



BLUEAIR



BLUE GROWTH SMART ADRIATIC IONIAN S3

**Fostering transregional S3-based cooperation:
Advancing the sustainable blue economy through macroregional innovation collaboration**

BLUEAIR Innovation Community

**Peter Medica, Technology Park Ljubljana
Brussels, 20 April 2023**



Macroregional Innovation Community for Sustainable Blue Economy

**Benchmarking AIR
against other EU sea
basins**

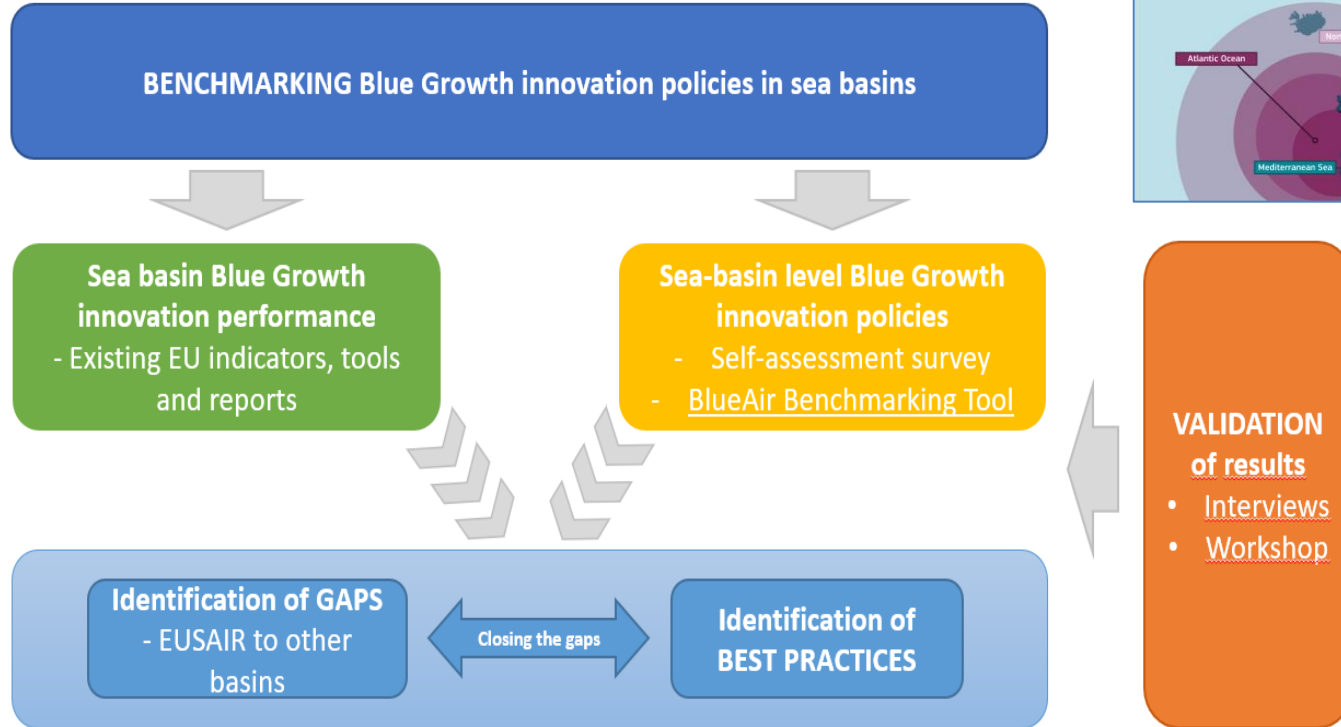
**Stakeholders
engagement process**

**Innovation community
building**

IC Manifesto

IC Action Plan

Benchmarking, Gap analysis, Best practices





BLUEAIR benchmarking tool

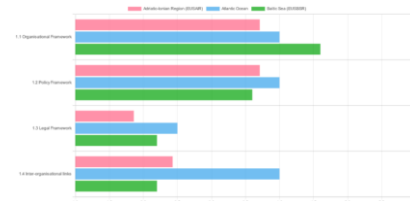
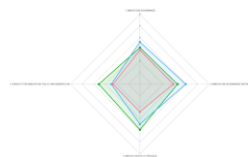
BLUEAIR is an Interreg Adrion project that aims to improve the institutional capacity of the Adriatic-Ionian territories in defining a common ES3 policy on Blue Growth. It was initiated by the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR) based on its strategic relevance to both EUSAIR and the ADRION Programme.

One of the activities within Blueair is benchmarking innovation policies in relation to the sustainable blue economy and identifying best practices in innovation cooperation in EU macro-regions/sea basins. As a support activity a benchmarking tool is devised and set online. Benchmarking matrices are structured around four innovation policy pillars subdivided into constituent dimensions which are composed of several qualitative indicators. It is based on a Self-Assessment approach and Innovation Policy Index: adapted from Prof. Slavo Radosevic as described in his paper on Benchmarking Innovation Policy in Catching up and Emerging Economies. Responses were obtained in Summer 2021 from members of sea basin/macro-regional strategy innovation policy implementing bodies and their external experts. For details on the methodology please refer to the Blue Growth Innovation Policies in Sea Basin Geographic Areas Best Practice Identification and Benchmarking Report (available in late November 2021). If you are involved in innovation policymaking at a level of a sea basin or macro-region, we invite you to complete the questionnaire.

To find out more about basins performance, please click at the corresponding link: [Adriatic-Ionian Region \(EUSAIR\)](#), [Atlantic Ocean \(EUSERR\)](#), [Baltic Sea \(EUSERR\)](#), [Black Sea, West Mediterranean.](#)

To proceed with benchmarking please [select the sea basins \(benchmarking partners\)](#) and make use of many ways in which to get the benchmarking related information.

Benchmarking **OF** innovation policy, not **FOR** innovation policy



**Benchmark
Tool**



**Benchmark
Report**

Gap analysis, Best practice



BLUEAIR



Governance and Implementation

Challenges to the future:

- The COVID-19 crisis requires a re-evaluation of the role of maritime policy and regional development strategies in coastal areas and their financing.
- Ensuring EUSIR practices in the next generation (2021-2027) of ERDF and other instruments.

EUSAIR Innovation performance 1/2

Regional innovation index:

The Adriatic-Ionian basin has the lowest innovation index among the Adriatic-Ionian sea basins.

Financing

- Overall, apart from interim programmes, the EU Member States and their coastal regions can draw on many different financing instruments.
- In the 2021-2027 programming period, financing opportunities may arise from the ERDF and ERDF funding. It is also the Commission's priority to support investments in innovation, digital development and green transition in EU outer coastal areas.
- It is vital to explore the role of the coastal basin focusing on green and blue technologies, innovative business models, off-grid green mobility, etc. to be possible to promote and implement more sustainable and innovative projects related to the Blue Economy.

Best practice on S3 interregional cooperation

- IRI (IRI) is a cluster working with EUSBSR flagships, both in terms of content and partnership.**
- Three types of project actions:**
 - Cooperation among regions with related S3 priorities.
 - Methods related to identifying partners with mutual complementary needs and interests.
 - Building of EUSIR S3 ecosystem.
- Lessons learned:**
 - Strong and continuous political commitment is a key.
 - Substantial strategic use of interim programming.
 - Strategic coordination – the establishment of the EUSIR S3 thematic network.



Best practice on Blue Economy

Interreg MED Strategic projects (ERDF - ERDF) (MED)

The aim of the plan is to provide access to possible new addresses and opportunities for the development of the Blue Economy in the Mediterranean region through the eradication of poverty and of new value chains in the Blue Economy.

- ERDF MED (Interreg) Innovation Alliance for sustainable blue economy:** involves the development of the Blue Economy in the Mediterranean region through the eradication of poverty and of new value chains in the Blue Economy.
- The second one, ERDF MED (ERDF) Building the Blue Economy:** aims to support the development of the Blue Economy in the Mediterranean region through the eradication of poverty and of new value chains in the Blue Economy.

Traditional Blue Economy sectors in the Adriatic-Ionian Sea Basin

- Coastal tourism** is a strong sector that was affected by the COVID-19 crisis but has now a potential to fulfil the demand for "slow tourism" and outdoor, nature-based destinations.
- There is still a high potential in fisheries and aquaculture.
- Maritime transport, shipbuilding and repair, port activities** also suffered from the COVID-19 crisis. The focus and activities are normalizing but new investments in decarbonizing and greening will be necessary.
- In marine renewable energies there are strong potentials for floating installations in Italy and Greece.

Emerging Blue Economy sectors in the Adriatic-Ionian Sea Basin

- Blue bio-economy** is a promising sector, e.g. the micro-algae sector might have a potential in the Adriatic-Ionian, perhaps coupled with the salt-factory tradition that are present in many landscapes in the coastal areas.
- The other emerging sector that might be interesting is desalination, because of water shortages.
- The emerging sectors need not only to be considered as a technical issue (something that needs to be applied on the EUSIR territory) but rather as development and business opportunities for SMEs and companies from the EUSIR area.

Best practice on governance

Baltic Sea Region: EUSBSR Flagships format

- The EUSBSR cooperation format of flagships as good practice generating various positive effects on policy development and implementation.
- It takes time to build strong and durable thematic networks emerging from bottom-up and top-down processes.

Best practice identification – Condensed selection of projects

- DuSic Sea:** Submission Network for Blue Growth EDG
- DuSic Sea:** Interregional Cooperation in Smart Specialisation
- Western Mediterranean:** MEET Network for Sustainable Tourism
- Mediterranean Basin:** BlueMed Initiative for Sustainable Blue Economy
- Mediterranean Basin:** Strategic Innovation projects
- ESPO:** Transpact

Transnational/interregional innovation policies have proven to be highly beneficial for sea basins with high regional diversity

Building international links and strengthening interregional collaboration between regional ecosystems can be particularly beneficial for lagging regions

Access to **interregional/international networks** can be a significant challenge for less-developed regions, and they tend to be under-represented in interregional collaboration activities apart from Interreg

There is a need for **improvement of collaboration among QH actors** in the Adriatic-Ionian area and better involvement of private sector

MRS flagships as long-term cooperation initiatives have proven to be the enablers of interregional S3 cooperation



Capacity- and community-building topics:

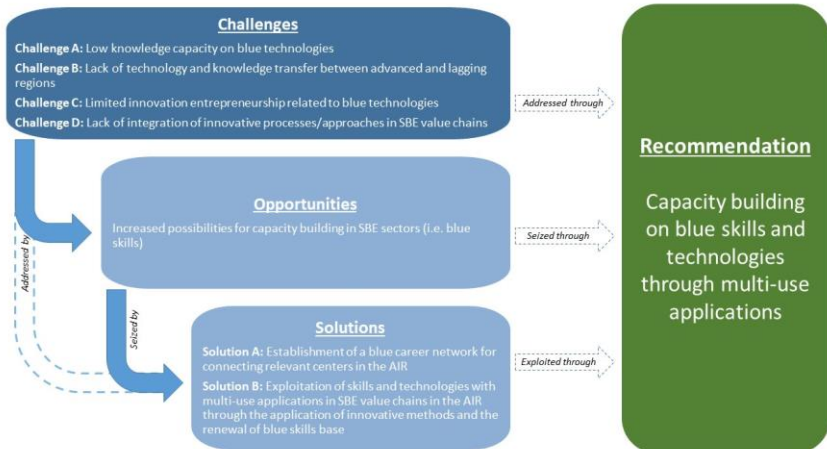
- Benefits and opportunities of cooperation through EUSAIR
- Macro-regional S3 cooperation: from territorial S3 cooperation to macro-regional
- Macro-regional cooperation governance structures
- Promotion of innovation and knowledge generation
- Transnational innovation linkages: networks creation
- Project cooperation and funding opportunities
- Political commitment



White paper with recommendations



BLUEAIR



Enhancing AIR's Sustainable Blue Economy in the long-term through the **sustainable exploitation of marine resources, green technologies, and green operations**

Alignment of institutional framework with current needs of the Q-Helix related to **macro-regional cooperation and blue innovation**

Establishment of a macro-regional innovation community for **strengthening cooperation** among all Q-Helix actors in the AIR

Capacity building (capabilities) on blue skills and technologies with multi-use applications

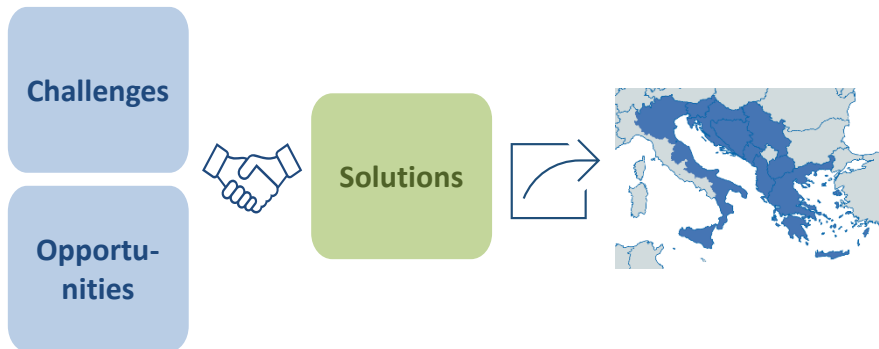
Pooling relevant **funding opportunities**



White paper



Matchmaking events



BLUEAIR Solutions Database

[About Database](#)

Please, start the search by entering a keyword

Keyword: aquaculture

Please, check results below.

Transnational Solutions: 7 results ^

Main outputs of transnational projects on innovation in SBE: 13 results ^

Open calls: 0 results v

Forthcoming calls: 2 results ^

Closed calls: 7 results ^

Top



- **Network** based on **previous activities and other initiatives**,
- **open to all**, consisting of quadruple helix stakeholders and actors,
- with the aim of coordinating initiatives and cooperation in the **definition of new actions**,
- based on the **manifesto** (principles and objectives of transnational collaboration in SBE) and the **action plan** (a comprehensive program for close transnational cooperation).



BlueAIR Innovation Community aims to be an **open platform to improve and streamline innovation collaboration** at territorial and macro-regional levels to move towards a sustainable blue economy in the Adriatic and Ionian Region.

Rather than creating a whole new layer, BlueAIR Innovation Community aims to be more of a **coalition/network of already existing frameworks and initiatives** from the Adriatic and Ionian Region while being **open also to new stakeholders**.

BlueAIR Innovation Community is open to **all quadruple helix stakeholders** from the Adriatic and Ionian Region, such as national and regional governments and local authorities, sectoral agencies, universities and research centres, companies, clusters and other business support organisations, civil society and NGOs.

BlueAIR Innovation Community aims to be a tool to **improve networking opportunities, exchanges of experiences, collaboration, advocacy and increase the visibility of innovations** in sustainable blue economy sectors, relevant to the Adriatic and Ionian Region.

The main tasks of the BlueAIR Innovation Community include **building innovation capacity** across the macro-region for a new wave of transformative innovation policies, **promoting collective innovation actions** and **exploiting cooperation opportunities**, and **strengthening the macroregional innovation ecosystem**.

BlueAIR Innovation Community shall be organised in **thematic/working groups** around sustainable blue economy sectors/value chains with the **greatest potential** for the Adriatic and Ionian Region.

Validated by **100+ stakeholders** from the Adriatic and Ionian Region:

- Stakeholders participating in the Blueair events
- Project coordinators of past and ongoing projects on the blue economy and innovation (Interreg Adrion, Interreg Mediterranean/Interreg Euro-MED, cross-border Interreg programmes, Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, EMFF/EMFAF)
- Blue economy cluster coordinators

BLUEAIR Innovation Community Manifesto



BLUEAIR



Web version for online consultations with stakeholders
April 2023

BLUEAIR Innovation Community Manifesto

*Blue economy thrives
Innovation leads the way
Adriatic-Ionian*

*Manifesto's not key
Action drives innovation
Sea of progress*

A call for action!

The blue economy presents significant opportunities for economic growth and job creation in the Adriatic and Ionian Region, but it also faces significant challenges related to sustainability and environmental protection. To address these challenges and fully realize the potential of the blue economy, stakeholders from across the region should work together to promote innovation and cooperation and the sustainable use of blue resources. We must adopt and develop new technologies and business models, foster collaboration between industry, research, and government and support the exchange of best practices and knowledge-sharing at the transnational level. By working together we can ensure that the blue economy in the Adriatic and Ionian Region continues to grow and thrive in a sustainable and innovative way.

So let us join forces and take action to promote coordinated innovation cooperation in the blue economy of the Adriatic and Ionian Region.

BLUEAIR Innovation Community

The BLUEAIR Innovation Community is an open platform that aims to enhance and streamline innovation collaboration at both territorial and macro-regional levels in order to drive a sustainable blue economy in the Adriatic and Ionian Region.

The BLUEAIR Innovation Community invites existing frameworks and initiatives, as well as new stakeholders (both organizations and individuals representing government, research and education bodies, and civil society) from the macro-region and beyond to collaborate on its mission to advance the blue economy, leverage the work that has already been done, pool existing resources and avoid duplication of effort. By working together, the Community can create a more cohesive and effective innovation ecosystem that benefits all stakeholders in the blue economy in the Adriatic and Ionian Region.



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April 2023

The main tasks of the BLUEAIR Innovation Community include building innovation capacity across the Adriatic and Ionian Region for a new wave of transformative innovation policies, promoting collective innovation actions, exploiting cooperation opportunities, and strengthening the macro-regional innovation ecosystem in the blue economy. The Community facilitates the development of innovative solutions, encourages knowledge sharing, and promotes networking opportunities. It also serves as a platform for stakeholders to engage with policymakers and funding bodies and influence policy and funding decisions that support innovation and sustainable blue economy development in the Adriatic and Ionian Region.

Objectives of the BLUEAIR Innovation Community

BLUEAIR Innovation Community is committed to supporting the Adriatic and Ionian Region's blue economy in its transition towards a more sustainable and innovative approach to economic and social growth by:

- **Promoting collective innovation actions** by facilitating collaboration between different stakeholders in the blue economy, identifying areas of common interest and opportunities for collective action to drive innovation and growth.
- **Building strong partnerships across sectors and disciplines** to leverage our collective expertise and resources and ensure the coherence of local initiatives with EU priorities.
- **Building innovation capacity** across the macro-region, developing skills, knowledge, and resources needed to support transformative innovation in sustainable blue economy sectors.
- **Increasing the visibility of blue innovation and its potential at the transregional scope**, by highlighting new products, services, and technologies that contribute to a more sustainable future and sharing experiences and best practices while strengthening the macro-regional innovation ecosystem.
- **Supporting the development of a macro-regional innovation system** for the Adriatic and Ionian Region.
- **Advocating for policies and practices** that support innovation, entrepreneurship, and social and environmental impact in the blue economy, addressing the main challenges of the Adriatic and Ionian Region.
- **Empowering and supporting** the next generation of innovators and leaders in the blue economy through education, mentoring, and access to resources, while promoting concrete actions at the regional, national and macroregional levels.

Principles that shape the BLUEAIR Innovation Community

The BLUEAIR Innovation Community is shaped according to the following pillars:

- A **multilevel governance pillar**, which connects existing transnational frameworks, networks, and initiatives already in place with territorial realities.



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- A **quadruple helix pillar**, which brings together government, research and education, business and civil society, and bridging organizations to facilitate collaboration.
- A **transformative innovation policy pillar**, which aims to address grand societal challenge and align with the European Green Deal.
- A **sustainable development pillar**, which takes the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals as a reference framework.

The BLUEAIR Innovation Community's functioning is grounded on the following principles:

- **Collaboration and Co-creation:** To enhance the success of the BLUEAIR Innovation Community, it promotes collaboration and co-creation among quadruple helix stakeholders from diverse sectors, regions, and countries. This requires involving all stakeholders in the design and implementation of innovation projects.
- **Inclusivity:** The BLUEAIR Innovation Community involves all quadruple helix stakeholder from the Adriatic and Ionian Region, both organizations and individuals and regardless of their size or level of development. This inclusive approach ensures that all stakeholders can contribute to and benefit from the collective knowledge and experience of the community.
- **Sustainability:** The BLUEAIR Innovation Community is committed to fostering a sustainable blue economy in the Adriatic and Ionian Region. To achieve this goal, it supports innovative projects that are environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.
- **Innovation:** The BLUEAIR Innovation Community is a hub of innovation that aims to build innovation capacity across the macro-region, promote collective innovation actions, and seize cooperation opportunities. This approach strengthens the macro-regional innovation ecosystem.
- **Networking:** Networking is a crucial factor in the success of the BLUEAIR Innovation Community. It provides a platform for stakeholders to connect, share ideas, and collaborate on innovation projects, increasing the visibility of innovations in sustainable blue economy sectors relevant to the Adriatic and Ionian Region.
- **Flexibility:** The BLUEAIR Innovation Community is flexible and adaptable to the evolving need of its stakeholders. It welcomes diverse stakeholders and focuses on building a dynamic and collaborative innovation ecosystem that responds to changing needs and priorities.
- **Governance:** The BLUEAIR Innovation Community operates under a transparent participatory, and accountable governance model. This approach facilitates collaboration, co-creation, and collective decision-making among stakeholders.

The governance model of the BLUEAIR Innovation Community

The Community is an open platform that brings together all quadruple helix stakeholders in the blue economy in the Adriatic and Ionian Region:

- **Governments and local authorities** promote economic growth and job creation in the blue economy, as well as address environmental challenges and social issues related to the sector.
- **Universities and research centers** collaborate with other stakeholders and contribute to the development of innovative solutions for the blue economy.



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April 2023

- **Companies and clusters** access new business opportunities, expand their networks, and collaborate with other stakeholders in the sector.
- **Civil society and NGOs** contribute to the development of a more sustainable and equitable blue economy and ensure that different voices are heard and represented.

The governance model of the BLUEAIR Innovation Community is designed to facilitate collaboration and communication across different levels of the Community and ensure that activities are aligned with the priorities and strategies of relevant stakeholders at the local, regional, and macro-regional levels:

- **At the micro-level**, individual stakeholders collaborate within thematic/working groups to develop innovative solutions and projects related to sustainable blue economy sector/value chains.
- **At the meso-level**, thematic/working groups collaborate with other stakeholders to scale up innovative solutions and projects, promote collaboration and networking, and share best practices.
- **At the macro-level**, the BLUEAIR Innovation Community works with regional and national governments, macro-regional actors, the European Union, and international initiatives to influence policy, develop funding opportunities, and promote the macro-regional innovation ecosystem.

A call for action! Definition Objectives Principles Governance model



Have your say!

Roadmap to success!





Thank you for your attention!



Peter Medica

Technology Park Ljubljana

peter.medica@tp-lj.si

[linkedin.com/in/petermedica](https://www.linkedin.com/in/petermedica)