



POLICY BRIEF

POLICY BRIEF *(max 4 pages)*

Project acronym and number:

CALLMEBLUE — 101124967

Policy impact *(max 100 words)*

How does your project contribute to the policy objectives indicated in the Call document (including more recent policy initiatives at EU or national level).

CallmeBLUE (CMB) successfully accelerated North-South and South-South cooperation and further advanced and consolidated the Cluster Alliance ecosystem, directly contributing to the WestMED Priority 2.2 and the UfM Ministerial Declaration Roadmap as well as the Pact for the Mediterranean (by DG MENA), the Blue Mediterranean Partnership (by the EIB), and EU support to Innovation Ecosystems in the Mediterranean.

Through matchmaking local workshops in Tunisia, Algeria, and Mauritania, the project secured cross-sectoral dialogue with policy makers and key stakeholders on the relevance of clusters' role as boosters of innovation.

CMB achievements have been strengthened also through a strategic participation to relevant high-level events. Among these: WestMED Hackathon (Portugal, 10/2024), ECOMONDO (Italy, 11/2024), Mediterranean Day/UNOC-3 promoted by UfM (France, 06/2025), and the 18th UfM Regional Platform (Belgium, 10/2025). These actions allowed strategic regional cooperation and joint initiatives aimed also to a structured policy dialogue to cooperating on further advancements on innovation in the Mediterranean ecosystem.

Impact for citizens and communities

Describe the impacts for EU citizens and citizen communities.

CallmeBLUE has promoted the Mediterranean Blue Economy into a fertile ground for opportunities, delivering benefits to both EU citizens and Southern Mediterranean coastal communities. By enhancing North-South and South-South cooperation and further advance and consolidate the Cluster Alliance ecosystem, CMB has moved from planning to active multi-layered implementation.

CallmeBlue has acted as a catalyst for entrepreneurship, competitiveness and regional advancement in the Blue Economy sectors through several key actions and results. Through local matchmaking workshops in Tunisia, Algeria, and Mauritania, CMB effectively connected stakeholders at local and regional levels, enhancing stakeholder engagement and raising awareness of maritime clusters as vital catalysts and boosters for blue economy innovation. These workshops facilitated MoUs and cooperation agreements, while also opening partnerships opportunities and exchange of best practices among interested stakeholders.

Callmeblue also enhanced interregional cooperation through a variety of conferences, events, joint activities, regional meetings, and roundtables (WestMED Hackathon, ECOMONDO, Mediterranean Day/UNOC-3 promoted by UfM, the 18th UfM Regional Platform) and more.

These addressed challenges in the sector and long-term sustainability, supporting clusters translate a shared vision into concrete achievements for local communities. This engagement fostered a collective sense of long-term vision, essential for building trust on potentials of the blue economy in North-Africa.

The project has successfully prioritized the training of maritime professionals while also including women and youth. Although women are often underrepresented in the Blue Economy, all initiatives promoted their fundamental role in the sector and opened new career perspectives. Specifically, two tailored Learning Labs, and respective transferable Toolkits, provided fundamentals, leadership skills, and technical training to over 100 professionals, including women and youth. These labs covered on the one hand, essential legal, administrative, and management aspects of cluster development and, on the other hand, advanced knowledge on business activities, equipping future leaders and local communities to strengthen and lead emerging maritime clusters across the Southern Mediterranean.

Ultimately, by bridging the North-South shores and enhancing interregional cooperation, CallmeBLUE has strengthened the attractiveness of the blue economy for investors opening to new business opportunities in Southern countries. The shared understanding and the enhancement of stakeholder engagement on different initiatives ensured that local communities and EU citizens are active beneficiaries of sustainable maritime growth.

Impact for companies and businesses (if applicable) *(max 100 words)*

Describe the impacts for EU companies and businesses.

CallmeBLUE successfully connected maritime clusters, organizations, start-ups, and companies through different initiatives such as the Matchmaking Business Forum in Malta alongside the EU Startup Summit (24-25 April 2025), while also building its online Regional Platform.



This high-level event acted as a catalyst for economic growth, innovation and business opportunities, generating potential partnerships agreements and new B2B contacts across 8 countries. By integrating startups with international investors, the project provided opportunities for blue economy innovations to reach new companies and facilitated new investments.

The online *Regional Platform* plays a strategic role in connecting clusters and stakeholders across the Mediterranean, facilitating cross-border partnerships, supporting startups, accelerators on emerging technologies, investment flows, sector growth.

The project ensured that all these viable outputs are being actively taken up by project partners and external stakeholders. These project outputs ensure their high replicability across the Mediterranean and other sea basins contexts.

Barriers and future needs (max 100 words)

Building on the successful North-South and South-South interregional cooperation, the primary challenge evolved from initial stakeholder engagement to maintaining long-term cooperation and synergy across different stakeholders, which has been successfully faced.

While no major barriers emerged, managing cross-border activities required constant adaptation and flexibility to align with evolving needs, territorial peculiarities, and local differences.

Based on these 2 and a half-year project experience, future needs may include:

- Further exploiting digital regional platform will secure project sustainability, ensuring ongoing knowledge sharing and fostering new initiatives between the North and South.
- Legislation and dedicated funding programmes & initiatives that secure long-term cooperation, specifically designed to empower local stakeholders in regions where capacity gaps still exist.
- Strengthening clusters governance and leadership to consolidate their role for the Blue Economy innovation and investments viability.
- Providing clusters cooperation through tailored services and capacity building programs able to advance the competitiveness of Blue Economy in the Med ecosystem overcoming barriers, ensuring long-term North-South and South-South interregional cooperation.

Market readiness and IPR (if applicable) (max 100 words)

N/A.

Other

Are there any other elements about the project relevant for being mentioned?

Beyond the specific impacts, recommendations and challenges previously noted, CallmeBLUE stands out as a unique driver for interregional cooperation and blue economy advancement across the North-Southern Mediterranean. CMB path could best understood as a series of incremental achievements, where each high-level event served as a strategic building block to strengthen stakeholder engagement and raise awareness of maritime clusters as essential engines for regional growth in the Blue Economy.

Across the Mediterranean events, joint initiatives, international meetings, opportunities for knowledge exchange among key regional actors emerged.

This process has been consolidated through different actions as follows: the WestMED Hackathon in Portugal (3 October 2024), facilitated the exchange of innovative project ideas to support the sustainable development of the region; followed closely by the ECOMONDO in Rimini (7 November 2024), where the project engaged private sector innovators and industrial stakeholders. Attention then turned to the Mediterranean Day (10 June 2025), promoted by the UfM during the UNOC-3 negotiations in Nice to shape a more inclusive and resilient future for the Med cluster community. CallmeBlue reached a strategic milestone at the 18th UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Blue Economy in Brussels (15-16 October 2025) as a key moment to share achievements, align regional priorities, and accelerate cooperation for a more inclusive, sustainable, and innovative blue economy across the Mediterranean.

Throughout these milestones, CallmeBLUE actively engaged institutional leaders to accelerate cooperation, aligning actions on priority issues such as maritime clusters, blue skills, and the energy transition while identifying concrete cross-border challenges and commitments.

Following these successes, CallmeBlue has consolidated its strategic networking during the Final Conference in Tunis strategically organized back-to-back with the WestMED Stakeholder Conference (27-28 November 2025). To ensure broad accessibility, the event facilitated a high-level roundtable of regional actors. This was not only a closing ceremony but a strategic event where project results were leveraged to shape future cooperation frameworks for innovation and further advancements, ensuring that Southern Mediterranean stakeholders remain central to the future of the Blue Economy in North Africa.

In recognition of its outstanding contribution, CallmeBlue was honored with the WestMED Project Award 2025. This prestigious recognition acknowledges CallmeBLUE as a flagship initiative that effectively strengthened maritime clusters' role through transnational and interregional collaboration. By presenting the project's achievements, the



consortium reinforced the importance of maritime cluster alliances as a primary key driver for innovation-driven development, positioning the project as a pilot for other sea basins.

Finally, the CMB Regional Meeting planned at the very last stage of the project (February 2026, Rome), brings together high-level representatives from Northern and Southern Mediterranean shores to establish a shared follow up vision for a Regional Alliance of Maritime Clusters, building upon the existing WestMED Cluster Alliance. By translating strategic priorities, cooperation models, and communication mechanisms into tangible long-term results, the meeting aligned with WestMED and UfM priorities. The main scope of this meeting is to transform project outcomes into a sustainable Roadmap for cluster collaboration and regional blue growth for the future.

This progression of successful achievements demonstrates that CallmeBLUE represents a transformative pilot project that has moved beyond awareness-raising to establish a sustainable and replicable model of regional cooperation with a clear and solid path forward.

EU funding statement

