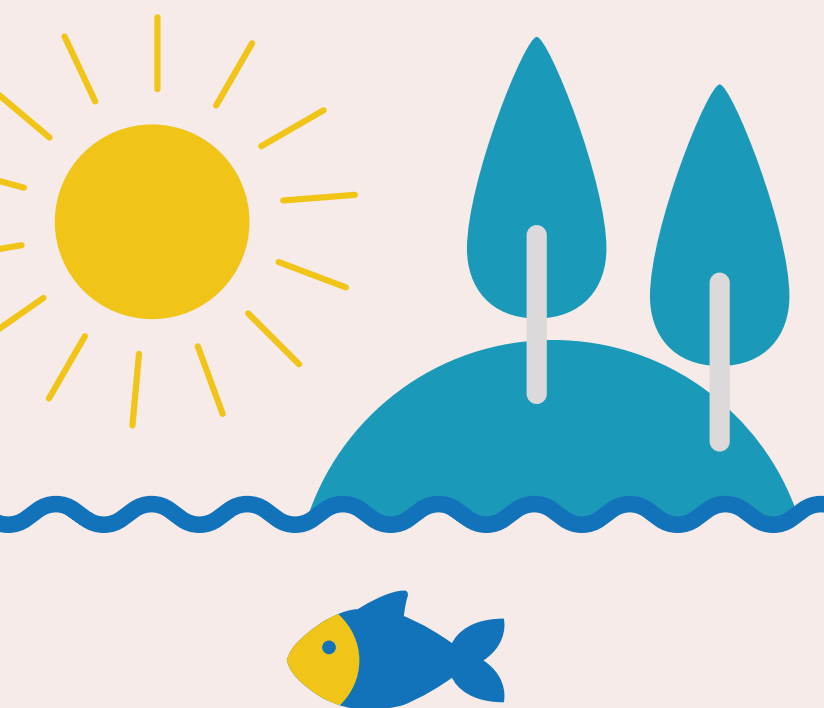


MEDLAB THEMATIC TALKS

Islands in the Mediterranean

Across the Mediterranean, Interreg programmes work with island communities to turn the constraints of insularity into a cooperation agenda: testing circular-economy and clean-energy models, reviving traditional water and heritage solutions, closing the logistics and digital divide, and feeding results into Europe's new Islands Strategy. This publication shows what that cooperation has been — and what it could become after 2027.



ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

There are roughly 250 inhabited islands in the Mediterranean, including two island Member States, Malta and Cyprus. Approximately 20 million people live across these inhabited islands, concentrated on a handful of the largest — Sicily, Sardinia, Cyprus and the Balearic Islands account for the majority.¹ Islands are recognised among the territories that suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps, thus requiring a particular attention.

In practice, insularity creates a consistent set of structural disadvantages. The European territorial evidence network ESPON lists these as: dependence on maritime and air transport, limited economies of scale, geographic remoteness and higher costs, heightened vulnerability to external shocks, constrained access to finance, and uneven access to technology and know-how.

Yet the same constraints make islands unusually inventive. Because every challenge arrives earlier and sharper, island communities have had to develop responses to energy, water, waste and logistics challenges under more constrained conditions than most mainland territories face. That experience is directly relevant to the EU's current policy agenda.

This publication draws on the MedLab Thematic Week Islands Session, which brought together practitioners, project partners, programme authorities and European Commission representatives around four thematic areas: circular economy and marine litter, heritage and water resilience, energy communities, and island logistics, and situated them within the new EU policy framework for islands. It complements those exchanges with evidence from the keep.eu database on what Interreg has financed on Mediterranean islands across the 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 programming periods.

The aim is to show what Interreg is doing for Mediterranean islands today, what it has learned, and how that experience can shape cohesion policy after 2027.

1. Sum of Eurostat regional population data (2021) for the ten Mediterranean island NUTS2 regions and some Member States tracked in this publication. Source: Zafeiris, K. (2025), "The Mediterranean Islands: Demographic Convergences and Divergences, 1995–2021," Qeios, doi:10.32388/BYVYTD.2 This source is complemented with National Statistics Offices (NSO) from other Mediterranean countries and UNDESA.

COOPERATION ACROSS MEDITERRANEAN ISLANDS

People and place at the centre

Insularity magnifies everything. As one participant at the MedLab session on islands put it, small islands act as “magnifying glasses” for Europe’s challenges: the smaller the island, the more acute the issue becomes. That is precisely why islands make such effective test beds. The absence of alternatives often inspires the search for solutions. Island authorities and communities have to find workable solutions to energy supply, water scarcity, waste management and service delivery. Several of the models are being developed and tested with the support of Interreg programmes that emerged from that kind of necessity. Interreg’s place-based approach is suited to this because it puts local authorities, agencies, universities and communities at the centre of project design rather than treating them as recipients of externally designed solutions.

Keeping results alive after project closure: relevant partners, capitalisation and the ‘mediator’ model

Keeping project results alive after closure is a challenge everywhere, but it bites harder on islands, where the pool of potential partners is smaller and it is more difficult to build new partnerships around completed work. Too many island pilots stop when the funding stops. During the session dedicated to Mediterranean islands, participants highlighted the ‘mediator’ role, someone who could help to identify which organisations could use a project’s outcomes and actively connects them to the next opportunity. This needs to run alongside cross-programme cluster activities that build on completed work rather than restarting from the beginning. Capitalisation, continuity and cooperation are what allow island project results to travel beyond the original partnership. For example, in 2026 the Interreg IPA ADRION programme launched ten thematic clusters grouping all funded projects by priority area, with the explicit aim of ensuring results are reused and anchored to the territory after project closure. The clusters feed into the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region, extending the reach of project results into regional policy.

Turning knowledge into action: heritage, the blue economy and the digital equaliser

Innovation on islands frequently means recovering the past, not only inventing the future. Traditional rainwater-harvesting cisterns on Djerba, or water-catchment systems in Sicily, are proven climate-adaptation

engineering — heritage that contains solutions. Combined with modern tools, this ancestral knowledge becomes scalable. At the same time, digitalisation is emerging as an ‘equaliser’: a common digital language for island logistics that offsets the domino effect a single maritime disruption sends through an island’s entire supply chain. Across water, energy, heritage, tourism and logistics, the same lesson holds — isolated, fragmented actions are no longer enough; shared frameworks and coordinated action are what deliver measurable results.

IN FOCUS — INTERREG SOLUTIONS FOR ISLAND CHALLENGES

Marine litter & circular economy.

LooP Zone (Interreg Euro-MED, €4M, of which €3.2M Interreg funds) creates Low Plastic Zones to cut single-use plastics in the hospitality sector on five Mediterranean islands, feeding into the Euro-MED tourism governance community. It builds on synergies with the EU Mission Ocean lighthouse BlueMissionMed and the CapiMed+ capitalisation of seven anti-plastics initiatives under the BeMed-Islands community. (MedWaves / UNEP-MAP).

Heritage & water resilience.

Med H2 (Interreg Euro-MED) supports Mediterranean islands in managing water sustainability through the conservation of tangible and intangible hydraulic heritage — an approach embodied on the ground by ASSIDJE’s rehabilitation of Djerba’s traditional rainwater cisterns as climate-adapted responses to water scarcity. (ASSIDJE).

Energy communities.

ENERGOPOIO (Interreg Greece–Cyprus) standardises energy-efficiency upgrades in public buildings on Greek and Cypriot islands, activating local energy communities and informing the revision of Cyprus’s energycommunity legislation. (CRES).

Logistics & digitalisation.

Easy2Log (Interreg Italy–France Maritime) uses its decision-support system as a digital “equaliser” for island–mainland freight coordination, with the ambition of mainstreaming into CEF Digital. (University of Cagliari)

And beyond.

MAPA (Interreg Italy–Croatia) strengthens the protection status of three marine areas as Marine Adriatic Parks with direct community involvement.

2021-2027 _CONTINUITY AND EVOLVING PRIORITIES

To frame Interreg's contribution, two keep.eu searches were run on island- and insularity-related projects in Mediterranean programmes: one for 2014–2020 (a closed and complete portfolio) and one for 2021–2027 (still in mid-implementation). The headline totals therefore measure different things — a finished period versus a snapshot of work in progress — and should be read with that in mind. The 2021–2027 results were additionally reviewed in keep.eu for genuine island relevance: 64 records were retained (10 core island-focused, 38 with a direct island component, 16 island-partner).

Headline figures

Indicator	2021–2027*	2014–2020
Island-related projects	64	97
Total project budget	€158.4 M	€228.3 M
Interreg EU funding	€125.1 M	€193.3 M
Partner participations	469	714
Avg. partners per project	7.3	7.4
Status	60 of 64 still ongoing	closed period

*2021–2027 reflects projects reported to keep.eu so far; the portfolio will grow as further calls are recorded.

A Clear Thematic Shift

Island cooperation is moving beyond tourism and heritage towards innovation, climate resilience, governance and social inclusion.

A stable architecture for island cooperation

In both periods Interreg Euro-MED programme is the single largest island contributor, with the Interreg maritime cross-border programmes — Greece–Italy, Italy–France Maritime, Greece–Cyprus, Italy–Croatia and Italy–Malta — forming the backbone around it. That architecture is also concentrated: Euro-MED, Greece–Italy and Italy–France Maritime together account for 39 of the 64 current projects (61%). With 60 of 64 projects still ongoing and further calls to be recorded, the current portfolio is still evolving — the comparison shows continuity in Interreg engagement and a diversification of priorities, not a decline in support for islands.

Interreg Programme	Projects 21–27*	Projects 14–20	Budget 21–27*	Budget 14–20
Euro-MED	16	29	€46.6 M	€65.3 M
Greece–Italy	12	20	€47.3 M	€78.9 M
Italy–France Maritime	11	10	€22.5 M	€13.0 M
Greece–Cyprus	6	10	€11.9 M	€18.0 M
Italy–Croatia	4	2	€8.7 M	€10.9 M
IPA Adrion	3	4	€4.6 M	€6.1 M
IPA Greece–Albania	3	8	€4.8 M	€14.2 M
Other programmes (8)	9	14	€10.1 M	€22.0 M
TOTAL	64	97	€158.4 M	€228.3 M

Programmes with fewer than three island projects in 2021–2027 are grouped under “Other programmes,” regardless of their 2014–2020 count.

What the comparison shows:

- **Risers:** several programmes already match or exceed their 2014–2020 island engagement at mid-period: Italy–France Maritime (10 → 11 projects, budget up from €13.0M to €22.5M), Italy–Croatia (2 → 4, already double its previous count), and Euro-MED past half its previous project total.
- **Newcomers:** the NEXT MED sea-basin programme enters the island dataset for the first time, while the Adriatic IPA cross-border programmes — IPA South Adriatic (1 → 2) and IPA Croatia–Bosnia and Herzegovina–Montenegro — sustain island engagement beyond the established maritime pairings.

A thematic shift that anticipates the EU Strategy for Islands

The mix of themes changed markedly between periods. In 2014–2020 the island portfolio was dominated by tourism (27 projects) and cultural heritage (19).²In 2021–2027 knowledge and technology transfer leads (21), with tourism still strong (18) but now part of a broader mix: community integration and identity (11), cultural heritage and governance & partnership (10 each), and climate change & biodiversity and social inclusion (9 each). The portfolio is broadening from tourism-and-heritage promotion toward innovation, governance and the social dimension of insularity.

Top themes 2014–2020	N. projects	Top themes 2021–2027*	N. projects
Tourism	27	Knowledge & technology transfer	21
Cultural heritage & arts	19	Tourism	18
Coastal & maritime issues	13	Community integration & identity	11
Clustering & economic coop.	11	Cultural heritage / Governance & partnership	10
Climate change & biodiversity	9	Climate change & biodiversity / Social inclusion	9
Renewable energy	9	Coastal & maritime / Waste / SME / Innovation capacity	8
SME & entrepreneurship	8	Institutional cooperation & networks	6

This evolution tracks closely with the direction the EU has now formalised. The EU Strategy for Islands, adopted in June 2026 as the first strategy ever dedicated to islands, is structured around four pillars — economic development, connectivity, competitiveness and innovation; energy security, environmental protection, green transition and climate resilience; communities, demography and quality of life; and security and crisis preparedness — with governance as a horizontal enabler. The current island portfolio already maps onto this architecture: knowledge and technology transfer and innovation capacity speak to the first pillar; climate change and biodiversity, waste and renewable energy to the second; community integration, social inclusion and cultural heritage to the third; and governance and partnership to the horizontal enabler. **Mediterranean Interreg programmes were, in effect, investing in the strategy's priorities before the strategy existed — evidence that cooperation portfolios can anticipate, not just follow, EU policy.**

The strategy recognises this role explicitly. It credits Interreg with mobilising resources and expertise for joint island projects in areas such as the blue economy, tourism and digitalisation, and commits the Commission to encouraging Interreg partnerships to capitalise on results that enhance island resilience and preparedness through cooperation with Southern Neighbourhood partner countries — a direct endorsement of the North–South cooperation participants at the session called essential. The one pillar where the island portfolio remains thin is security and crisis preparedness: an emerging space where Mediterranean programmes, with their experience in risk prevention and civil protection cooperation, are well placed to grow in the 2028–2034 period.

Where the partners are

At island-region level, the Ionian Islands, Cyprus, Sardinia, Sicily and Corsica are consistently the most active territories.

2. Keep.eu can label each project with up to three themes, so theme counts do not sum to the number of projects.

Island related cooperation in the Mediterranean, 2021-2027

64 reviewed projects, 156 island-based or island-representing partner participations

To frame Interreg's contribution, two keep.eu searches were run on island- and insularity-related projects in Mediterranean programmes: one for 2014–2020 (a closed and complete portfolio) and one for 2021–2027 (still in mid-implementation). The headline totals therefore measure different things — a finished period versus a snapshot of work in progress — and should be read with that in mind. The 2021–2027 results were additionally reviewed in keep.eu for genuine island relevance: 64 records were retained (10 core island-focused, 38 with a direct island component, 16 island-partner).



Smaller islands locations (1-2 participations each): Cres, Murter/Kornati, Djerba, Lampedusa & Linosa, Lošinj, Lérins Islands, Ponza, Vis, Pantelleria and Sporades; plus island-representing networks based in Marseille and Athens. One Canary Islands participation is outside the map extent.

Bubble size represents the number of reviewed partner participations linked to each territory or island-representing body.

Source: keep.eu extract, reviewed island-relevance dataset (18 august 2026). Basemap: Natural Earth.

Island region (NUTS2)	Partners 14–20	Partners 21–27*
Ionian Islands	43	18
Cyprus	43	25
Sicily	35	21
Sardinia	18	20
Corsica	16	19
Malta	22	9
Crete	18	6
Balearic Islands	12	11
South Aegean	11	4
North Aegean	4	3

Present, but steering less: island entities in the partnership map

- **Island entities participate steadily but lead less.** They hold roughly 30% of participations and organisations in both periods, yet their share of lead-partner roles fell from 31% (30 of 97 projects) to 19% (12 of 64) — pointing to a capacity constraint, not a lack of access.
- **About seven in ten partners sit on the mainland.** Around 143 of 469 participations (~30%) are island-based, once partners on islands within mainland regions (Cres, Lošinj, Ponza) are counted alongside the ten island NUTS2 regions. A further 13 participations come from organisations that represent island territories but are based on the mainland; the map opposite includes these, giving the wider count of 156.
- **The partner mix is public and multi-level, with business nearly absent.** Local authorities, national authorities, NGOs and business support organisations participate in near-equal numbers, but SMEs are only 4% — a gap given the EU Islands Strategy's competitiveness pillar.

A NEW POLICY MOMENT FOR EUROPE'S ISLANDS

For the first time, islands are moving from the margins to the centre of EU territorial policy. The EU Strategy for Islands, adopted in June 2026, anchors this shift — and it does not stand alone. Several converging processes will shape island cooperation after 2027, each opening a channel through which Interreg results can travel into policy.

Synergies across a converging policy landscape

- **EU Strategy for Islands** (COM(2026) 520, adopted 10 June 2026) — the EU's first dedicated islands strategy. Built around four pillars — economic development, connectivity, competitiveness and innovation; energy security, environmental protection, green transition and climate resilience; communities, demography and quality of life; and security and crisis preparedness — with governance as a horizontal enabler, it recognises islands among the territories facing severe and permanent handicaps under Article 174 TFEU, and explicitly credits Interreg with mobilising resources for joint island projects.
- **EU Strategy on resilient, prosperous and liveable coastal communities** (COM(2026) 530, adopted 10 June 2026) — the islands strategy's twin, presented the same day. Structured around prosperity, resilience and liveability with thirteen flagship actions, it covers the 95 million people living along the EU's 70,000 km of coastline; the two strategies are designed to work in tandem, with island-specific challenges handled by the islands strategy.
- **European Ocean Pact** (June 2025) — the EU's overarching maritime-governance framework, in which both strategies are anchored and islands are set to hold a prominent place.
- **Pact for the Mediterranean** (adopted 16 October 2025, launched in Barcelona on the 30th anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration) — the EU's renewed strategic framework with its Southern Mediterranean partners, built on three pillars (people; sustainable and integrated economies; security, preparedness and migration management), with a first Action Plan of 21 concrete actions adopted in April 2026. For Mediterranean islands, it is the political frame for the North–South cooperation this publication argues is essential.
- **Right to Stay Strategy — Your Region, Your Future** (in preparation; adoption expected end 2026) — the emerging agenda to ensure that remaining in one's home territory is a choice, not a casualty of missing opportunities. Its demographic and depopulation lens speaks directly to the social dimension of insularity, and the islands strategy names it as the framework that will address these challenges for all remote areas, islands included.
- **Macro-regional and Sea Basin strategies** — two frameworks give Mediterranean island cooperation

a wider governance home. The **EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)** is the macro-regional framework for the Adriatic–Ionian basin, whose Pillar 4 on sustainable tourism runs the cross-cutting Mediterranean Diet flagship initiative and offers island projects a route into regional policy — the same route the IPA ADRION thematic clusters use. The **WestMED Initiative** — formally the Initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean (2017) — brings together five EU Member States (France, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain) and five southern partners (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia) around maritime safety and security, a sustainable blue economy, and better governance of the sea, with an Assistance Mechanism offering project development support and partner matchmaking.

- **The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)** is a 43-member (EU and non EU) intergovernmental institution that promotes cooperation, stability, and a sustainable blue economy across the Euro-Mediterranean region. Its key focus areas include improving maritime governance, reducing marine litter, and advancing climate resilience across all member states. For islands and insular territories, the UfM also offers targeted support to tackle isolation and climate vulnerability through the Mediterranean Blue Economy Stakeholder Platform.

Mediterranean islands also sit in a different legal category from the EU's outermost regions — the Canary Islands, the Azores, Madeira, and five French territories — which hold dedicated status under Article 349 TFEU, including specific funding instruments and state-aid derogations that Mediterranean islands do not share. Mediterranean islands are recognised only under Article 174 TFEU as territories facing “severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps,” with no matching dedicated funding architecture. For them, Interreg is not a supplementary channel alongside other island-specific instruments — it is close to the only one.

Further reading

- **European Parliament (EPRS): “Islands of the European Union”** — background briefing on island challenges and the case for dedicated EU action.
- **ESPON: “Islands and insularity”** — territorial evidence on the structural challenges and opportunities of insular regions (ERMES project).

WHY IT MATTERS FOR INTERREG

Why it matters for Interreg

The roughly 250 inhabited Mediterranean islands — including the island Member States Malta and Cyprus — face permanent territorial handicaps the Commission now explicitly acknowledges. Cohesion policy is identified as a key instrument for addressing them through place-based approaches.

This is the opening Interreg has been waiting for: a chance to feed a decade of island project results and methodologies directly into the implementation of the Islands Strategy, and to position islands as a priority territorial typology in 2028–2034 programmes.

“The Commission clearly recognises the specific socio-economic challenges of islands — insularity, remoteness, vulnerability. We believe cohesion policy can play an important role in supporting islands through place-based approaches.”

— Tamara Pavlin, DG REGIO — Mediterranean Programmes

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PRACTITIONERS

Selected statements from the MedLab Islands Session, addressing project work, programme coordination and the future of cohesion policy for islands.



Ignasi Mateo Rodriguez

MedWaves / UNEP-MAP Regional Activity Centre

“Marine litter knows no borders. If we implement solutions only in the northern Mediterranean, we will not solve the problem. Islands are interesting contexts for new reuse-and-refill business models — pilots and living labs to test innovative solutions before scaling up.”



Khaoula El Cadi

ASSIDJE / Safeguarding of the Island of Djerba, Tunisia

“Heritage reminds us that sustainability is not a new concept — our ancestors practised development aligned with natural constraints. The challenge is to combine traditional knowledge with modern technology. Isolated, fragmented actions are no longer sufficient.”



Patrizia Serra

University of Cagliari / Easy2Log
(interreg-marittimo.eu/web/easy2log/progetto)

“Digitalisation can be an equaliser for islands. Any disruption in the maritime leg creates a domino effect across the whole transport system. A common digital language can close these gaps — and the goal should be to mainstream these tools into wider European programmes.”



Barbara Di Piazza

Head of Joint Secretariat / Interreg IPA ADRION

“We want to act as a mediator — to scout which organisations could use the outcomes of our projects and build the missing link to who could benefit next. Our thinking at programme level is very much in line with what we hear from practitioners.”

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERREG

The evidence assembled here points one way: Mediterranean island cooperation is not a niche, it is a preview. The 2021–2027 portfolio was already investing in innovation, climate resilience, governance and the social dimension of insularity before the EU Strategy for Islands formalised those priorities in June 2026. Islands remain reliable test beds precisely because their constraints arrive earlier and sharper — but the data also shows where cooperation must improve. Eight recommendations follow for the post-2027 period, each carrying political backing from the Cyprus Presidency, which opened the Leaders of Interreg Forum by framing island regions as facing permanent structural constraints and territorial cooperation as “a necessity, not an option.”



1

Strategic positioning

Treat islands as a priority territorial typology, with dedicated calls or thematic priorities aligned to the EU Islands Strategy, and feed a decade of project results into its implementation — through the national and regional partnership plans for 2028–2034 and the Commission’s biennial islands event.



2

Capitalisation, scaling & coordination

Prioritise capitalisation mechanisms, structured cluster activities and cross-programme coordination — in the spirit of the Mediterranean Multi-Programme Mechanism (MMM) and IPA ADRION’s thematic clusters — so island results survive beyond the funding cycle. The programme-level ‘mediator’ role, scouting who could use a project’s outcomes and building the link to who benefits next, turns capitalisation from an aspiration into a practice, generating synergies and value for money by avoiding duplication.



3

Island leadership

Close the leadership gap. Island entities hold a steady three in ten participations across both periods, yet their share of lead-partner roles has fallen from 31% to 19%. This signals capacity, not appetite: simplified lead-partner requirements, preparation support and administrative capacity building would let island institutions steer the cooperation designed for them, not only join it — the practical test of the “place-based, bottom-up nature” the Presidency asked to preserve



4

North-South cooperation

The inclusion of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean partners is essential, not optional — marine litter, water and climate are shared problems.



5

The Pact for the Mediterranean and the Islands Strategy’s own commitment to Interreg cooperation with Southern Neighbourhood countries on island resilience now give this a political frame.

Innovation & tradition

Recognise that island ‘innovation’ often means recovering and scaling traditional, nature-based solutions — Djerba’s cisterns, hydraulic heritage, ancestral water management — and reflect this in evaluation criteria.



6

Digital as equaliser, business as partner

Position digitalisation as a cross-cutting enabler for island equity, with scalability and interoperability built into project design. Use business support organisations, already among the most active partner types, as the bridge to island SMEs — today only 4% of participations, a gap that matters given the Strategy’s competitiveness pillar.



7

Energy communities

Support a common Mediterranean framework — guidelines, standards, shared indicators — so citizen-led energy communities can replicate across islands, building on the legislative openings and standardised approaches already tested in the Greek and Cypriot islands.



8

MedLab as platform

Maintain and strengthen MedLab post-2027 as a structured dialogue platform, used to coordinate joint contributions to EU consultations and to carry shared frameworks — such as the one proposed above for energy communities — across the seventeen Mediterranean programmes. It delivers what no single programme can.

The Cyprus Presidency’s call that the “right to stay should be an option, not a necessity” adds a demographic lens that strengthens the social dimension of insularity, and its framing of Interreg as a policy laboratory with “small budgets but high leverage” — to be preserved with stronger strategic focus, simpler delivery and greater visibility — reinforces every recommendation above. Cyprus framed Interreg as a key instrument for an island Member State to stay connected to the EU.

Looking ahead

Islands have spent decades being described as places that receive policy. This publication suggests something different: that they are places that generate it. The cisterns of Djerba, the low-plastic zones of the Mediterranean’s small islands, the energy communities of the North Aegean and the digital freight tools of Sardinia and Corsica were not designed to serve an EU strategy — they were designed to solve problems that arrived on islands first. That the EU Strategy for Islands now names those same priorities is not a coincidence; it is a measure of how much island cooperation already had to say. The task for the post-2027 period is to make that flow of evidence deliberate rather than fortunate: to capitalise what works, to let island institutions lead it, and to keep the seventeen Mediterranean programmes talking to each other so that no island has to solve the same problem twice.

MEDLAB - FOR STRONGER COOPERATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN



MedLab is a platform of programmes working to improve synergies across the seventeen Interreg programmes active in the Mediterranean. Launched in 2019 and co-led by DG REGIO and INTERACT/TESIM, it began with the 2021–2027 programming phase and continues through the current implementation period. WestMed and the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region are associated, and the Mediterranean Multi-Programme Mechanism (MMM) — a pilot coordination initiative launched in 2022 that now brings together ten Interreg programmes around sustainable tourism — is among its spin-offs.

Its approach is deliberately inclusive — DG REGIO, DG MARE, programme structures, managing and joint authorities, monitoring-committee members and, in some cases, project beneficiaries — connecting top-down and bottom-up. What it does: scale up project results, promote programmes to other Commission services, run thematic publications like this one, and provide a space for dialogue and innovation between transnational and cross-border programmes.

THE SEVENTEEN MEDITERRANEAN INTERREG PROGRAMMES

- Interreg NEXT MED
- Interreg Euro-MED
- Interreg Spain–France–Andorra (POCTEFA)
- Interreg Italy–France Maritime
- Interreg SUDOE
- Interreg Italy–Malta
- Interreg Italy–Tunisia
- Interreg Italy–Croatia
- Interreg Italy–Slovenia
- Interreg Greece–Italy
- Interreg IPA Italy–Albania–Montenegro
- Interreg IPA Croatia–Bosnia–Montenegro
- Interreg IPA Greece–Albania
- Interreg IPA Greece–North Macedonia
- Interreg IPA Greece–Bulgaria
- Interreg IPA Adrion
- Interreg Greece–Cyprus

“There is demand from the programmes for MedLab to continue in the post-2027 process. The need for coordination and synergy has not diminished — if anything, it is growing.”

Jean-Pierre Halkin
DG REGIO

METHODOLOGY AND DATA NOTE

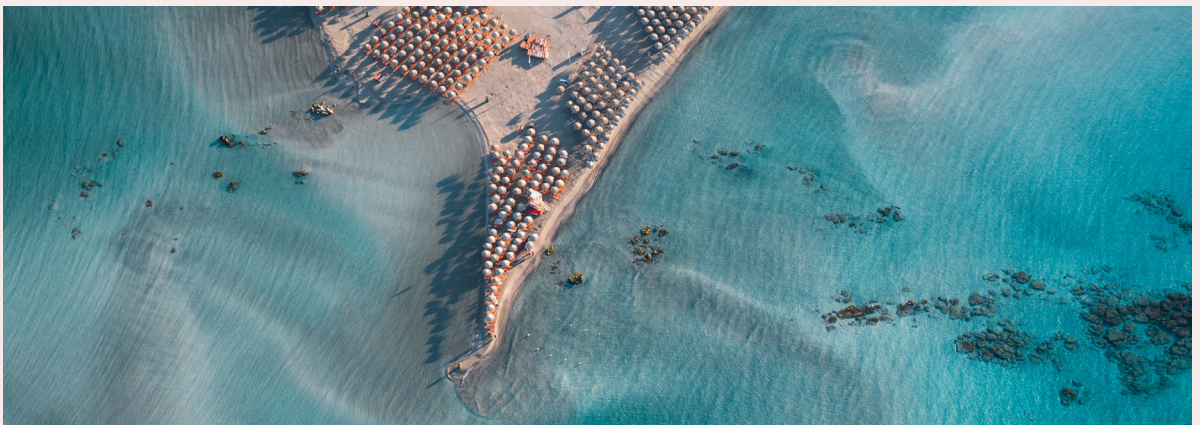
All figures in this publication are drawn from the keep.eu database. Two searches were run on island- and insularity-related projects in Mediterranean Interreg programmes: one for 2014–2020, a closed and complete portfolio, and one for 2021–2027, still in mid-implementation. The two headline totals therefore measure different things and should be read with that in mind.

The 2021–2027 results were screened for genuine island relevance, excluding semantic false positives such as urban heat islands and ecological waste-collection islands. Of 70 records returned, 64 were retained: 10 core island-focused projects, 38 with a direct island component, and 16 retained because at least one formal partner is based in or represents an island territory. The cut-off date is 12 August 2026; 60 of the 64 projects were still ongoing at that date, and the portfolio will grow as further calls are recorded.

Financial figures refer to total project budgets and expenditure recorded in keep.eu, not amounts paid. Totals may not sum exactly due to rounding. Programmes renamed between periods are aligned, and Balkan–Mediterranean was discontinued. Organisation-type data is available in keep.eu for 2021–2027 only, and around 10% of participation are recorded as ‘other’ or unspecified, so those shares are indicative.

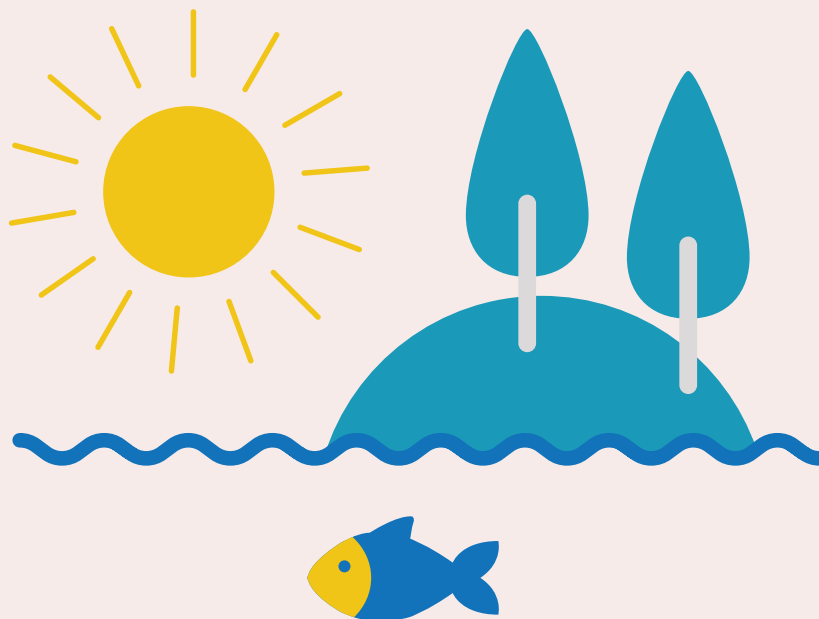
Partners are counted as island-based when they are located in one of the ten Mediterranean island NUTS2 regions, or when their recorded town is on an island within a mainland region — for example Cres and Lošinj in Adriatic Croatia, or Ponza in Lazio. A small number of organisations that represent island territories but are based on the mainland are not included in that count; they are noted separately where relevant. Themes are counted across the Theme 1–3 fields, so a project may appear under more than one theme.

The figures here can be reproduced and updated: filter keep.eu by programme, period and theme to generate your own statistics.



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