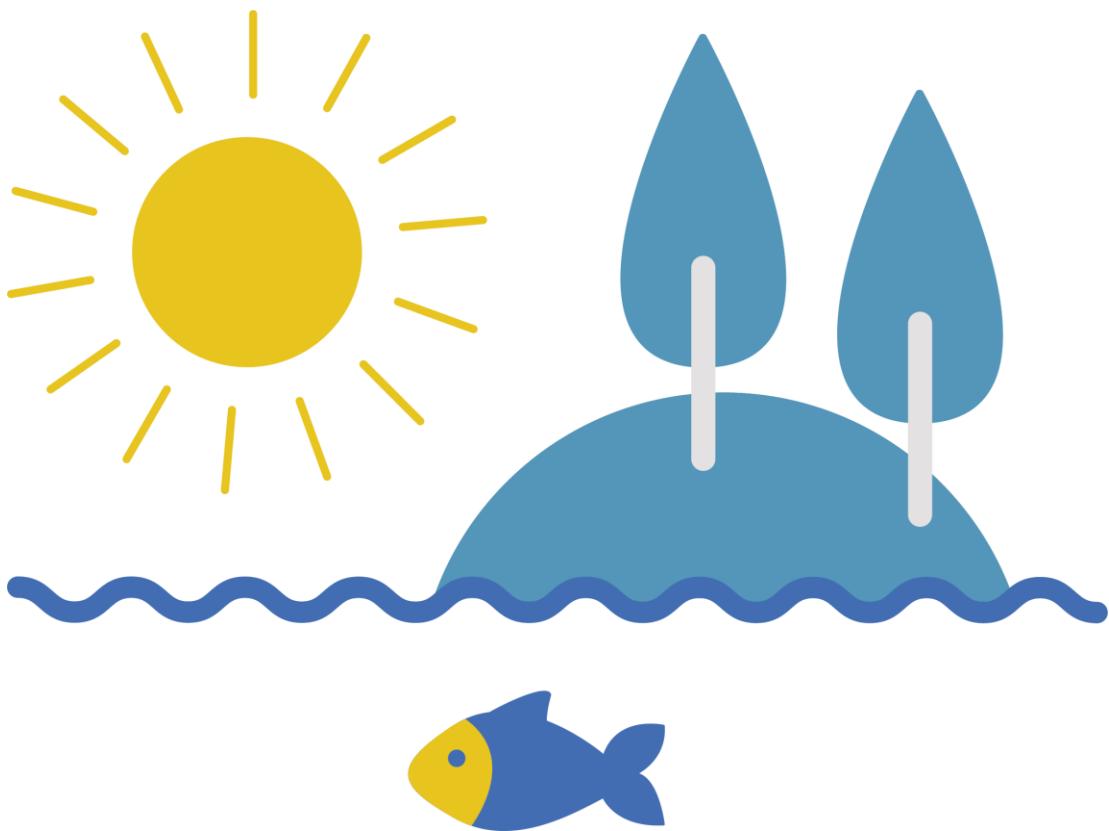


MedLab Thematic Week



20, 21 and 22 of January 2026. From 10-12h CET

MedLab Thematic Week: Connecting Mediterranean practitioners for better synergies





MedLab Thematic Week: Connecting Mediterranean practitioners for better synergies.

20-22 of January 2026.

Purpose and vision

The Mediterranean's challenges don't stop at borders — and neither should our solutions. This event is designed to explore how coordinated action can multiply impact across the region, through interactive and solution-focused sessions.

Our vision is to build a Mediterranean Community of Practitioners: a living network connecting Interreg programmes, national representatives, the European Commission, and field practitioners. The event provides a space to exchange experiences, generate insights, and shape actionable recommendations to strengthen synergies across Mediterranean Interreg programmes.

The Mediterranean itself stands as a living laboratory for cooperation and reform. In this context, the sessions will also explore how Interreg's evidence can guide a more responsive, effective, and results-oriented Policy. Together, we strive to promote meaningful and lasting collaboration across the region — turning shared challenges into shared opportunities.

Schedule: three thematic sessions



10:00–12:00 CET each day

- **January 20th: Focus on Water.** Managing a Shared Resource: Water Governance Across the Mediterranean
- **January 21st: Focus on Islands.** Island Voices in the Mediterranean Agenda
- **January 22nd Focus on Skills.** Empowering Mediterranean People Through Skills and Learning

Horizontal aspect_ Interreg as a Policy Lab: Impact and Reforming Cohesion in the Mediterranean

What makes this special?

Building on last year's successful experience, these sessions offer an interactive platform for practitioners and policymakers to exchange solutions and strengthen the impact of cooperation on shared Mediterranean challenges. The approach highlights the crucial role of project partners in fostering synergies across policies, funds and territories, while promoting dialogue and innovation to support resilience and contribute to the future design of Cohesion Policy post-2027.

Key questions:

- How can Mediterranean regions better coordinate to address shared challenges through cooperation and joint governance?
- What opportunities exist to deepen territorial synergies across Interreg programmes, funds, and policies?
- How can reform efforts ensure that Mediterranean cooperation remains a driver of innovation, resilience, and territorial cohesion across the EU?

Who should attend?

This event is tailored for:

- Practitioners with hands-on experience working with EU funds
- Interreg and other EU project experts
- Programme managers and national contact points



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- Policymakers and regional stakeholders
- Representatives from UfM, WestMed, and EUSAIR
- DG Regio and other relevant DGs

The goals of the Thematic Week

- To demonstrate that Interreg is actively “hitting the road” in the Mediterranean, addressing substantial regional challenges.
- To legitimise and give voice to a distinct group of experts — practitioners connected to the Interreg community — who, through their daily work, push the boundaries of innovation and embed it into territorial policies.
- To showcase the natural environment for a dynamic Community of Practice, one that operates beyond the EU framework and engages directly with the shared needs and challenges of the Mediterranean basin and its territories.

How we aim to achieve these goals

- By showcasing concrete actions and practices — not simply projects — that effectively respond to common challenges.
- By giving visibility to real people and experts, representing diverse countries and territories across the Mediterranean, to highlight the richness and plurality of this shared “movement.”
- By encouraging exchanges through interactive Q&A sessions that foster smooth, informal, and engaging discussions.
- By creating a welcoming environment where participants feel comfortable, safe, and motivated to speak up and share.



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Day One, Tuesday, 20/01/2025

Managing a Shared Resource: Water Governance Across the Mediterranean

10.00 – 10.05

Welcome words.

Interact and TESIM

10.05 – 10.20

Interreg as a policy Lab for the Mediterranean - focus on water

Introduction by Mercedes Acitores from Interact and Interview to Jean Pierre Halkin and Reka Rozsavolgy. DG Regio

10.20 – 11.55

Panel discussion

- **Veliko Srzic** - Associate Professor in Water Resources and Environmental Engineering at Split University, Croatia, and lead player in the **SWAMrisk** project under the **Interreg Italy Croatia** and dealing with water catchment from surfaces and underground basins. Among its areas of interest: coastal systems including hydrogeology methodological approaches, porous media flow and transport, contaminant transport, environmental engineering, environmental monitoring, stochastic and numerical modelling, analytical frameworks.
- **Barbara Sarnari** - Project manager and Vice-President of **SVI.MED – Centro Euromediterraneo per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile**. Since 2017 she has coordinated projects funded by programmes like LIFE, Horizon Europe, Erasmus+ and **Interreg Euro Med and ENI CBC MED programmes** – i.e. the projects URWAN, NAWAMED, Medwaycap - focusing on unconventional water resources and nature-based solutions.
- **Nicola Tselikas** - Civil hydraulic engineer at the **Acquedotto Pugliese (AQP)** in Italy and currently head of the Green Management Area of the Environment and Energy Department, collaborating in projects as **RE-WATER** and **ECO-FLOW** under the **Interreg Italy Greece** programme. He has a long experience in Shared water management and governance with leading roles in Wastewater Treatment Plants Areas in Lecce and Foggia and responsible for the management, operation and maintenance of 185 wastewater treatment plants.
- **Stefano Marino** - Environmental Engineer at **AQP**, Italy, working within the Environment and Energy Directorate (DIRAM/TERBI). He is engaged in assessments of water availability for Apulian aqueduct sources and studies on climate-change impacts on water resources and serves as Technical Manager for Interreg projects including **AQUA** under the **Interreg IPA-ADRION** and **SA RESILIENCE**, under the **Interreg IPA South Adriatic**



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programme. His research and publications focus on coastal and hydraulic engineering, breakwater stability and shallow-water effects.

Moderated by Rosario Sapienza, TESIM

Debate with participants

Moderated by Diana Kobayter (TESIM) and Ilze Ciganska (Interact)

11.55 – 12.00

Conclusions and Next Steps

Interact and TESIM.



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20-22 of January 2026.

Day Two, Wednesday, 21/01/2025

Island Voices in the Mediterranean Agenda

10.00 – 10.05

Welcome

Interact and TESIM

10.05 – 10.20

Interreg as a policy Lab for the Mediterranean - focus on islands

Introduction by Mercedes Acitores from Interact and Interview to Jean Pierre Halkin and Tamara Pavlin. DG Regio

10.20 – 11.55

Panel discussion

- **Ignasi Mateo Rodríguez** – **MedWaves**, the UNEP/MAP Regional Activity Centre for SCP representing **Interreg Euro-MED Programme** co-financed project LooP Zone, which aims to reduce and prevent plastic waste and marine litter in Mediterranean islands.
- **Khaoula El Cadi** – **ASSIDJE: Association for the Safeguarding of the Island of Djerba, Tunisia**, representing civil society efforts committed to preserving Djerba's cultural, environmental and architectural heritage while promoting sustainable tourism, and currently preparing to launch an initiative under the **Interreg Italy-Tunisia Programme**.
- **Konstantinos Patlitzianas** – **Centre for Renewable Energy Sources and Saving (CRES), Greece** bringing experience from several **Interreg Greece-Cyprus Programme** co-financed projects and beyond including the recently closed project ENERGOPOIO, which developed cross-border cooperation to standardise the implementation of renewable energy and energy-saving technologies in public buildings while activating local communities toward productive energy communities.
- **Patrizia Serra** – **University of Cagliari** (Sardinia, Italy) representing the **Interreg Italy-France Maritime Programme** co-financed project **Easy2Log**, which develops digital tools and decision-support systems to improve multimodal logistics performance across the cross-border maritime area, strengthening connectivity and operational efficiency for ports and freight operators.

Moderated by Ilze Ciganska, Interact

Debate with participants

Moderated by Ilze Ciganska (Interact) and Rosario Sapienza (TESIM)

11.55 – 12.00

Conclusions and Next Steps

Interact and TESIM.



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20-22 of January 2026.

Day Three, Thursday, 22/01/2025

Empowering Mediterranean People Through Skills and Learning

10.00 – 10.05

Welcome

Interact and TESIM

10.10 – 10.20

Interreg as a policy Lab for the Mediterranean - focus on skills

Introduction by Mercedes Acitores from Interact and Interview to Katalin Julia Pénzes

10.20 – 11.55

Panel discussion

- **Ms. Cassandra Lerede** from the **Consorzio Mestieri Puglia scs.** representing the **Interreg Greece-Italy programme** co-financed project **PR.O.GR.E.S.S**, which aims to enhance the inclusion and employability of people with disabilities by improving access to education, training, and work through cross-border cooperation, innovative technologies, and shared inclusive practices.
- **Dr. Eudokia Balamou, Operations Manager** at the **Larnaca and Famagusta Districts Development Agency (Cyprus)**, representing the **Interreg EURO-MED programme** co-financed project **REVIVE**, which aims to strengthen the capacities of public and private organizations to implement and coordinate Regional Innovation Strategies, enhance SME competitiveness, and accelerate the transition to a circular and sustainable economy.
- **Dr. Jean-Noël Baleo, Director of the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie Moyen-Orient**, representing the **Interreg NEXT MED programme** co-financed project **EUSEEDS** which aims to tackle youth unemployment by strengthening the link between higher education and labor market needs through the establishment of university-based centers. The project equips students, graduates, and vulnerable groups with digital, soft, and entrepreneurial skills, promoting employability, self-employment, digital literacy, and inclusive, sustainable economic development in the region.

Moderated by Diana Kobayter, TESIM

Debate with participants

Moderated by Diana Kobayter (TESIM) and Mercedes Acitores (Interact)

11.55 – 12.00

Conclusions and Next Step.

Interact and TESIM