
- Public authorities
- International partners
- Sector-specific communities.

Members expect tailored information, especially on:

- Funding opportunities
- Partnerships and B2B
- Training and events
- Policy updates
- Project results
- Governance decisions.

Lesson

Segmentation increases relevance and engagement.

4) Focus internal communication on actionable value for members

Members primarily want:

- Calls for funding and projects
- Business opportunities
- Participation invitations
- Clear updates on cluster initiatives

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- Success stories from peers.

Best practices include:

- Curated newsletters
- Thematic working groups
- Project-specific platforms
- Regular meetings and direct relationship management.

Lesson

Internal communication should answer: *“What’s in it for my business?”*

5) Avoid common internal communication mistakes

Frequent pitfalls include:

- Sending the same information to everyone
- Information overload
- Irregular communication
- No clear call to action
- Focusing only on the cluster’s achievements instead of member needs.

Lesson

Quality, relevance, and consistency matter more than volume.

6) Build a strong external positioning narrative

External communication should express:

- The cluster’s identity and mission
- Its role in the ecosystem

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- Its strategic impact.

Fórum Oceano positions itself as:

- National Blue Economy coordinator
- Bridge between industry, academia, and government
- International ambassador of national expertise.

Lesson

Emerging clusters should define a clear positioning (e.g. regional hub, innovation platform, policy interface).

7) Communicate impact, not just activities

Good external communication prioritises:

- Project results and outcomes
- Economic or environmental impact
- Member success stories
- Strategic relevance to national or EU priorities.

Mistakes to avoid:

- Communicating only events
- Using overly technical language
- Lack of measurable results.

Lesson

Visibility depends on demonstrating value and impact.

8) Ensure brand consistency and professionalism

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Key elements:

- Consistent visual identity
- Clear tone and messaging
- Regular presence across channels
- Coherent storytelling.

External channels typically include:

- Website (main reference platform)
- LinkedIn and social media
- Press and media relations
- Participation in events and international networks.

Lesson

A strong brand builds trust with funders, partners, and institutions.

9) Use storytelling to make the cluster visible and credible

Effective content includes:

- Member case studies
- Innovation pilots
- Export or investment successes
- Real-life project stories.

Lesson

Stories humanise the cluster and demonstrate concrete impact.

10) Use communication to support internationalisation and partnerships

Communication supports:

- Preparation and follow-up for international missions
- Visibility in EU networks
- Faster response to partnership opportunities.

Lesson

Communication is a tool for **network building and international positioning**.

Post-training Advanced Learning Labs Activities

Satisfaction Survey

A satisfaction survey on the Advanced Learning Labs training programme was conducted by ANIMA using Microsoft Forms after each online session.

Participants were invited to complete the survey via email.

The online satisfaction surveys are available at the following links:

[Call Me Blue Business Trainings 2025 Satisfaction Survey – 02-10-2025 form](#)

[Call Me Blue Business Trainings 2025 Satisfaction Survey-16-10-2025 form](#)

[Call Me Blue Business Trainings 2025 Satisfaction Survey-30-10-2025 form](#)

[Call Me Blue Business Trainings 2025 Satisfaction Survey-13-11-2025 form](#)

[Call Me Blue Business Trainings 2025 Satisfaction Survey-04-12-2025 form](#)

[Call Me Blue Business Trainings 2025 Satisfaction Survey-11-12-2025 form](#)

The questionnaires comprised of 10 questions which are shown in the **Error! Reference source not found**.below.

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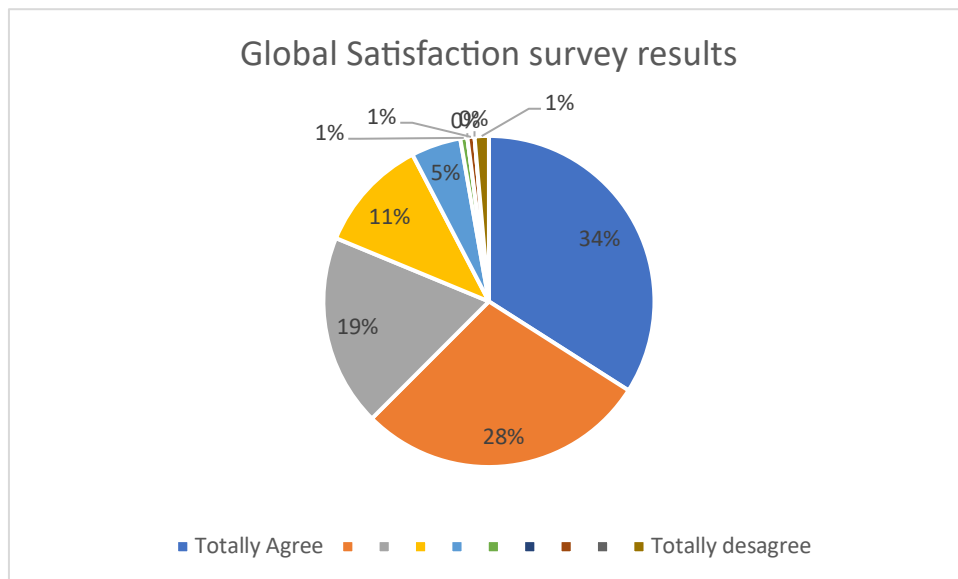
Questionnaire for the Learning Labs Satisfaction Survey

| Index | Question | Answer Choices |
|-------|---|---|
| 1 | The learning objectives were clearly stated at the beginning of the Learning Labs. | 1 (Very Poor) 2 (Poor) 3 (Fair) 4 (Good) 5 (Excellent) |
| 2 | The online-live sessions were well scheduled, starting and ending punctually. | 1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neutral) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree) |
| 3 | The trainers and facilitators were knowledgeable and delivered the content effectively, while facilitating discussions and participation from all participants. | 1 (Not Relevant) 2 (Slightly Relevant) 3 (Moderately Relevant) 4 (Relevant) 5 (Highly Relevant) |
| 4 | The program provided a good balance between theory and practical application. | 1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neutral) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree) |
| 5 | The interaction with other participants was beneficial to my learning. | 1 (Very Ineffective) 2 (Ineffective) 3 (Neutral) 4 (Effective) 5 (Very Effective) |
| 6 | Feedback from the trainers and moderators during the sessions was constructive and timely. | 1 (Very Ineffective) 2 (Ineffective) 3 (Neutral) 4 (Effective) 5 (Very Effective) |
| 7 | The material presented was relevant to my professional development. | 1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neutral) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree) |
| 8 | Accessing course materials for the Learning Labs on the online platform was clearly explained and easy to find. | 1 (Very Poor) 2 (Poor) 3 (Fair) 4 (Good) 5 (Excellent) |
| 9 | Overall, I am satisfied with my learning experience in this Learning Labs Pilot Training course. | 1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neutral) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree) |
| 10 | Other Comments and suggestions for improvements. | <i>open-ended question</i> |

Insights and results of Survey

The Satisfaction Survey and informal feedback sessions provided encouraging evidence of impact.

- The majority of participants rated the trainers as highly knowledgeable and appreciated their ability to deliver the content effectively while encouraging active participation and discussion.
- 90% of participants considered the training materials to be relevant to their professional development.
- More than 90% of participants reported a high level of overall satisfaction with the Learning Labs pilot training experience.



This highlights a strong demand for future editions of the programme and confirms the Advanced Learning Labs as a replicable model for capacity-building initiatives.

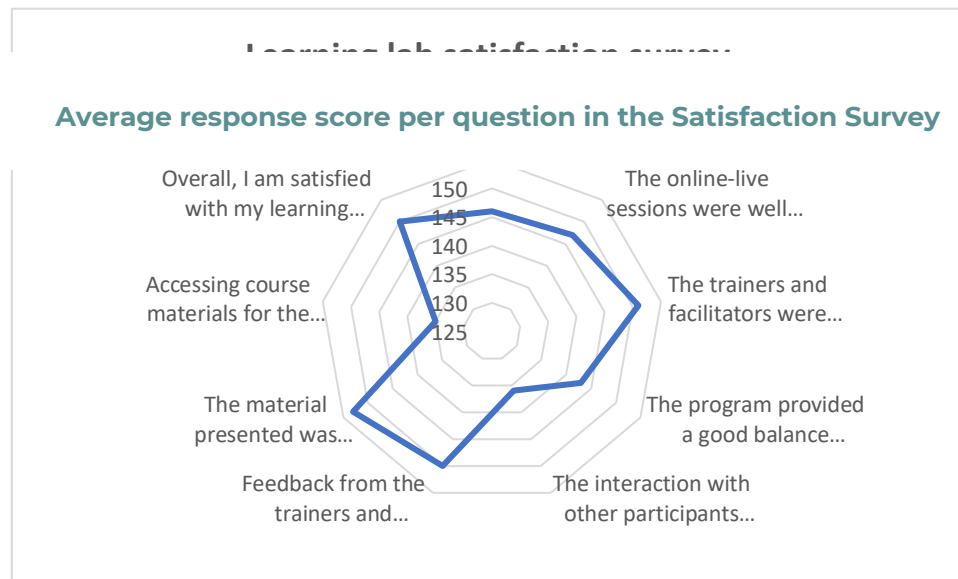
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Overall, the feedback was highly positive across all questions, as shown in the table below.

To facilitate analysis, responses on the five-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) were converted into a linear numerical scale ranging from 0.2 to 1.0, based on a predefined conversion table. Using this method, the average scores across the nine questions ranged between 78% and 91%, as presented below.

Questionnaire answers Table

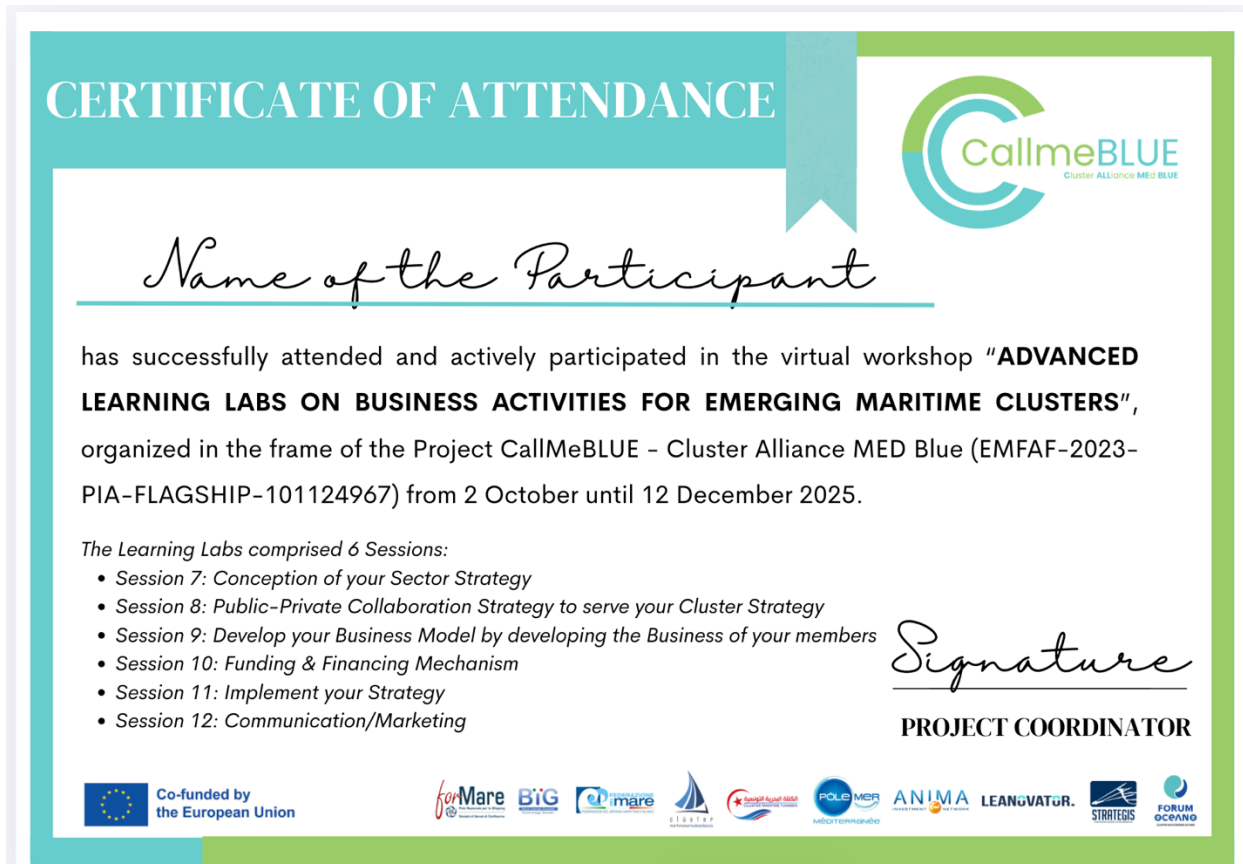
| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| 10 - Strongly agree | 49 |
| 9 | 41 |
| 8 | 27 |
| 7 | 16 |
| 6 | 7 |
| 5 | 1 |
| 4 | 0 |
| 3 | 1 |
| 2 | 0 |
| 1 | 2 |
| 0 - Strongly disagree | |



Certificate of Attendance

A Certificate of Attendance was issued to participants who actively attended the online pilot training programme.

The certificate template, prepared and signed by the legal representative of FORMARE as Lead Partner of the CallMeBLUE project, includes a general statement outlining the main topics covered (see below).



Certificate of Attendance

TOOLKIT TRAINING BUSINESS ACTIVITIES FOR EMERGING MARITIME CLUSTERS, LESSONS LEARNED

The main output of Task 3.3 is the **“D3.3 TOOLKIT: Training Business Activities for Emerging Maritime Clusters, Lessons Learned. Task 3.3”**

This Toolkit consolidates the resources, methods, and outputs of the piloting Learning Labs into a **transferable training package**.

Objectives of the Toolkit

It is intended for future maritime cluster managers and stakeholders in the Southern Mediterranean, aiming to strengthen their business and operational capacities to support the effective establishment of maritime clusters.

The model is also designed to be transferable and adaptable to other sea-basin contexts.

Transferability and Future Use

- The Toolkit’s modular structure allows for flexible adaptation and customisation by local and regional institutions.
- It supports policy design, cluster incubation and development processes, as well as capacity-building initiatives.
- It can be applied to other EU-funded projects or regional cooperation frameworks (e.g. WestMED, Union for the Mediterranean).

Key Insights – Toolkit

- Provides a practical, modular training framework to support the creation and development of clusters.

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- Consolidates essential knowledge, operational tools and networking resources into a reusable and transferable package.
- Strengthens capacities and contributes to the long-term sustainability of maritime clusters.

CONCLUSION & LESSONS LEARNED

The CallMeBLUE Advanced Learning Labs for Emerging Maritime Clusters provided a structured and comprehensive capacity-building experience for prospective cluster managers and ecosystem stakeholders in the Southern Mediterranean.

By combining conceptual foundations, practical case studies, regional cooperation approaches and governance tools, the programme offered an integrated learning pathway reflecting the multidimensional nature of cluster development within the blue economy.

This section synthesises the key lessons emerging from the six training sessions, the associated Toolkit, and the feedback collected from participants and project partners.

Sources of Lessons Learned

The conclusions presented below are based on multiple sources:

- Feedback collected during the Task 3.1 local awareness workshops held in Algeria, Tunisia and Mauritania, which prepared the ground for the Learning Labs.
- Internal assessments by CallMeBLUE partners regarding the design and delivery of the programme.
- Relevant project outputs, including the Feasibility Study on Emerging Maritime Clusters (D3.1.3), the Maritime Clusters Blue Economy Reporting (D2.1), and the Technical Report on the Tunisia Workshop (D3.1.1).
- Benchmarking against comparable initiatives, notably the MarMED project (Maritime Cluster Management Education Development).
- Direct participant feedback collected during the sessions and through the final satisfaction survey.

Key Lessons from the Pilot

1. Awareness is a prerequisite for engagement

Significant knowledge gaps regarding cluster concepts were identified among participants. The Learning Labs confirmed that targeted awareness-raising and

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exposure to international practices are essential to encourage stakeholders to consider cluster-based cooperation as a viable development approach.

2. North–South and South–South exchanges are critical

Peer learning between established European clusters and emerging actors from the Maghreb proved highly valuable. Exchanges with organisations such as Forum Oceano, Pôle Mer Méditerranée, Cluster BIG and the Andalusian Maritime Cluster provided practical insights and replicable ideas. In parallel, South–South cooperation was recognised as a key mechanism to pool resources, strengthen regional ties and build mutual trust.

3. Practical case studies drive engagement

Operational examples of clusters with diverse governance structures and business models had a strong impact. Participants highlighted that learning from real experiences—including challenges and lessons from failures—was more effective than theoretical content alone.

4. Governance and financial sustainability are decisive

Long-term viability depends on transparent governance, diversified revenue streams (membership fees, services and project funding), and strong stakeholder ownership. Reliance solely on grant funding was identified as a major risk.

5. Professional management capacity is essential

Effective cluster management requires specialised competencies combining strategic planning, stakeholder facilitation and project management. The pilot confirmed that these skills remain limited in the Southern Mediterranean and that their development is a key priority.

Final Reflections

The CallMeBLUE Learning Labs represent an important step towards building the next generation of maritime cluster leaders in the Maghreb. The experience

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demonstrated that a coherent combination of theory, practical examples and collaborative learning significantly enhances participants' confidence, knowledge and strategic vision.

Beyond the immediate results, three broader strategic conclusions emerge:

- Capacity building needs to be institutionalised
- One-off training initiatives are insufficient. Sustainable cluster development requires continuous programmes and dedicated institutional support structures.
- Regional cooperation acts as a multiplier
- Collaboration within a Maghreb Cluster Alliance or similar regional platform could strengthen visibility, bargaining power and access to funding.
- The Toolkit represents a transferable asset

By consolidating training materials, references and session recordings into a structured format, CallMeBLUE has developed a resource that can be adapted not only within the Maghreb but also in other sea-basin contexts.

Conclusion

The Advanced Learning Labs implemented under Task 3.3 successfully achieved their dual objective: raising awareness and providing practical tools for the development and management of maritime clusters in the Maghreb.

The pilot confirmed that the success of emerging maritime clusters will depend primarily on strong governance, professional leadership and reinforced regional cooperation.

These lessons provide a solid foundation for future actions within CallMeBLUE and for other EU-supported initiatives aimed at promoting a sustainable and competitive blue economy across the Mediterranean and beyond.

Key Insights – Lessons Learned

- Capacity building remains the most pressing priority for emerging clusters.
- Robust governance frameworks and diversified funding models are essential for long-term sustainability.
- Regional cooperation enhances scale, visibility and collective leverage.
- Practical case studies and peer-to-peer learning are the most effective drivers of action and engagement.
- The Toolkit provides a replicable and transferable resource to support future training and capacity-building initiatives.

Key Messages – Conclusions & Lessons Learned

The CallMeBLUE Advanced Learning Labs highlighted that awareness, effective governance and cooperation are key enablers for the development of maritime clusters in the Southern Mediterranean.

Emerging clusters can achieve long-term sustainability only through professional management, transparent governance structures and diversified funding sources. At the same time, regional alliances have the potential to amplify their impact at the Mediterranean scale.

The Toolkit represents a practical innovation, ensuring that the knowledge and experience gained through this pilot can be replicated and adapted in other sea-basin contexts.

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Cluster ALLiance MEd BLUE

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