



## D5.4 NORTH AFRICA / MAGHREB BLUE ECONOMY PLATFORM

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## Summary CallmeBLUE Project

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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 in order 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 in order to raise awareness on the relevance of Maritime clusters as key actors for a sustainable blue economy policies. 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 in order 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

Digital platforms play a fundamental role in strengthening cooperation, visibility, and investment opportunities within the Mediterranean Blue Economy. Under the framework of CALLMEBLUE (CMB), the partners have developed a dedicated digital space focused specifically on North Africa and the wider Maghreb region, hosted within the Hub Azul Dealroom Platform, managed by Forum Oceano.

This deliverable presents the North Africa / Maghreb Blue Economy Regional Platform, which acts as an online tool for mapping, connecting, and supporting stakeholders across the region. It showcases maritime clusters, SMEs, start-ups, research organisations, investors, public authorities, accelerators, universities, and other blue economy actors, offering a single access point for collaboration and intelligence.

This digital environment allows users to search stakeholders by category, sector, sea basin, and geographical focus, making it the first comprehensive and user-friendly platform aimed at regional cooperation between Northern and Southern Mediterranean actors. Additionally, a dedicated CALLMEBLUE section has been created within Hub Azul Dealroom, serving as a structured ecosystem to identify and visualise actors relevant to the project.

The platform was enriched through a data collection campaign led by Leanovator and CMT, supported by a multilingual Google Form disseminated locally through consortium partners. This process ensured the integration of validated stakeholders from the Maghreb region into the platform.

As a legacy component, Forum Oceano will continue managing the platform, while Leanovator and CMT will contribute with new data and updates during the 3 years following project completion. This collaborative mechanism secures the long-term sustainability and strategic value of the platform, supporting future cooperation efforts under the UfM framework, the WestMED Maritime Cluster Alliance, and future regional programmes.



## 1. Introduction: Background and Purpose

The CALLMEBLUE project was designed to reinforce cooperation between maritime clusters across both shores of the Mediterranean, with a particular emphasis on strengthening the role and visibility of blue economy actors in North Africa and the wider Maghreb region. In this context, digital tools play a pivotal role in enabling long-term collaboration, promoting innovation, and supporting the internationalization of SMEs and clusters.

As part of Work Package 5 (Exploitation, Sustainability and Legacy), the development of an online platform dedicated to the North Africa / Maghreb region represents one of the most important legacy components of the project. This deliverable presents that platform and explains its purpose, structure, and long-term value.

The online platform is hosted within the Hub Azul Dealroom (HAD), a digital system managed by Forum Oceano that supports blue economy mapping, matchmaking, up-to-date information, and investment readiness. Within CMB, Hub Azul Dealroom acts as the main digital infrastructure for stakeholder identification and ecosystem-building, and the creation of a dedicated section for CallmeBLUE ensures that mapping efforts undertaken during the project will remain accessible after its completion. The platform thus serves not only as a repository of information but also as an active tool to promote cooperation and visibility for maritime clusters, SMEs, investors, research institutions, and public bodies from the Maghreb region.

These deliverable addresses three main components. First, it describes the purpose of Deliverable 5.4, which is to present the North Africa / Maghreb Blue Economy Platform as a key output of WP5 and as an instrument to ensure the continuity of project results, how the platform is integrated into the wider CMB strategy and how its functionalities contribute to enhancing cross-border cooperation, supporting market intelligence, and enabling matchmaking between regional actors. Second, the document describes the GDP rules compliance and the data collection process that have been supported by the stakeholders' aggregation in the platform. And finally, next steps and future actions beyond the project conclusion are described.

By doing so, the deliverable situates the platform within its broader strategic context and highlights its role as a long-term asset for the development of the Blue Economy in North Africa and the Mediterranean.



## 2. North Africa/Maghreb Blue Economy Platform

### 2.1. Usefulness of Regional Platform for the Blue Economy

The Platform has rapidly become one of the most relevant digital tools supporting the development of the Blue Economy at regional and international level. By consolidating thousands of verified blue economy actors—including start-ups, SMEs, corporates, investors, research centres, clusters, accelerators, policy bodies and NGOs—it provides a unique, data-driven overview of emerging trends, investment opportunities and innovation pathways across ocean-related industries.

The platform currently aggregates a comprehensive dataset of more than 2,500 verified blue economy start-ups, 4,400 investors, and 130 corporates, positioning itself as the first digital Mediterranean hub for Blue Deals and innovation intelligence.

For policymakers, the platform offers a reliable mechanism to identify gaps in the ecosystem and monitor sectoral evolution. For companies and innovators, it serves as a gateway to visibility, funding opportunities, strategic partnerships and internationalisation. Its capacity to display enterprise analytics, map technological developments and facilitate matchmaking makes HAD a strategic asset for fostering sustainable growth and accelerating cooperation among blue economy stakeholders worldwide. In the scope of HAD, the Regional Platform developed under CallmeBLUE, with the functionalities that will be detailed in the following sections, plays a pivotal role by acting as the digital backbone for ecosystem intelligence and stakeholder engagement.

By providing a centralized, data-driven view of ocean-related actors across the Mediterranean and other relevant sea basins, the Regional Platform enables to identify high-potential innovation projects, facilitate transnational collaboration, and support evidence-based policy design. Its matchmaking capabilities and comprehensive analytics allow CMB partners to quickly connect start-ups, SMEs, investors, research institutions, and corporates, accelerating the scaling of sustainable blue economy solutions.

Moreover, the Regional Platform strengthens cross-basin cooperation by highlighting sectoral trends, investment flows, and technological developments relevant to the Mediterranean region. In this way, it not only enhances visibility and strategic networking for individual actors but also contributes directly to achieving CallmeBLUE's objective of creating a



harmonized, data-informed ecosystem that fosters innovation, investment, and sustainable growth across sea basins.

The project official Website provides a prominent place for easy access to the platform and the form to join the CallmeBLUE Community within HAD, available in this link: <https://callme-blue.eu/>

Figure 1: Regional Platform accessible from CMB website

### 2.1.1. Navigation & Search Tools

Users can search by:

- Category (e.g. SME, investor, cluster, research institution)
- Sea Basin (Mediterranean, Atlantic, Black Sea)
- Country
- Sector
- Investment type
- Technologies & application areas

These filters enable precise navigation and cross-matching between Northern and Southern Mediterranean stakeholders.

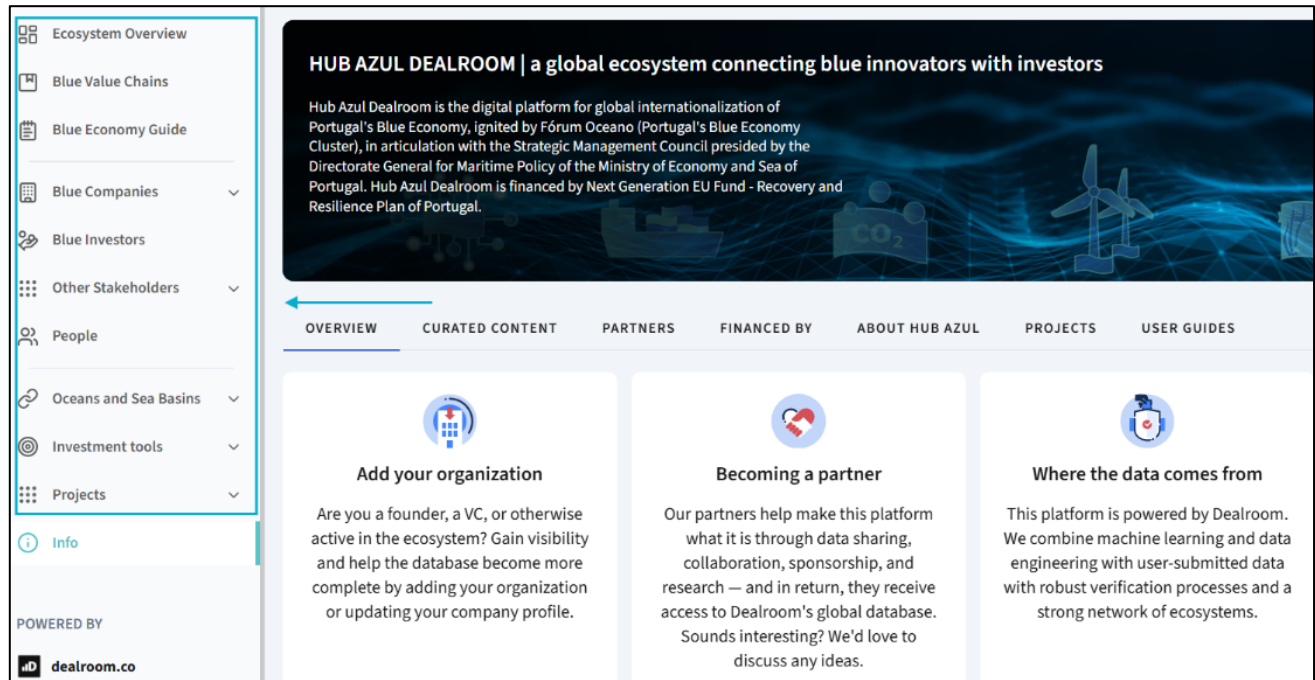


Figure 2: Hub Azul Dealroom features overview

### 2.1.2. Market Intelligence Features

The platform offers real-time insights including:

- Investment trends
- Enterprise value analytics
- Sector heatmaps
- Geographic distribution of actors
- Funding sources

These tools support data-driven decision making for clusters, policymakers, and investors.

### 2.1.3. Matchmaking & Cooperation Features

The platform supports:

- Investor–startup matching
- Cluster–cluster cooperation opportunities
- SME visibility for internationalization

To summarize, through the HAD functions the Regional Platform of CallmeBLUE will aim to support:

- Investment attraction and matchmaking between blue economy start-ups and investors.
- Data-driven intelligence through real-time monitoring of market trends, investment flows, and technological developments.
- Visibility for maritime clusters and their members at international level.
- Regional collaboration, allowing clusters to identify potential partners and funding opportunities for future joint projects.

Integrating CallmeBLUE's North Africa and Maghreb ecosystem into this platform allows regional actors to benefit from this established digital environment and ensures that their profiles become part of a wider, globally recognised blue economy community.

#### **Its incorporation in WP5 allows:**

- Regional stakeholder visibility.
- Market intelligence (through Blue Compass and Blue Economy Guide).
- Investment facilitation.
- Cross-border matchmaking.
- Cluster development and internationalization.

The platform therefore represents the core digital legacy of CallmeBLUE.



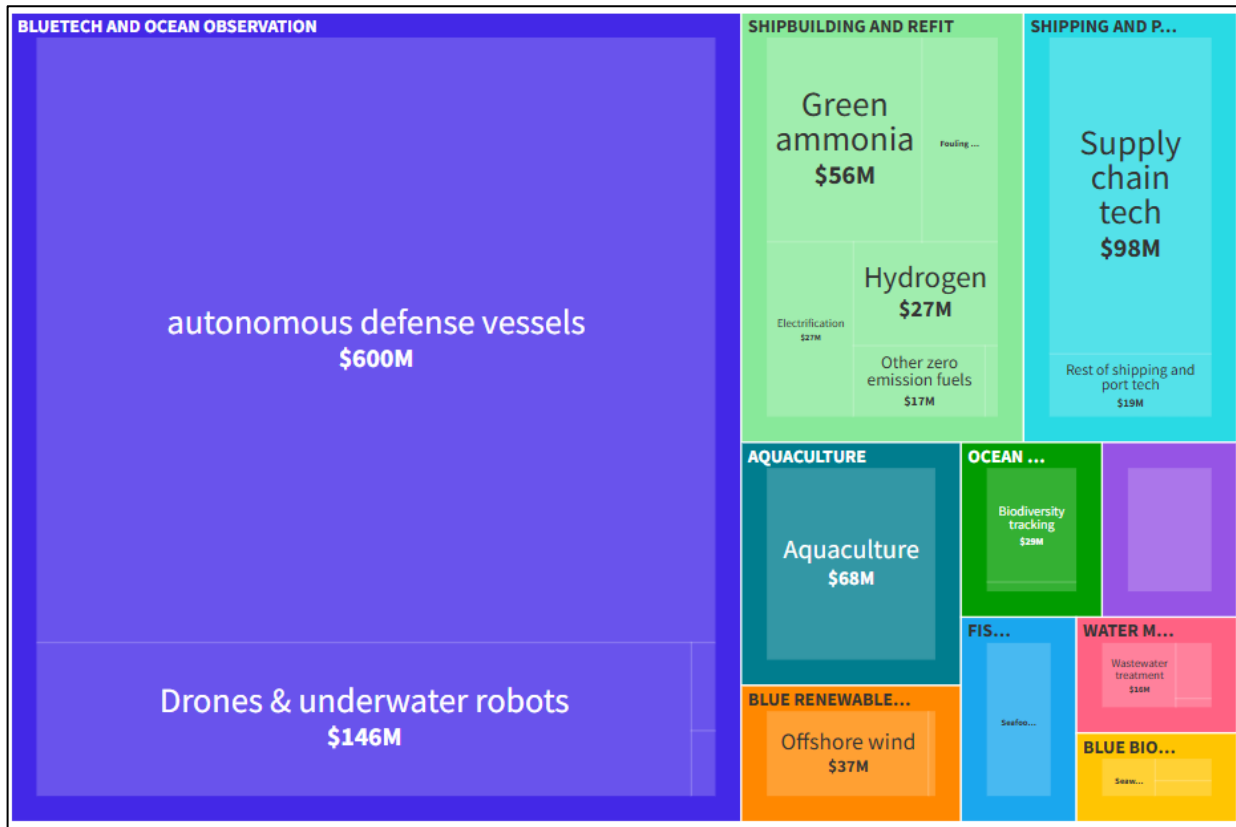


Figure 3: Blue Economy Guide - Blue Economy segments trend 2025

## 2.2 Sea Basin Ecosystem Section

One of the most powerful features of Platform is the **Sea Basin section**, which allows users to explore blue economy actors according to their geographical and maritime context. Through this filter, stakeholders can be viewed and analysed within specific maritime basins—such as the Mediterranean, Atlantic, North Sea or Black Sea—enabling a more strategic understanding of regional dynamics and cooperation potential.

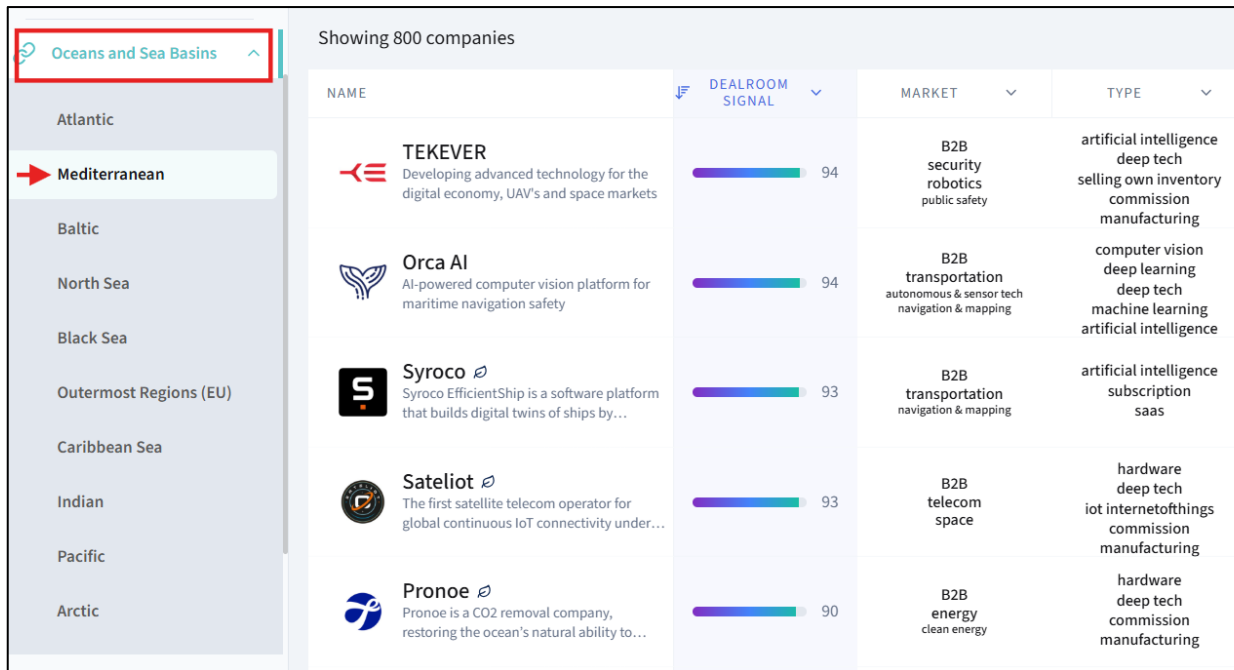


Figure 4: Sea Basin section

This functionality is particularly valuable for cross-border initiatives such as CallmeBLUE, where the interaction between Northern and Southern Mediterranean actors is a central objective. By selecting the “Mediterranean” Sea Basin, users can directly visualise the stakeholders relevant to the region, compare sub-regional patterns, and identify cooperation opportunities across both shores. For the Maghreb region, this section provides a clear representation that is growing of its blue economy landscape within the wider Mediterranean context, supporting evidence-based decision making and facilitating engagement between clusters, startups, public bodies and research organisations operating across the sea basin.

Through this space, CallmeBLUE beneficiaries and associated partners are displayed as part of a living and growing ecosystem that reflects the diversity and dynamism of the Mediterranean Blue Economy. Rather than being a static directory, this section functions as a **digital node of collaboration**, embedded within the broader HAD environment.

By interlinking CallmeBLUE stakeholders with the wider global blue economy community mapped in Hub Azul, the platform enables:



- **Cross-visibility** between Mediterranean and Atlantic actors.
- **Thematic and geographic intelligence**, through the aggregation of data and analytics on investment trends, sectoral growth, and innovation flows;
- **Active matchmaking and cooperation**, connecting clusters and SMEs with investors, accelerators, and funding opportunities.

## 2.3 The CallmeBLUE Dedicated Section in Hub Azul Dealroom

Within the Hub Azul Dealroom Platform, a dedicated section has been developed for the CallmeBLUE project, serving as a digital ecosystem that showcases and connects the Mediterranean blue economy community built through the project’s activities.

Accessible at <https://hubazuldealroom.forumoceano.pt/lists/50346>, this section operates as an integrated “ecosystem space” that highlights the clusters, SMEs, research entities, investors, and public institutions identified and engaged through CallmeBLUE.

The CallmeBLUE ecosystem section offers an intuitive and interactive way to explore the Mediterranean Blue Economy landscape, allowing users to:

Filter by Sea Basin or geographic region, enabling navigation through the Mediterranean, Atlantic, or other relevant basins, and identifying opportunities for North–South and South–South cooperation;

Access detailed stakeholder profiles containing institutional information, activity areas, projects, and contact data, facilitating visibility and matchmaking among regional actors.

Through this dedicated space, CallmeBLUE beneficiaries and associated partners are displayed as part of a living and growing ecosystem that reflects the diversity and dynamism of the Mediterranean Blue Economy. This section functions as a digital node of collaboration, embedded within the broader Hub Azul Dealroom environment.

This CallmeBLUE digital ecosystem represents a key component of the project’s long-term legacy, ensuring that its network, data, and synergies remain accessible, dynamic, and expandable beyond the project’s lifetime. It



transforms the HAD into a permanent regional alliance platform, fostering continued collaboration and investment in the Mediterranean Blue Economy.

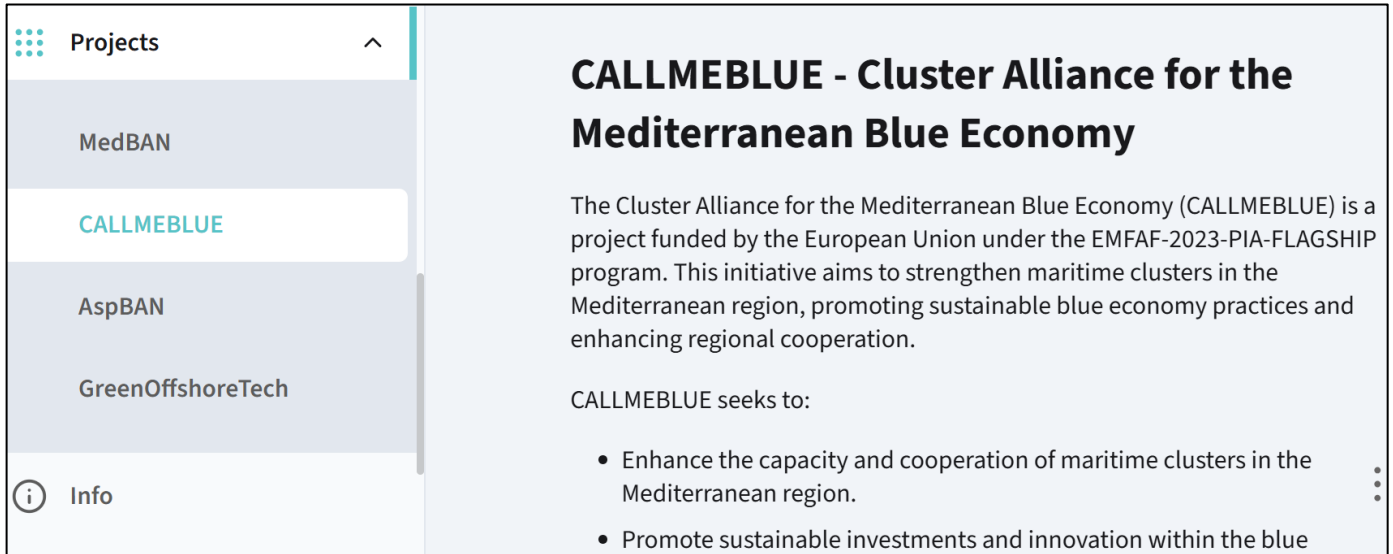


Figure 5: CallmeBLUE section in HAD Platform

### 3. Data Governance, GDPR and Security

#### 3.1 GDPR Compliance

Ensuring the protection, accuracy and responsible management of data is a core requirement for all digital tools developed within CallmeBLUE. The North Africa / Maghreb Blue Economy Platform, embedded within Hub Azul Dealroom, fully aligns with EU data protection regulations and applies rigorous data governance procedures. These measures guarantee that all information published on the platform is collected with consent, processed lawfully, and maintained securely. They also ensure transparency for stakeholders and provide a robust framework for long-term sustainability of the platform beyond the project’s lifetime.

The platform integrates several mechanisms to ensure these obligations are met:



### 3.1.1 Clear consent procedures

All entities included in the platform provide explicit consent before any personal or organizational data is collected, uploaded, or published. Consent is obtained either through the platform’s internal onboarding mechanism or via the multilingual Google Form used during the CallmeBLUE data-gathering campaign.

### 3.1.2 Secure hosting environment

Hub Azul Dealroom is hosted on a secure infrastructure employing encryption, access controls, and continuous monitoring. This ensures that all stored data—both personal and organizational—is protected against unauthorized use, loss, or alteration.

### 3.1.3 Rights of data subjects

Stakeholders featured on the platform retain the right to access, rectify, or delete their data at any time. Clear instructions are provided to allow organizations to request corrections or removal via direct contact with the platform’s internal support tools. Requests are processed promptly and transparently.

### 3.1.4 Data minimization and responsible processing

Only data necessary for mapping and cooperation purposes is collected. Sensitive or unnecessary personal information is not solicited, and all entries undergo verification to adhere to the principles of accuracy and proportionality.

### 3.1.5 Transparency through a dedicated privacy policy

A publicly accessible privacy policy outlines how data is collected, processed, stored and protected. Users are informed of their rights, the purpose of processing activities, and the measures in place to safeguard their information.

### 3.1.6 Roles and responsibilities

Forum Oceano acts as the data controller with the Dealroom technical team for the overarching platform, responsible for ensuring GDPR compliance, managing user requests and maintaining secure data infrastructure.

Leanovator and the Cluster Maritime Tunisien (CMT) act as data providers (data controllers for the information they collect), ensuring that any data they supply to the platform is obtained lawfully and with proper consent. Their collaboration with Forum Oceano ensures coherent data flows and consistent compliance across all partners.



Together, these measures guarantee that the North Africa / Maghreb Blue Economy Platform is fully aligned with GDPR requirements and adheres to the highest standards of data protection and ethical data management.

### 3.2 Data Collection Process

The data populating the North Africa / Maghreb section of the digital ecosystem is the result of a structured and collaborative process involving several CallmeBLUE partners. This process ensures that all listed organizations are legitimate blue economy stakeholders and that the information uploaded is accurate, relevant, and compliant with data protection standards.

To initiate the population of the platform, a multilingual data collection campaign was launched, using a Google Form developed by WP5 and translated into French and English. This approach ensured inclusiveness and maximized accessibility for stakeholders across the Maghreb region. The form was designed to gather essential organizational information (e.g., sector, location, activities, contact point) while applying GDPR-compliant consent fields and limiting the collection of personal data to what is strictly necessary. It is worth mentioning that any actor who may have interest in joining the HAD can do it directly by creating a user for the platform with no costs associated.

The form was disseminated widely through the networks of Leanovator, CMT, and national supporting organizations in Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Libya, and Mauritania. This localized dissemination ensured that the campaign reached relevant actors, including maritime clusters, SMEs, ports, research institutions, universities, incubators, public authorities, and NGOs involved in blue economy activities. Local knowledge from partners played a significant role in targeting key institutions and obtaining reliable and representative submissions.

Once data was collected, validation and quality control were carried out from Forum Oceano. This verification process included checking the legitimacy of organizations, ensuring that data fields were complete, and confirming that consent was provided. Any unclear entries were followed up individually to maintain high-quality standards.

After the validation stage, Forum Oceano conducted the final integration of entries into the platform. Uploading was performed according to strict internal data standards, ensuring that entries were consistent in format, categorization, and completeness. This structured workflow guarantees that the information



displayed in the North Africa / Maghreb ecosystem is correct, up-to-date and ready for use by stakeholders and policymakers.

Across the above-mentioned process, the Regional Platform has been also disseminated during CMB events and initiatives carried out by several partners, namely: Local workshops, Business Forum, Learning Labs and Advanced Learning Labs.

To date, the platform has consolidated 21 key actors in the dedicated project section that has been manually populated and more than 800 on the Mediterranean Sea Basin.

Within the scope of CallmeBLUE (3 years after project's conclusion), the platform is expected to actively engage nearly 1,000 actors in the Mediterranean Sea Basin and near 50 in the CMB section, creating opportunities for strategic partnerships, funding, and internationalization. This represents key KPIs for the project, measuring the platform's capacity to mobilize stakeholders and stimulate transnational collaboration.

By combining multilingual accessibility, local partner engagement, rigorous quality control and centralized data management, this process ensures that the North Africa / Maghreb Blue Economy Platform reflects an accurate and trustworthy representation of the region's blue economy landscape.

## 4. Stakeholder Engagement and Platform Population Strategy Post-Project

Ensuring the relevance and long-term usefulness of the North Africa / Maghreb Blue Economy Platform depends on a strong and sustained engagement strategy with regional stakeholders. Within CallmeBLUE, platform development has been supported by a combination of local knowledge, targeted outreach, and data collection. To maintain this momentum beyond the end of the project, a structured approach has been defined to guide both population of the platform and long-term engagement. This section outlines the roadmap and collaborative mechanisms foreseen for the following three years after the project conclusion.



#### 4.1. Data Collection Campaign and Three-Year Roadmap After Project Completion

Building on the foundation of the campaign carried out by Leanovator, CMT and Forum Oceano for data collection and processing described in the previous section, a **three-year roadmap** has been established to guarantee the continuous updating and expansion of the platform after the end of the CallmeBLUE project.

Over the following 36 months, emphasis will be placed on consolidating the existing database, reviewing the accuracy of uploaded profiles, and identifying further actors in key sectors. The platform will also be promoted through regional existing events, national workshops and communication campaigns, allowing new organizations to join voluntarily, using existing publication material and maintaining the existing Form for gathering information.

Parallely, campaigns will be organized in cooperation with Leanovator, Forum Oceano and CMT, and supported by relevant national stakeholders. Special attention will be given to emerging innovation hubs and to SMEs seeking internationalization or investment opportunities.

In the third year, the focus will shift toward consolidating the platform as a recognized reference tool for the Maghreb region. This will involve strengthening connections with regional initiatives such as the WestMED Maritime Cluster Alliance, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Blue Economy Stakeholder Process (MBESP), and national blue economy strategies.

Leanovator and the Cluster Maritime Tunisien (CMT) play a central role in both the short-term expansion and long-term sustainability of the platform. Their proximity to national and regional blue economy actors uniquely positions them to identify new stakeholders, validate information and promote platform use across the Maghreb. Their contributions will follow a structured approach, to be validated with their internal inputs, ensuring coherence with national priorities and the broader objectives of the project.

One of their core responsibilities will be to support data update cycles every 6 months, providing Forum Oceano with new entries collected through their networks. These updates will guarantee that the platform remains dynamic, accurate and reflective of ongoing developments in the region. Leanovator and CMT will also lead joint outreach campaigns in the southern countries of



the Mediterranean, ensuring that new organizations—particularly SMEs, start-ups, training institutions and research centers—are made aware of the platform and invited to join.

In addition, both partners will contribute to visibility and dissemination activities, including co-branded promotional materials showcasing the platform at national and regional events. The involvement of Leanovator and CMT ensures that newly added actors reflect real needs, gaps and opportunities within the regional ecosystem.

Throughout this process, Forum Oceano will retain responsibility for technical maintenance, data governance and platform management, while Leanovator and CMT will act as strategic multipliers and regional ambassadors.

This combination of institutional support, regional collaboration and technical continuity ensures that the platform will remain operational, updated and useful well beyond the end of the project. The continued contributions of Leanovator, CMT and future partners will help secure regular data flows and ensure that the ecosystem evolves in line with regional priorities and emerging blue economy developments. As a result, the platform is positioned to become a long-term reference tool for blue economy cooperation, visibility and innovation in the Maghreb region.



## 5. Conclusions

The development of the North Africa / Maghreb Blue Economy Platform within the Hub Azul Dealroom represents a significant and enduring outcome of the CallmeBLUE project impact. By mapping and connecting maritime clusters, SMEs, research institutions, investors, public authorities and civil society actors across the southern Mediterranean, the platform provides a structured and accessible entry point into one of the most dynamic yet underrepresented regions of the Blue Economy. It contributes directly to the project's objectives of enhancing regional cooperation, strengthening cluster capacity, and promoting inclusive innovation across both shores of the Mediterranean.

Through a coordinated data collection campaign, the platform has been populated with high-quality, validated information that reflects the diversity and potential of the Maghreb's blue economy ecosystem. Its integration into Hub Azul Dealroom ensures that the mapped actors are not isolated but are embedded within a wider global network of over a thousand blue start-ups, investors and organizations.

The sustainability of the platform is further guaranteed through a clear governance model and a collaborative three-year roadmap for continued data updates and stakeholder engagement. Forum Oceano will maintain the technical infrastructure and ensure GDPR compliance, while Leanovator and CMT will act as regional multipliers, expanding the platform's coverage and promoting its use within key blue economy value chains.

Moreover, its aim will be to expand its impact by promoting cooperation and alignment with major regional frameworks—such as the WestMED Maritime Cluster Alliance and the Union for the Mediterranean's Blue Economy Stakeholder Platform positing the CMB Regional platform as a long-term strategic asset. It can serve as a reference tool for policymakers, a support mechanism for clusters and SMEs seeking internationalization.

In conclusion, the North Africa / Maghreb Blue Economy Platform stands as one of the most strategic legacy tools of CallmeBLUE. It consolidates regional knowledge, strengthens cooperation mechanisms, and provides a sustainable, scalable digital infrastructure that will continue to support innovation, investment and collaboration in the Maghreb region in the long-term vision.



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## Abbreviations

Term	Definition
<b>HAD</b>	Hub Azul Dealroom
<b>CMT</b>	Cluster Maritime Tunisien
<b>CMB</b>	CallmeBLUE

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# CallmeBLUE

Cluster ALLiance MEd BLUE

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