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MSP flashcards

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How Cards Work

The cards provide useful tips on key aspects of maritime management and development. Each card offers insights into Maritime Spatial Planning and the sectors addressed by the MEDIGREEN project: fisheries, aquaculture, offshore renewable energy, and nature protection.

The cards present key current figures as well as future directions and opportunities for non-EU countries in terms of blue growth — opportunities that can be realized through well-established Maritime Spatial Planning.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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What is Maritime Spatial Planning?

Maritime spatial planning (MSP) is a practical and science-based process for managing the use of seas and oceans to ensure that human activities are conducted efficiently, safely, and sustainably. It involves analyzing and allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of activities in marine areas, aiming to achieve ecological, economic, and social objectives. MSP helps different sectors—like fishing, tourism, transport, energy— to balance competing interests and promote the sustainable development of marine areas while protecting the environment.

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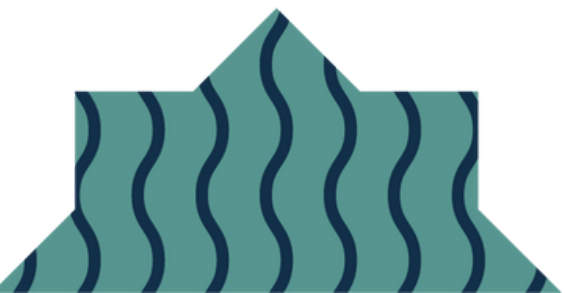
What is Maritime Spatial Planning?

Its objectives?

- reducing conflicts between users (e.g. fishermen vs tourism) and creating synergies between different activities (e.g. wind farms and aquaculture in the same area), supporting food and energy security
- Improve transparency and legal certainty to attract investment.
- increasing cross-border cooperation to develop renewable energy, allocate shipping lanes, lay pipelines,submarine cables and marine protection, etc.
- protecting marine ecosystems by assigning protected areas, developing impact assessments and identifying opportunities for multiple uses of space

MSP works best when adapted to local governance, structures and cultures.



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The state of the art in the Mediterranean - key sectors

Fisheries

75% of assessed stocks remain unsustainably fished

75,000 vessels

420,000 jobs

Small-scale fisheries dominate the landscape, representing over 80% of the fleet

Key species include European anchovy, sardine, red mullet, cuttlefish, and shrimp

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The state of the art in the Mediterranean - key sectors

Aquaculture

EUR 11 billion

annual average contribution to blue economy

280,000 jobs

85% finfish farming

Techniques: marine cages (68%), followed by land-based systems and pens

Leading producers include Egypt, Türkiye, Greece, and Italy, while smaller producers such as Albania and Algeria are showing fast-paced growth.

The sector must adapt to climate change, market volatility, and regulatory gaps

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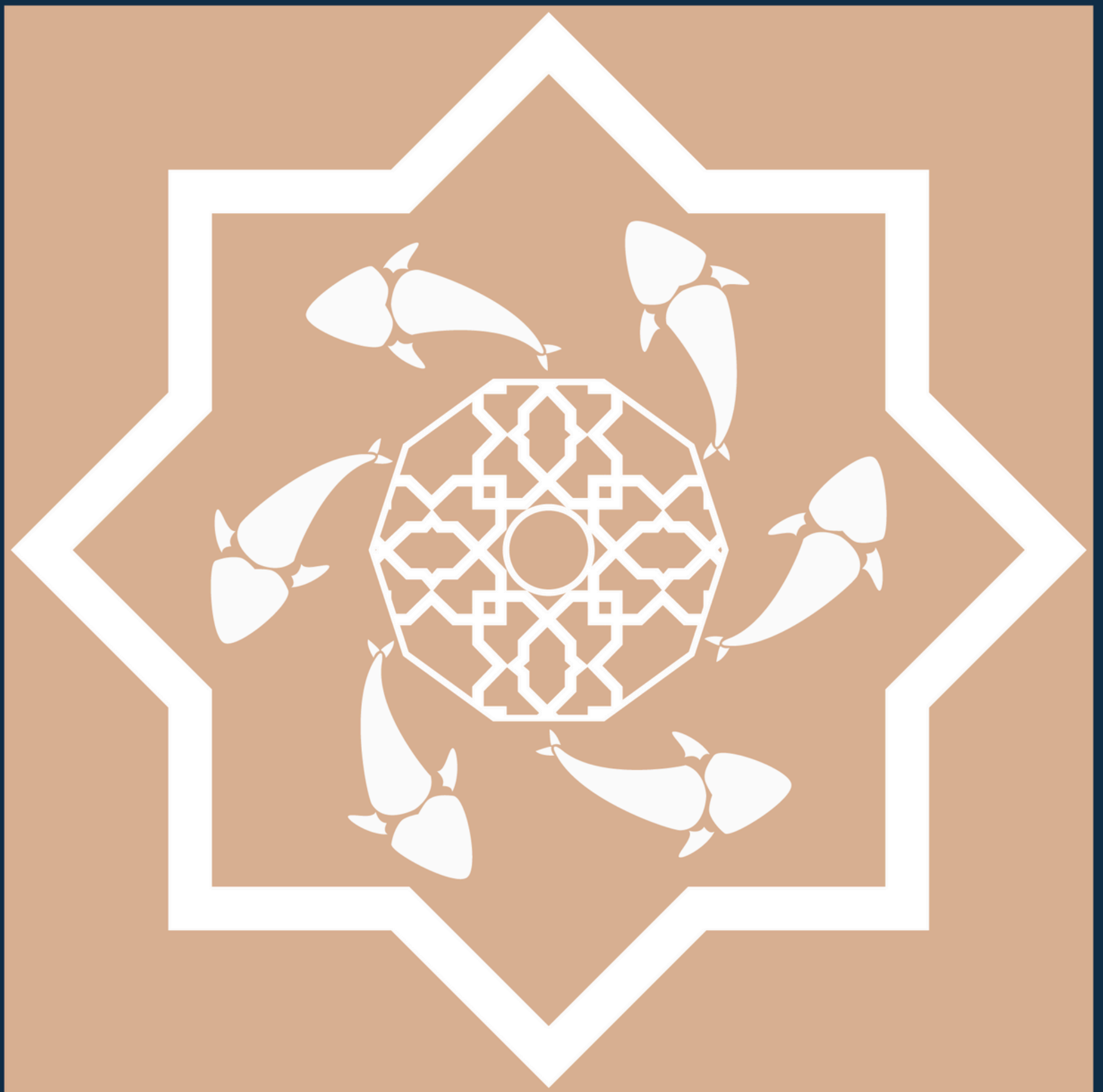

The state of the art in the Mediterranean - key sectors

Offshore Renewable Energy

Trends:

Rapidly expanding, seen as the most promising renewable due to high wind potential and falling costs.

Key Sites:

Gulf of Lion (France), Adriatic Sea, Straits near Sicily, Tunisia, and Malta, Gulf of Gabès (Tunisia)

Projections:

Up to 12 GW by 2030 in EU Med countries.

Environmental Concerns:

- Impacts on marine life from noise, electromagnetic fields, and infrastructure.
- Bird collisions and habitat disturbance during construction and operation.
- Cumulative effects are a major concern—marine spatial planning is key to mitigate this.

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The state of the art in the Mediterranean – key sectors

Nature protection

The Mediterranean is a global biodiversity hotspot, containing approximately **7%** of known marine species despite representing only **0.3%** of the global ocean volume

UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention and its associated protocols, particularly the **Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD Protocol).** Under this framework, countries have established Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), which now cover nearly 10% of the Mediterranean Sea—close to the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Target. However, while coverage has expanded, effective management and enforcement of MPAs remain major challenges.

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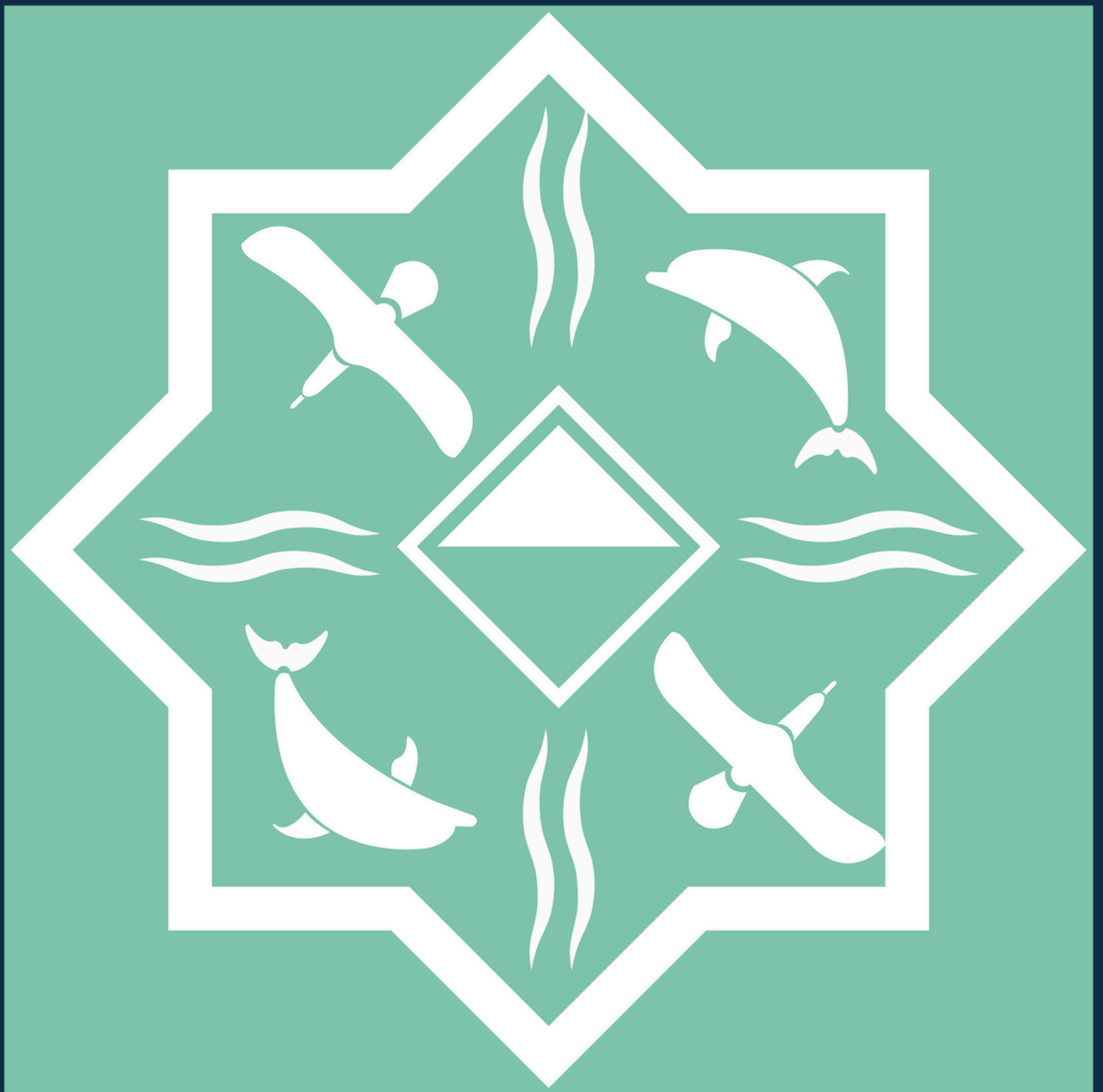

Fisheries

Small-scale fisheries **(SSF) dominate employment (62%)** but generate **only 26%** of total revenue, indicating their social but economically fragile role. The path to 2030 demands bold action: reducing overexploitation of marine resources, scaling up regional monitoring, and enforcing stronger regulations.

Critical to this is **investing in data collection, multiannual adaptive management plans, and fisheries restricted areas**. A generational renewal is urgently needed: the sector is aging, and lacking digital skills.

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Aquaculture

Growing sector but its **future growth must be environmentally sound and socially inclusive.**

Emerging trends focus on the diversification of production — especially low-trophic and high-value species like algae — and the adoption of circular economy models, such as bio-waste valorisation and microalgae-based feed.

Ecosystem-based farming, **digitally optimized monitoring**, and AI-supported feeding systems

The sector has strong potential to contribute to nutrition security, rural employment, and the energy-food nexus

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By 2030, the European Union is targeting 111 GW of installed offshore renewable capacity, but the Mediterranean will only contribute with a small quota.

The region's electricity demand is projected to hit **2.53 PWh.**

Offshore wind, solar-at-sea, and other MRE technologies are seen as crucial to decarbonization, energy security, and job creation.

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Unlocking Blue Economy Opportunities in Non-EU Mediterranean Countries

Opportunities:

- **Investments** in data systems, digital tools, and local value chains.
- Creation of fisheries restricted areas backed by **socio-environmental data**.
- **Funding** for compliance mechanisms to reduce IUU fishing and protect biodiversity.
- **Policy Needs:** Tailored support for SSF, capacity building, and youth and women inclusion.

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Unlocking Blue Economy Opportunities in Non-EU Mediterranean Countries

Opportunities:

- **Investment** in microalgae-based feeds, bio-waste valorisation, and digital farming systems.

- Support for **eco-certification**, export compliance, and green infrastructure.

- Development of gamified **e-learning and training platforms for future professionals**.

- **Policy Needs:** Harmonized licensing, innovation-friendly regulation, and regional cooperation.

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Unlocking Blue Economy Opportunities in Non-EU Mediterranean Countries

Opportunities:

Deployment of offshore wind, floating solar, and integrated energy–aquaculture platforms.

Regional interconnectivity and **cross-border investment** platforms.

Reduced fuel dependency for fisheries and aquaculture, enhancing resilience and profitability.

Policy Needs: Clear permitting, grid access, and public-private financing instruments.

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Unlocking Blue Economy Opportunities in Non-EU Mediterranean Countries

Cross-Cutting Enablers

Digital Transformation: Tech adoption across all blue sectors to reduce inefficiencies and trace impact.

Skills Development: Vocational Education and Training (VET) and higher education reform to match the needs of the new blue workforce.

Circular Economy: Valorisation of marine biomass, waste reuse, and eco-design of operations.

Financing & Support: Increased flexibility of funds, regional innovation clusters, and south-south collaboration.

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Cross-Cutting Enablers

Several countries, such as Tunisia and Algeria, have developed a strategic assessment of the blue economy within their national policies.

Demographic dividend: Southern Mediterranean countries that are not members of the EU are characterized by youthful populations and untapped talent.

Climate imperative: The urgent need for mitigation and adaptation aligns with impact finance objectives.

Strategic geographic location: These countries serve as a bridge between markets in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

Political momentum: There is a regional commitment through the FAO/GFCM 2030 Strategy, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Blue Economy Agenda, and EU–Southern Neighbourhood cooperation.

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