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AI-generated photo depicting an integrated sustainable blue economy in the Euro-Arab world (Source: ChatGPT 4.0)

Blue Economy: Rebuilding Mutual Understanding in Euro-Arab Cooperation – A Young Perspective in Troubled Waters

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1. Introduction

It is paradoxical that, despite the Mediterranean Sea being a nexus between Europe and the Arab region, maritime cooperation and the blue economy are not central to the Euro-Arab agenda. This paradox deeply challenges the foundations of mutual understanding. Euro-Arab cooperation is therefore navigating difficult and troubled waters, due to complex and interconnected polycrisis.

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the blue or oceans economy originates from the 'green economy' concept endorsed at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012 and has been adopted by many island and coastal nations as a strategy for achieving sustainable growth (UNCTAD, 2014). Additionally, the World Bank outlines the blue economy as the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, while preserving the health of ocean ecosystems, covering sectors such as fisheries, shipping, renewable energy and tourism (World Bank, 2017).

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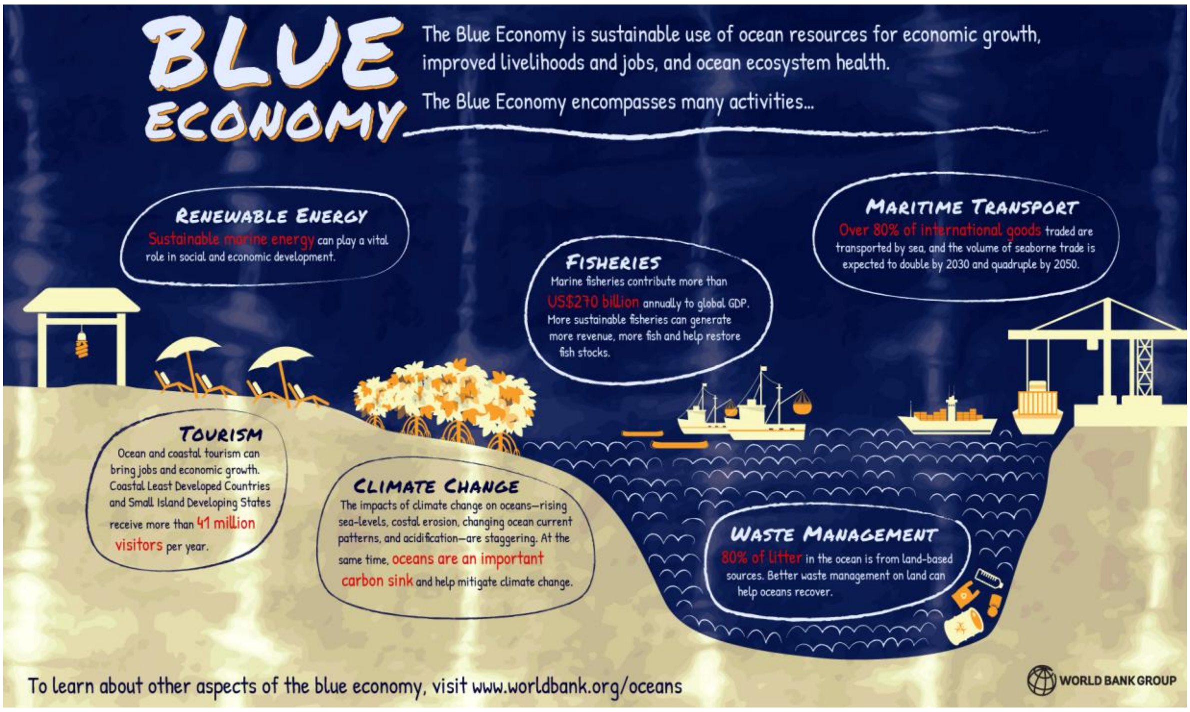

Figure 1 Blue Economy infographic from the World Bank website (2017)

This policy paper aims to propose ideas for regional cooperation and policy recommendations to Euro-Arab policymakers, think tanks, and policy analysts on the blue economy agenda. The central argument is that enhancing Euro-Arab regional cooperation in the Blue Economy will foster long-term mutual understanding and maximise impact in addressing common challenges posed by climate change, with a strategic focus on the natural barrier of the common seas. Additionally, the paper makes the case to incorporate young and diverse voices to the strategic thinking on Euro-Arab relations, proof of which is that the paper is co-authored by two young authors from the Arab region with a strong motivation in moving Euro-Arab relations forward. In line with the spirit of the El-Hiwar project and its summer school the paper suggests that reenergising and rejuvenating Euro-Arab relations are two sides of the same coin.

Blue economy feeds into the European Union's (EU) Green Deal Agenda and Arab Green Agenda for investment opportunities. Yet, this will not automatically translate into bi-regional cooperation unless there is leadership and vision to bring it to the core of Euro-Arab cooperation. Moreover, revamping this cooperation is urgent, particularly when taking into consideration how the spill-overs from regional escalations and tensions might jeopardise the positive climate of dialogue and cooperation between Arab and European partners. In this extremely sensitive period of polycrisis, the Blue Agenda can play a key role by creating crucial opportunities to promote environmental sustainability and long-term economic prosperity (in line with the 2023 UN High Seas Treaty).

Indeed, climate change challenges and natural disasters continue to threaten both Euro-Arab shores in areas such as water scarcity and vital infrastructure, with devastating effects on economic sustainability, therefore amplifying vulnerabilities and exacerbating socio-economic gaps. As climate catastrophes will continue to arise in the future, addressing innovatively and inclusively interdependent issues, while balancing sustainability and the pursuit of economic interests constitute a common Euro-Arab challenge. Shaping common responses to climate change on a multilateral and bi-regional basis, rather than addressing them nationally or bilaterally, will create a win-win scenario for all parties involved. This approach calls for innovative and inclusive solutions.

The first part of this policy paper focuses on why the Blue Economy is important in Euro-Arab future relations, while the second part focuses on how this cooperation can be strengthened. The third part builds on the way forward by providing policy recommendations to advance the common Euro-Arab blue agenda and how this is relevant to EU Green Deal and Arab stances. In conclusion, this policy paper suggests that these common challenges create opportunities to improve Euro-Arab relations multilaterally, balancing the need for sustainability and investment opportunities for both the EU and its Member States on one hand (Team Europe approach), and the League of Arab

States (LAS) and its Member States on the other. Focusing on the Blue Economy could also bring better integration and cohesion between and within the two regions, rather than mere alignment.

2. Why the Blue Economy should be the focus of Euro-Arab cooperation

Oceans and Blue Economy sectors are indispensable to the global economy and the planet's health, exemplified by the principle that a healthy sea equals a healthy and prosperous economy. With 12% of the world's population relying on fisheries and aquaculture for their livelihood, and nearly 90% of global goods transported by sea OECD Report on Ocean Economy 2030 (OECD, 2016), regional cooperation in blue economy governance has a strong potential in Euro-Arab relations. Focusing on sustainability and transitioning the blue economic sectors will ensure long-term prosperity and resilience for coastal communities and global value chains. This strategic approach is crucial to mitigating climate change impacts and addressing pollution in our oceans and seas.

The opportunities of advancing the waters of the Blue Economy are immense. According to the OECD report on Ocean Economy 2030, the maritime economy alone (only offshore blue economy sectors) projected to reach $3 trillion by 2030, unlocking the potential of the Blue Economy can return a five-fold yield, with a $5 return for every $1 invested. The Blueinvest Investor Report 2024 argues that the volume of investments disclosed in the Blue Economy has seen a substantial increase, tripling over the past decade. Moreover, between 2018 and 2023, these investments surpassed €13 billion (BlueInvest, 2024). The most dynamic sectors driving this growth are blue renewable energy, blue tech, ocean observation and aquaculture.

2.1. Exploring Regions of Interest

The European Commission's EU Blue Economy Report 2023 report (European Commission, 2023) highlighted the EU Blue Economy's strength, boasting a turnover of €523 billion in 2020, despite challenges posed by COVID-19, particularly affecting coastal tourism. The established sectors have witnessed significant increase from 2010, particularly offshore wind energy by + 1762% since 2010, and whose employment rate increased by 20 times in just 10 years. This sector, including the knowledge acquired, is particularly one of the critical levers that the EU could bring to the table in spreading the sustainability and growth of the Blue Economy - marine energy sectors with their neighbours in addition to other financial instruments to drive the waters of the blue agenda.

Arab countries are increasingly aligning their political and economic strategies with the burgeoning Blue Economy, adhering to environmental and sustainability agendas while unlocking the potential of their offshore and onshore sectors. In Morocco, coastal areas contribute over 50% of GDP and jobs (World Bank, 2022), making the country a regional Blue Economy (BE) centre. Morocco is now in the process of establishing a robust national institutional framework and was the first to benefit from the World Bank's Blue Economy Program for Results (PforR) with a $350 million loan, also funding key blue sector activities such as sustainable tourism and aquaculture (World Bank, 2022). Additionally, Morocco has shown leadership in subregional BE initiatives like the 5+5 Dialogue under the WestMED initiative.

Other Arab countries, including Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon, are also active in advancing the Blue Economy through national dialogues aimed at integrating Blue Economy principles within their territories. These dialogues, part of a regional program funded by the European Commission and executed by UNEP under the SwitchMED II program, have been instrumental in setting common yet nation-specific priorities and establishing baselines for both emerging and established sectors.

Beyond the Mediterranean and Red Sea, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, despite abundant opportunities for Blue Economy activities, have historically not fully integrated the sea into their economies, resulting in its limited contribution to GDP. However, there is a notable shift as these nations pursue economic diversification, evidenced by increasing focus and investment in Blue Economy sectors. Saudi Arabia's WAVE initiative, backed by a $100 million investment to preserve coral reefs, exemplifies this growing commitment to ocean conservation. Moreover, recent agreements such as Saudi Global Ports (SGP) partnering with China's SANY to supply King Abdulaziz Port in Dammam with 80 electric trucks underscore the GCC states' efforts to adopt sustainable practices and diversify water supply sources (SANY, 2024). Despite these advancements, limited cross-border and inter-agency collaboration within each country poses significant challenges in effectively addressing environmental

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degradation, particularly in ad hoc Marine Spatial Planning. These governance issues underscore the critical need for coordinated efforts to promote sustainable development across the GCC's marine resources.

2.2. Sowing the Seeds for Euro-Arab Blue Cooperation

Regional interest in sustaining and advancing the Blue Economy has surged, with projections indicating that the global ocean economy could reach $3 trillion by 2030, growing annually at 5% (OECD, 2016). This growth presents a prime opportunity for Euro-Arab cooperation, leveraging their combined social capital, strategic influence over key straits and canals, and complementary economies. According to the EU Blue Economy report 2023, the EU, a leader in offshore sectors, currently generates over €500 billion annually from its maritime industries, employing more than 5 million people (European Commission, 2023). Collaborating with Arab countries therefore can significantly boost these figures and ensure sustainable economic growth across the region.

Arab countries stand to benefit from European expertise in sustainable marine sectors, practices, and technology transfer, addressing their growing need for skilled know-how in marine resource management, particularly as they pursue ambitious plans for unlocking new economic developments and investment opportunities in their waters. This collaboration is crucial for maintaining European competitiveness against rising Chinese investment in Arab world port operations and infrastructure. Moreover, Euro-Arab cooperation in the Blue Economy aligns with the EU's Green Deal objectives, promoting environmental sustainability and extending these principles globally. With a proven track record in Euro-Arab cooperation, the EU is well-positioned to navigate regional challenges and foster impactful partnerships. This underscores the immense potential for joint initiatives that leverage mutual strengths to achieve shared economic, environmental, and developmental goals in the Blue Economy.

3. From deeds to facts: setting the bases for the Euro-Arab Blue Agenda

The MED2050 Report (Planbleu, 2022) has outlined five future scenarios for achieving a sustainable Blue Economy in the Mediterranean region, which could serve as foundational models for broader Euro-Arab cooperation. These scenarios identify risks associated with efforts towards a sustainable Blue Economy, including potential tensions, crises, and regional instability, as evidenced by current challenges in the eastern Mediterranean. These tensions stem from what could be perceived as uneven progress, jeopardising the attractiveness of sustainable Blue Economy development in the region, therefore putting at risk investments in the Euro-Arab space. Addressing these challenges necessitates envisioning a cooperative Blue Economy model, leveraging the Euro-LAS advanced partnership and EU-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Dialogue on Economic Diversification Project. The political goal is to expand cooperative Blue Economy mechanisms and instruments through regional Euro-Arab partnerships at sub-regional levels (North Africa, Gulf and East Mediterranean/Mashreq). Success will depend on scaling up with key regional partners, such as Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Lebanon. Another key area is to establish EU institutional frameworks for the Blue Economy, similar to the Green Deal and green sustainable finance. This could incentivise particular sectors, such as sustainable tourism and marine industries and leveraging EU's Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) and European Commission's DG MARE (Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries) for bilateral and multilateral agreements with Arab partners. Achieving these goals hinges crucially on political stability in the region, underscored by robust efforts in Euro-Arab cooperation.

3.1. Scaling-up existing initiatives

Effective mechanisms to scale up cooperation in the region are built upon long standing frameworks centred around Mediterranean countries, which have established enduring partnerships with institutions and states. Existing Euro-Arab partnerships should build on youth dynamism and interest in the blue economy, and therefore rejuvenating and diversifying the Euro-Arab dialogue. While regional collaboration in the Blue Economy is not new, Euro-Arab efforts operate on a broader scale. In the Mediterranean Sea, UNEP/MAP (UNEP, 2024) has played a pivotal role by facilitating numerous multilateral and bilateral collaboration platforms and partnerships. The Barcelona Convention, administered by UNEP/MAP, stands as the most comprehensive and longstanding framework for environmental sustainability in the Mediterranean, fostering robust cooperation among member countries. This legal framework has spurred significant regional initiatives and partnerships, including the SwitchMed Project (supported by the EU). In its second phase (2019-2023), SwitchMed focuses on Blue Economy as one of its components, demonstrating business models that promote sustainable transformations in maritime economic activities, aiming to minimise their impact on marine and coastal ecosystems. This initiative has successfully conducted evidence-based Blue Economy dialogues in seven Arab countries — namely Lebanon, Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, and Tunisia—resulting in the establishment of nationwide networks.

The UNEP/IMAP Regional Activity Centre specialising in biodiversity and conservation (SPA/RAC) stands as a critical coordination hub, offering a replicable model for Euro-Arab collaboration. Likewise, the WestMED initiative (supported by the European Commission) and implemented with Arab partners, namely Morocco, Libya, Tunisia, Mauritania and Algeria. This valuable initiative on sustainable BE serves as a prime example of successful regional cooperation, forged through extensive dialogues among ten countries in the western Mediterranean under the '5+5 Dialogue'. This initiative has empowered regional and national authorities to synchronise efforts in advancing the Blue Economy agenda, setting a precedent for potential replication at smaller Euro-Arab regional scales. Essential elements from WestMED include establishing specialised Technical Groups with clear mandates for enhancing Blue Economy coordination and governance, while fostering constructive dialogues on blue growth among participating countries.

3.2. Critical Areas Ensuring the Cooperation and Long-Term Sustainability

The win-win cooperation focuses on balancing environmental protection and management with economic growth. Key to this effort are financing instruments, which today are primarily funded by the EU and its member states operating within the region. At the same time, there is a lack of funding instruments supported by high-income Arab partners involving not only the Mediterranean Sea, but also the Red Sea as a crucial area for worldwide trade supply chain (i.e. the Suez Canal). The Blue Mediterranean Partnership (BMP), hosted by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), channels specific mechanisms tailored for non-EU Mediterranean countries (EIB, 2023). Another pivotal instrument is the World Bank's Problue program (World Bank, 2024), primarily funded by the EU, as a multilateral bloc, and EU Member States, namely Sweden, Denmark, Germany, France, and Ireland. This program has bolstered Morocco's role as regional leader in the Blue Economy, supporting initiatives ranging from marine plastic pollution management to coastal tourism development and the formulation of a national Blue Economy roadmap.

These instruments should attract increased investments and interest from regional banks and Arab states, such as the Islamic Development Bank (ISDB) and the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund. It is crucial that these investments align with a Euro-Arab regional BE framework, emphasising biodiversity protection, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, plastic pollution reduction, and sustainable tourism, while also accommodating local priorities determined through bilateral/national dialogues. National Blue Economy dialogues proved to be effective as per SwitchMed II activities and should be replicated annually. These bilateral dialogues ought to be complemented by regional conferences on the BE to facilitate broader adoption of Euro-Arab agendas. Additionally, promoting the blue financing agenda in key regional summits and conferences led by the parties enhances collaboration and strategic alignment.

Technically, the increase in offshore activities in the Euro-Arab region, particularly in countries with limited sectoral experience, poses potential long-term risks to fragile ecosystems and biodiversity in shared waters. Therefore, collaboration should prioritise establishing an offshore protocol for coastal states and major cities, focusing on common guidelines, standards, and capacity-building programs. These efforts should emphasise the transfer of blue skills, expertise, and related technologies unconditionally between States. Long-term sustainability in integrated water resource and coastal zone management at a regional level must be emphasised, with a strong focus on greening port operations within regional dialogues. Additionally, developing concrete tools for monitoring Blue Economy indicators, including EU's Copernicus satellite programme for remote sensing services among Euro-Arab countries in the Blue Economy sectors. This is necessary to mitigate adverse impacts from the maritime and tourism sectors in the Mediterranean, Red Sea, and Persian Gulf, thereby contributing to decarbonization and reducing air pollutant emissions, creating partnership with the Kuwait-based Regional Organisation for Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME).

4. Roadmap for Euro-Arab Blue Economy cooperation agenda

There is a lack of institutional long-term vision for LAS and GCC countries on the Blue Economy Agenda and this is detrimental for sustainability (e.g. for the protection of the marine environment). Also, there is a lack of proper foreign policy instruments oriented specifically to the Blue Economy. There exists a substantive financial gap within the EU when it comes to FPI (Foreign Policy Instruments) and the existing financial instruments provided by the Green Deal focus only internally at EU level. At the same time, Arab countries should be on the same wavelength, in terms of institutional financial instruments for the Blue Economy. However, Blue Economy could be used as a ‘soft’ leverage in Euro-Arab cooperation, for instance in the Gulf building Euro-Arab cooperation with the ROPME (Regional Organisation for Protection of the Marine Environment) when it comes to balancing sustainability and economic interests and strengthening partnerships with UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme). In order to turn this into a reality, three different and complementary options should be explored: crafting a new blue narrative for Euro-Arab relations, incorporating foresight techniques into policy design and upgrading efforts in the promotion of research and innovation. Furthermore, these options can be further advanced by involving the dynamic voices of young people to rejuvenate and re-energise Euro-Arab cooperation.

4.1. Blue narratives

The smart utilisation of strong Arab regional political umbrella like LAS relations is pivotal, especially in co-leading technical working groups, while defining clear mandate, and nudging its work. Blue Economy should be seen as an opportunity for new narratives for discussing regional connectivity sustainability transitions and mainstreaming but also pressing issues such as maritime security and migration, to better open ports for trade and innovation. This is a driver for regional economic corridors. The role Arab countries should play should go beyond financing instruments and follow the example of AI development, such as in the UAE (Bloomberg, 2024), aiming to increase patents and innovation in the marine renewable energy and environment at the interface of sustainability, trade, and security.

The EU-Egypt Investment Conference, with its €40 billion in private investment agreements, addressed critical decarbonization solutions in Blue Economy sectors such as renewable energy and hydrogen (European Commission, 2024). However, what is needed is a comprehensive framework that prioritises Blue Economy narratives above mere energy transition narratives. Blue Economy narratives in the Euro-Arab cooperation are crucial for mainstreaming sustainable consumption and production behaviours, as future challenges require societal transition and a shift in business-as-usual practices for all parties involved.

These conferences can ensure European competitiveness by strengthening narratives in which EU industries and businesses are well-positioned to diffuse innovation and expertise to the region. This approach will also guarantee the delivery of high-quality Blue Economy services with low carbon practices. The focus should now be on mainstreaming Blue Economy narratives within a multi-level governance framework, particularly in countries that have demonstrated readiness beyond political stability. Despite its economic and political challenges, Lebanon has shown through its Blue Economy dialogue (LebanonBE, 2024) that it is a platform for self-governed, active collaboration from the bottom up. This readiness signals to international Blue Economy partners in the Euro-Arab interface that Lebanon is prepared to seize this opportunity for recovery, thereby creating a less risky atmosphere in the region and fostering a promising Euro-Arab Blue Economy Dialogue.

4.2. Foresight and policy-making

Forecasting techniques, such as horizon scanning and scenario analysis, could enable Euro-Arab policy and decision-makers to make careful decisions and well-targeted actions by anticipating potential risks and failures. According to Gaub, the sense of urgency is related to climate-related water scarcity that is exacerbated by geopolitics (Gaub, 2019). This constitutes a spillover also for Blue Economy when it comes to the distribution of resources. Indeed, the risk of the Blue Economy being excessively focused on profit and economic interests is creating growing geopolitical competition in Euro-Arab cooperation. Indeed, oil and gas drilling in disputed maritime economic zones in the Eastern Mediterranean. Moving away from sustainability in the blue agenda thus constitutes a detrimental risk to sustainability and the preservation of the marine environment.

4.3. Research and Innovation

Existing schemes of exchanging knowledge like Erasmus+ and Marie Curie Actions and expanding Horizon Funds could serve to stimulate the creation of regional labs of policies, knowledge transfer and technology innovation as well as to leveraging the technical expertise of both regions, setting a balance that prevents perpetuating Eurocentric agendas and unidirectional cooperation efforts. The EU leadership is key in making sure the youth of the Arab world can thrive and serve their security in their own country, and Arab countries should take this opportunity wisely. More finance and focus on the new Blue Economy will prove vital to setting the world on a course to achieving a healthy, thriving ocean. Euro-Arab student exchanges should focus on the Blue Economy to better prepare young leaders and generations to find a balance between sustainability and economic interests.

4.4. Policy Recommendations

This policy brief focuses on the Blue Economy as a shared opportunity to enhance integration and cohesion within and between the Euro-Arab regions, going beyond mere alignment. Furthermore, it aims to rejuvenate, re-energise and diversify the Euro-Arab dialogue. The policy recommendations below are categorised into strategic, operational, and tactical levels for policymakers in both regions. They also invite scholars, think tanks, and professionals at the intersection of international affairs and environmental issues to evaluate and challenge the feasibility of these recommendations.

At the strategic level, key recommendations emphasise effective dialogue and financing mechanisms to advance governance and funding at a regional scale. For the operational level, policies focus on establishing an offshore protocol as a leverage point to progress with blue cooperation and achieve tangible results in implementing the blue agenda. At the tactical level, the role of the EU as a proactive agent is highlighted, with policy tools designed to initiate regional cooperation and introduce tested, solid instruments.

A) Effective Dialogue and Financing Mechanisms

- **Regional Blue Economy Conferences and Dialogue (bottom-up and top-down approaches):** Establish multi-level regional Euro-Arab activities and mobility programs to foster collaboration and capacity-building across borders with a bottom-up approach (i.e. organising a El-Hiwar Summer School on Euro-Arab Blue Economy). Also, through a top-down approach, establish a Euro-Arab Regional Policy Dialogue Forum including Ministers of Environment or Ministers of Marine Resources Management. The 2023 UN High Seas Treaty constitutes a crucial policy framework for the top-down approach. Indeed, the European Union and some Arab countries, such as Morocco, adopted it and are in the process of ratifying it (News announcement by the European Commission, 17 June 2024).
- **Multilateral Development Bank (MDB) Role:** The World Bank and other key regional development banks, such as the EIB (European Investment Bank) and ISDB (Islamic Development Bank), should significantly increase investments allocated for BE sector projects, particularly focusing on marine living resources and energy transition within a BE framework in the Euro-Arab region.
- **Technology Transfer and Innovation:** Collaborate with technology leaders in the private sector at EU-level (Team Europe approach) to facilitate the transfer of innovative technologies bidirectionally with Arab partners to enhance circularity and sustainability in BE sectors, with particular focus on green ports.
- **Channelling Finances through National Partners:** Ensure that the MDB's financing mechanisms involve national and local implementing partners. This should include components aimed at strengthening Euro-Arab cooperation within each country’s BE institutional frameworks.

B) Establishing an Offshore Protocol as a Leverage

- **Regional Collaboration**: Facilitate collaboration between coastal states and major cities in the Euro-Arab region to establish a comprehensive offshore protocol that are connected to trade (including carbon markets) and greening ports initiatives.
- **Common Guidelines and Standards**: Develop common guidelines and standards, focusing on capacity-building programs to ensure safety and sustainability in offshore operations. Additionally, utilise innovation funds for offshore marine energy sectors, including green hydrogen, and address end-of-life use and life-cycle costing of their technology.
- **Establish Blue Economy Data Centres leveraging innovative technology**: Create data centres dedicated to Blue Economy indicators to monitor progress, identify trends, and guide policy decisions by leveraging innovative technologies, such as ‘quantum computing’ (Nature Reviews Physics volume 4, page1, 2022), liquid “Nanonclay” (BBC), ‘floating sebins’ (World Economic Forum, 23 Sep 2022), and ‘CloudFisher’ nets (podcast, World Changing Ideas).

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C) The EU as a Proactive Agent

- **EU and Member States' Proactivity**: Encourage the EU and its member states to proactively integrate their expertise in critical Blue Economy sectors, including port operations, shipping safety management, offshore wind, PV-solar supply chains, electric vehicles, and hydrogen infrastructure in the Arab world with special tariffs and compromised deals.
- **Arab Countries Institutional Financial Instruments**: Arab countries should build funding instruments supported by EU and European countries, involving not only the Mediterranean Sea, but also the Red Sea.
- **EU-GCC Cooperation:** Strengthen emerging partnerships such as the EU-GCC cooperation on economic diversification, with a specific focus on the Blue Agenda.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Utilise the EU's leadership in the Euro-Mediterranean sphere and its role in the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) to forge strategic partnerships in key Blue Economy sectors with Arab countries beyond the Mediterranean, fostering Euro-Arab BE dialogue
- **Utilise Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe:** Leverage the Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe frameworks to support educational and research initiatives that bolster the Euro-Arab BE sectors, and foster technical and research mobility.

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El Hiwar project

El Hiwar III is an EU-funded project implemented by the College of Europe (Bruges, Belgium). It designs, organises and facilitates a series of activities with the aim of building capacity, contributing to information exchange and interactions between the EU and the LAS. These activities take various formats, such as policy dialogues, summer schools, training programmes, policy briefs, etc.

The League of Arab States is a central partner in the stabilisation of the region and the main institutional interlocutor with the Arab world. At the first EU-LAS summit in Sharm El-Sheikh (Egypt) on 24-25 February 2019, the leaders agreed to deepen Arab-European ties to enhance the stability, prosperity, and well-being of the two regions. Both sides agreed to boost cooperation towards security, conflict resolution and socio-economic development throughout the region. Leaders also reaffirmed the need to strengthen economic cooperation between the two regions to spur investment and sustainable growth. The summit in Egypt marked the start of a new dialogue between the EU and the LAS. Leaders committed to hold EU-LAS summits regularly.

This project is designed to reinforce the dialogue and cooperation with the League of Arab States.

El Hiwar III aims to contribute to the implementation of the EU-LAS Joint Work Programme on information and training, complementing the formal EU-LAS activities taking place outside of El Hiwar (e.g. Ministerial and PSC meetings, other political exchanges with EU-LAS counterparts, EU-LAS Strategic Dialogue).

Whenever relevant, El Hiwar III can provide inputs for the preparation of formal EU-LAS relations meetings (e.g. preparation of policy briefs) or for the implementation of decisions made during Ministerial meetings, summits, etc. Likewise, El Hiwar III can provide inputs in the framework of relevant multilateral events.

El Hiwar III also aims to contribute to enhancing the partnership between the EU and Arab countries by sharing knowledge and expertise to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Arab countries.

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About the HiwarBrief

HiwarBrief: New Voices, New Ideas from the El Hiwar Summer School is a publication featuring policy briefs produced by participants of the Summer School on Euro-Arab Relations.

This initiative translates the knowledge gained during the Summer School into practical recommendations, contributing to ongoing Euro-Arab cooperation efforts.

Guided by Eduard Soler i Lecha, an El Hiwar expert, participants draft policy briefs on key issues explored during each edition of the programme. In 2023, these focused on crisis management, climate change, humanitarian aid, and resilience building, reflecting the pressing challenges discussed during that year's Summer School.

HiwarBrief fosters the exchange of ideas among emerging experts while strengthening the El-Hiwar network, offering participants a channel to reach policymakers and advocate for impactful change.

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