

A New Pact for a Sustainable Mediterranean Future

19-21 May 2026 Athens, Greece



CIRCLE THE MED
9TH EDITION

Co-organised with



**Innovative
sustainable economy**

**Interreg
Euro-MED**



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AQUAMAN



Concept Note

Join us in **Athens on 19, 20 and 21 May** for three days of high-level dialogues, knowledge exchange, networking and community building at Piraeus Sailing Club. The [Innovative Sustainable Economy \(ISE\) Mission of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme](#) invites you to our in-person community gathering, hosted by our Greek partners DVISION and MIO-ECSDE, and held within the context of the Circle the Med Forum.

[Circle the Med - The Mediterranean Forum](#) is a flagship annual event and community platform dedicated to accelerating the green transition, climate neutrality, and environmental resilience across the Mediterranean region. Over the years, Circle the Med Forum has established itself as a cornerstone of climate and environmental diplomacy in the region.

The Circle the Med Forum will showcase how collaborative efforts under the ISE Mission are driving transformative solutions that strengthen innovation capacities, promote green and blue circular economies, and support systemic territorial transition across the region. The Forum will facilitate exchanges in this direction by hosting two of the main annual gatherings of the ISE Mission: the MED Innovation Summit and the ISE Community of Practice (CoP).

9th Edition Circle the Med Forum Opening - High-level Dialogues

The 9th edition seeks to articulate a renewed Mediterranean vision, one rooted in cooperation, resilience, and shared responsibility. The Forum will explore how the region can transform vulnerability into strength by building trust, deepening partnerships, and aligning political leadership, economic forces, and societal aspirations around a common purpose.

High-level dialogues will address the Mediterranean's strategic role in the global climate and energy transition, recognising energy as both an instrument of sustainability and a pillar of peace and stability. They will also consider the stewardship of the Mediterranean Sea itself; its waters, islands, coastlines, and biodiversity - as a moral and strategic obligation to future generations.

Equally central is the human dimension. The Mediterranean's living heritage, cultural diversity, and social fabric must remain at the heart of any **sustainable future**. Models of development, including tourism, maritime activity, and urban growth, must reinforce social cohesion, respect identity, and serve communities, while remaining aligned with environmental limits.

MED Innovation Summit 2026

The 3rd edition brings together the Mediterranean community to share knowledge, foster collaboration and turn innovation into lasting impact. This year's approach is rooted in the ISE Mission's conviction that a sustainable transition requires coordinated action across sectors, governance levels and territories.

The 2026 edition focuses on sharing the knowledge and solutions tested within the ISE Community by Thematic Projects (TPs), mentors and partners, while enhancing synergies within and beyond the ISE Mission.

The Summit's four thematic panels reflect this logic, focusing on **the sustainable use of natural resources, climate-smart resilience, regenerative economic models, and Green Living Areas** as laboratories for community-led governance. By combining policy dialogue, scientific knowledge and concrete project experience from across the Euro-MED area, the Summit highlights how innovation can be tested, transferred and scaled in diverse Mediterranean contexts, aligning with the [Interreg Euro-MED Academy](#).

5th ISE CoP in-person gathering

Since June 2024, the [ISE CoP](#) has been consolidating a dynamic and collaborative network among the ISE Mission's 23 TPs and two Governance Projects. This year's in-person gathering comes at a pivotal moment, as the Community reaches peak momentum- marked by tangible project results, emerging innovations, and strengthened partnerships.

To capitalise on this collective energy, the third day of the event will be fully dedicated to deepening thematic collaboration. Participants will engage in four **Thematic Working Groups** (Marine Resources, Agri-Food Systems, Industrial Transition, and Resources Valorisation) to reflect on the progress, align priorities, and exchange practical insights from the **Mentoring & Twinning programme** action plans.

A **Marketplace Village** will foster peer learning and cross-fertilisation among recently launched initiatives. Organised around three territorial challenge clusters: **islands and coastal areas; agriculture and rural regions; and villages and urban spaces**. This interactive format will encourage solution-oriented dialogue and showcase innovative practices.

In the afternoon, a training targeted on **regional policies for circular innovation** will draw on experiences from the European Circular Economy Innovation Valley, complemented by regional strategy examples, public administration case studies, and an overview of decentralised funding mechanisms anticipated under the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework (2028–2034).

The gathering will conclude with a **panel discussion** focused on lessons learned and pathways to shift from fragmented initiatives toward collective impact. Voices from [ISEC Hub](#) members will contribute perspectives on scaling solutions, strengthening cooperation, and enhancing the long-term effectiveness of the ISE Mission Community.

[Register now](#)

Day 1 | 19 May

Circle the Med Forum Opening

Time	Activity
13.00-14.00	Registration & Welcome Coffee
14.00-15.00	Circle the MED Opening Ceremony Forging a Common Mediterranean Space: A New Pact for Our Shared Future The official opening of the Forum sets the strategic tone, introducing the vision of a renewed Mediterranean partnership rooted in cooperation, resilience, and shared responsibility.
15.00-16.00	Energy as a Bridge: Climate Resilience, Energy Security, and Peace in the Mediterranean This dialogue explores how renewable energy cooperation, cross-border infrastructure, and clean-energy investment can strengthen resilience, reduce tensions, and build trust across the Mediterranean basin.
16.00-17.00	The Blue Horizon: Water, Seas, Islands, and Coastal Futures Reimagining the Mediterranean Blue Economy This session rethinks the blue economy through the lenses of marine protection, sustainable fisheries, coastal resilience, island development, and maritime innovation, highlighting water governance and ocean stewardship as pillars of long-term regional sustainability.
17.00-18.00	Living Heritage and Sustainable Tourism: Resilient Societies and the Human Pillar of Mediterranean Sustainability This dialogue focuses on regenerative tourism models, cultural preservation, community-led development, and social cohesion, placing people and local identity at the heart of sustainable economic growth.
18.00-19.00	Financing the Pact: Mobilising Sustainable Investment and Enabling a Circular Economy for a Just Transition and a Resilient Mediterranean Mobilising sustainable investment and enabling a circular economy are central to strengthening strategic autonomy, competitiveness, and regional stability. At the core of this effort lies the principle of a just transition, ensuring that no one is left behind.
19.00-19.30	Special Ceremony Guest of Honour Country: Egypt - Bridging Continents, Cultivating Sustainable Growth A dedicated ceremonial segment honouring Egypt as Guest of Honour, highlighting its strategic Mediterranean role, cultural depth, and leadership in sustainable development, energy transition, and agro-industrial value chains.
19.30-21.00	Cocktail Reception & Networking

Day 2 | 20 May

MED Innovation Summit

Time	Activity
9.00-9.30	Registration
9.30-10.00	Welcome & Introduction Introduction to the session and the Interreg Euro-MED Academy, which covers the themes of all panel discussions.
10.00-11.30	Waves of Change: Redefining New Models for Sustainable Systems The panel will examine how bio-based sectors can balance sustainability and competitiveness through cross-sector innovation, new business models, and place-based governance to support long-term transitions. Thematic Projects invited (TBC): CARBON FARMING MED, 2B-BLUE, BLUE ECOSYSTEM, AZA4ICE
11.30-12.00	Coffee Break
12.00-13.15	Beyond Mitigation and Adaptation for a Climate-Smart Resilient Mediterranean The panel will explore how structured, evidence-based decision-making and foresight tools can address complex climate impacts across sectors and territories, supporting resilient choices and coordinated action. Thematic Projects invited (TBC): SPOWIND, CLEPSYDRA
13:15-14:30	Lunch Break
14.30-15.45	Economies of Regeneration: Redesigning Growth for a Sustainable Future The panel will explore how regenerative, circular and low-carbon business innovation and collaboration can redefine value and scale sustainable solutions for resilient regional economies. Thematic Projects invited (TBC): ProcuraMED, GREENSMARTMED, CircleMED
15.45-16.30	Coffee Break
16.30-17.45	Green Living Areas Institutional Policy Dialogue on Energy and Water Communities The session offers a policy-oriented space that turns experience from energy communities into practical value for water-community development.
17.45-18.00	Closing Remarks
19.00-20.00	Cultural activity Tour in the Athens City Centre

Day 3 | 21 May

ISE Community of Practice

Time	Activity
8:30-9:00	Registration
9:00-9:45	Welcome & Introduction
9:45-10:45	<p>Thematic Working Groups Call to Action Leading to 1st version of White Papers</p> <p>Marine Resources: SPOWIND, 2B-BLUE, AZA4ICE, BLUE ECOSYSTEM, AquaBioNets, RECONNECT</p> <p>Agri-Food Systems: CARBON FARMING MED, Clepsydra, OliveOilMedNet, IDRON</p> <p>Industrial Transition: CircleMED, GREENSMARTMED, REVIVE, ProcuraMED, S.o.I.e.MED, BIOSTARS, WATERVILL</p> <p>Resource Valorisation: REPper, eWAsTER, VERDEinMED, CircBioWaste, SHARE.MedWATER, EcoMedIslands</p>
10:45-11:15	<p>Coffee Break Marketplace village</p>
11:15-12:00	<p>Mentoring & Twinning Programme Presentation of Action Plans and testimonials from participating stakeholders</p>
12:00-12:15	<p>Interactive Session Feedback to Governance Projects</p>
12:15-13:00	<p>Call04 & Call05 project advances Marketplace village</p> <p>Island/Coastal: RECONNECT, AquaBioNets, EcoMedIslands</p> <p>Rural/Agriculture: WATERVILL, S.o.I.e.MED, IDRON</p> <p>Village/Urban: BIOSTARS, CircBioWaste, SHARE.MedWATER</p>
13:00-14:00	<p>Lunch Break Marketplace village</p>
14:00-15:15	Training on regional policies for circular innovation
15:15-15:30	Marketplace village Awards
15:30-15:45	<p>Coffee Break Final networking</p>
15:45-16:45	<p>Panel Discussion ISEC Hub perspectives: from fragmentation to collective impact</p>
16:45-17:00	Wrap up & Conclusions



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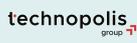
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