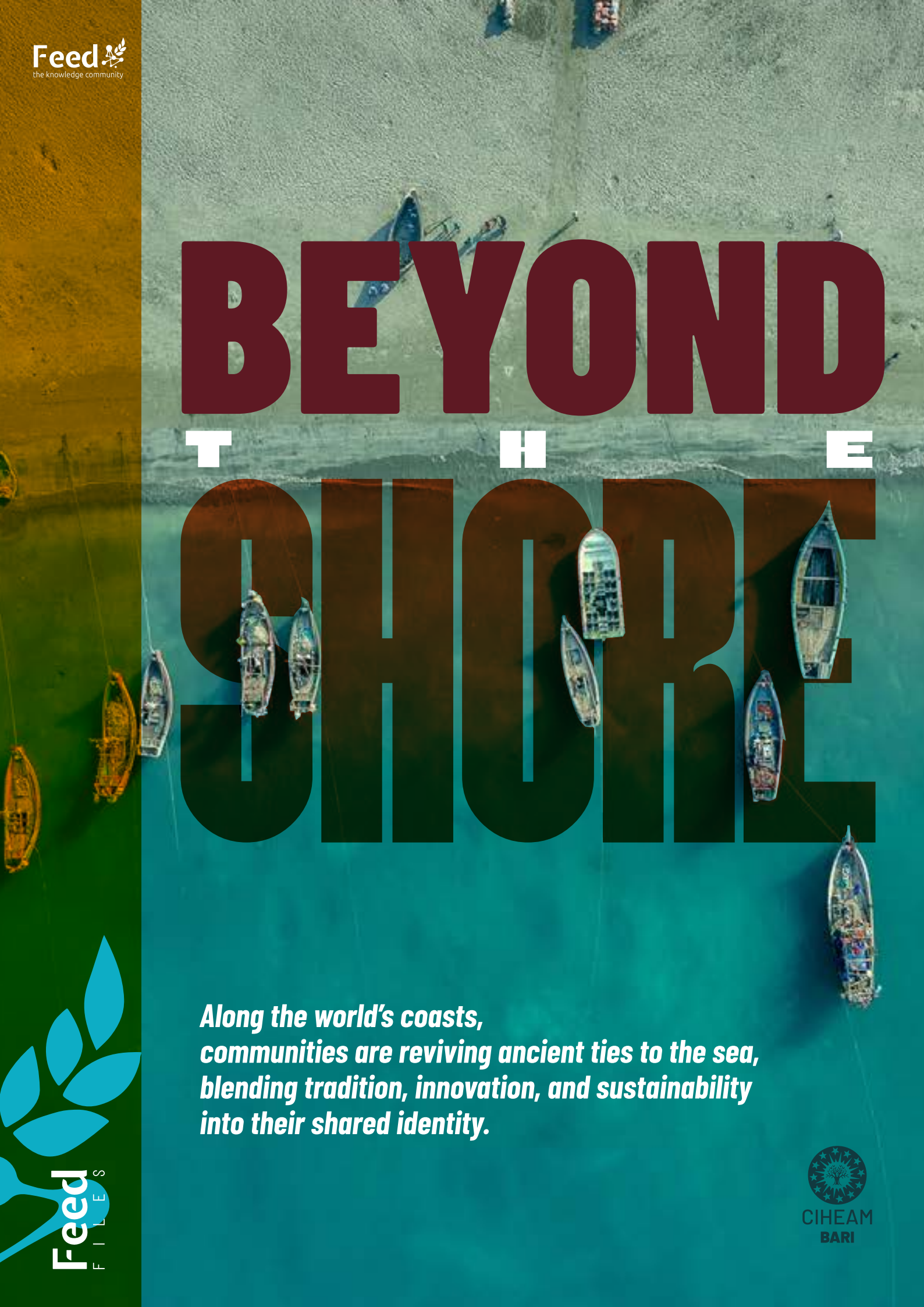
Feed
the knowledge community

BEYOND THE SHORE



Along the world's coasts, communities are reviving ancient ties to the sea, blending tradition, innovation, and sustainability into their shared identity.

Feed FILES

CIHEAM
BARI

Feed
FILES

n.4/2026

This report is available on the FEED website platform (www.feedcommunity.net).

The selection of the good practices was based solely on the nature and effectiveness of the solutions implemented, without prioritizing any specific country. This approach reflects a commitment to inclusivity and fairness, ensuring that all regions have the opportunity to contribute and benefit from the sharing of innovative solutions.

ISBN: 978-2-85352-651-7
https://doi.org/10.48259/bc1963b
Not for sale edition
How to cite this publication: Mininni B., Semeraro M. and Pagano E. (eds) (2026). Beyond the Shore: CIHEAM Bari. FEED The Knowledge Community. Feed files, 4.

Feed Platform Coordinator
Mara Semeraro

Editorial Lead
Ernesto Pagano

Staff Editor
Brigida Mininni

Contributors to this issue
Biagio Di Terlizzi, Director, CIHEAM Bari
Maria Cristina Fossi, Full Professor in Ecology and Ecotoxicology, UNISIENA
Vahdet Ünal, Professor, Faculty of Fisheries, Ege University
Harun Güçlüsoy, Associated Professor, Mediterranean Conservation Society
Asma Ben Abdallah, Head of Service, Directorate General of Fisheries and Aquaculture – Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Fisheries
Ali Cheikh Sboui, General Director of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Directorate General of Fisheries and Aquaculture – Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Fisheries
Danilo Leone, Associate Professor in Archaeological Research Methodologies, UNIFG
Valentina Demarchi, PhD candidate, University of Lisbon
Andrea Magnolo, Consultant, CIHEAM Bari
Antonio Errico, President, Magna Grecia Mare Association
Alessandra Sensi, Head of Sector Environment, Green and Blue Economy, UfM Water Environment and Blue Economy Division
Adriana Salazar, Sustainable Blue Economy Expert, UfM Water Environment and Blue Economy Division
Orazio Albano, Consultant, CIHEAM Bari
Brigida Mininni, Consultant, CIHEAM Bari
Massimo Zuccaro, Head of Unit: Green and Blue Communities, CIHEAM Bari
Gianfranco Cataldi, Scientific Administrator, CIHEAM Bari

Graphic Design
Gianluca Ferrentino

Copy Editing
Megan Kilbourn

This edition of Feed Files was made possible through the collaboration of writers, researchers, and creatives committed to fostering a deeper dialogue around food, sustainability, and the Mediterranean.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to Tamara Nicodeme, Enrico Nerilli and Stefano Carbonara for their invaluable contributions to this report.

Ministero degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale

Feed
the knowledge community

MEDIET
BUILD SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

CIHEAM
BARI

WADJET
A STORYTELLING COMPANY

Frontlines of Transition

by Biagio Di Terlizzi

Coasts are by their very nature places of encounter and exchange between multiple dimensions: water and land, resources and needs, nature and human society.

Around 40% of the world's population — over three billion people — live within 100 kilometres of the coast. These areas host some of the most densely populated regions on the planet, with growing concentrations of infrastructure, economic activities and migration flows that place increasing pressure on the environment and natural resources.

The communities that inhabit coastal areas are therefore among the most exposed to the effects of climate change: sea-level rise, coastal erosion, loss of biodiversity, soil salinisation, decreasing water availability and the crisis of traditional activities.

Coastal communities mirror the planet's health.

Today more than ever, coastal communities are living indicators of the state of the planet, because their ability to adapt to climate change, to preserve ecosystems and to regenerate local economies reflects the degree of balance – or imbalance – between human development and the health of the Earth.

This vulnerability makes them early sentinels of change and, at the same time, strategic actors for interpreting and responding to it. Yet, to strengthen this role, protective policies alone are not enough: it is necessary to grant coastal communities a central place in the governance of the ecological transition, so that decisions are not confined to institutional levels, but take root in territories, among people and in their daily practices.

Coastal communities embody a core principle of sustainability: the interdependence between sea and land. When traditional practices are combined with scientific knowledge and social solidarity, the coastal zone becomes a living laboratory where innovative and integrated solutions are tested. It is here that a equitable transition takes shape, one that goes beyond partial interventions and promotes an approach connecting the health of marine ecosystems, the local economy and the well-being of coastal societies, in the name of a low-emission, fairer and more inclusive future for all.

On these foundations, CIHEAM Bari bases its "glocal" action at the international level, supporting coastal communities in the Mediterranean, Africa, Latin America and Asia in building integrated and sustainable development models.

Through training, applied research and territorial cooperation, CIHEAM Bari fosters dialogue between science and communities, tradition and innovation, helping to translate sustainability into concrete and participatory policies.

This commitment aims to transform coasts — too often perceived as marginal— into the true foundations of a new alliance between people and nature, capable of regenerating ecosystems and restoring to coastal communities the role that is rightfully theirs: that of protagonists of the global transition.

Feed
the knowledge community

Italy - Puglia

WE ARE SEA PEOPLE

In southern Italy, a small Apulian marina avoided privatization and reinvented its future—transforming heritage into a walkable, open-air living museum. The sea is a teacher: its communities learn cooperation, the courage to face the unexpected, and respect for others.

Turkey

PROTECTED AREA

From a "paper park", Gokova is now a well-established and effective marine protected area. The project was launched to address the gap between formal protection and ineffective on-the-ground management.

Tunisia

BLUE CRAB ECONOMY

In Tunisia, the blue crab what was once an economic and environmental emergency has been turned into an opportunity. Along the coast—long marked by illegal migration—Nemo Kantara supports communities by transforming fragile economies through sustainable development.

Lebanon

LISTENING TO THE COAST

At its best, a master plan is more a method than a plan. It is an exercise in listening and collective design, where expertise does not replace local voices but helps structure them—turning lived experience into workable priorities. The Lebanon Coastal Communities Master Plan has enabled the development of seven local sustainable development plans tailored to specific community needs.

Kenya

A TURNING-POINT PLAN

In Kenya, a coastal master plan is more than just a piece of paper: it turns local voices into a shared vision. Along East Africa's beaches, seaweed that once washed up as a nuisance now sparks opportunity. Morganics turns this coastal waste into organic fertilizer, creating jobs, teaching new skills, and helping communities build a greener, more sustainable future.

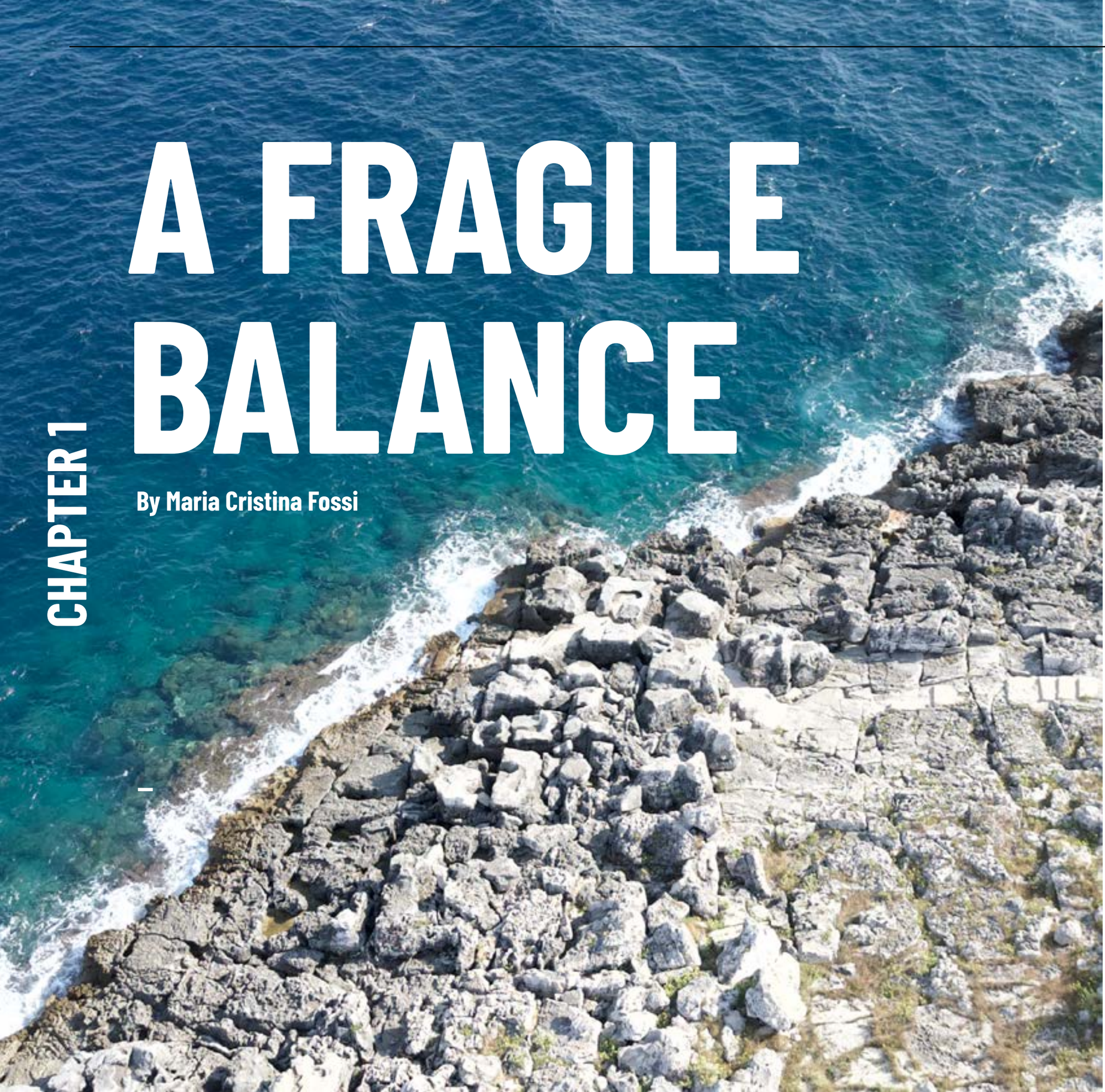
LEARN MORE

This report features stories centered around the good practices collected on **www.feedcommunity.net**.
Scan the **QR code** to explore hundreds of stories organized by topic.

CHAPTER 1

A FRAGILE BALANCE

By Maria Cristina Fossi



Change is no longer just a forecast for the future of the world's coastlines; it is now a daily reality. In the Mediterranean basin, this transformation is particularly intense.
The basin has long been recognised as an extraordinary reservoir of biodiversity, a complex and delicate system in which natural richness and human activity have coexisted for centuries.

However, this balance is under increasing pressure today.
It is not only the intensity of environmental impacts that is changing, but also their nature. Legacy and emerging pollutants, marine litter, habitat degradation, invasive species and climate change do not act in isolation. They interact, overlap, and reinforce each other, generating cumulative effects that reshape ecosystems and the way their resources are used.

The real question is no longer how a single impact affects biodiversity, but rather how multiple stressors, acting together, alter the ecological balance and the sustainability of key sectors, such as fisheries and aquaculture.
This shift in perspective marks a turning point. The Mediterranean is not only a biodiversity hotspot; it is a balanced system in which economic vitality and biodiversity are closely intertwined. The degradation of habitats, such as seagrass meadows, wetlands or the habitats of threatened species, directly affects directly affects ecological integrity, human health, and activities.

The response is already taking shape. A more integrated and forward-looking approach is emerging across coastal regions, recognising the interconnected nature of these challenges.
The focus is shifting towards integrated diagnostic tools that can assess the impact of multiple stressors and translate them into actionable knowledge. This paves the way for more effective mitigation and restoration efforts, tailored to specific regional contexts, where monitoring, prevention, adaptation, and governance are closely linked.

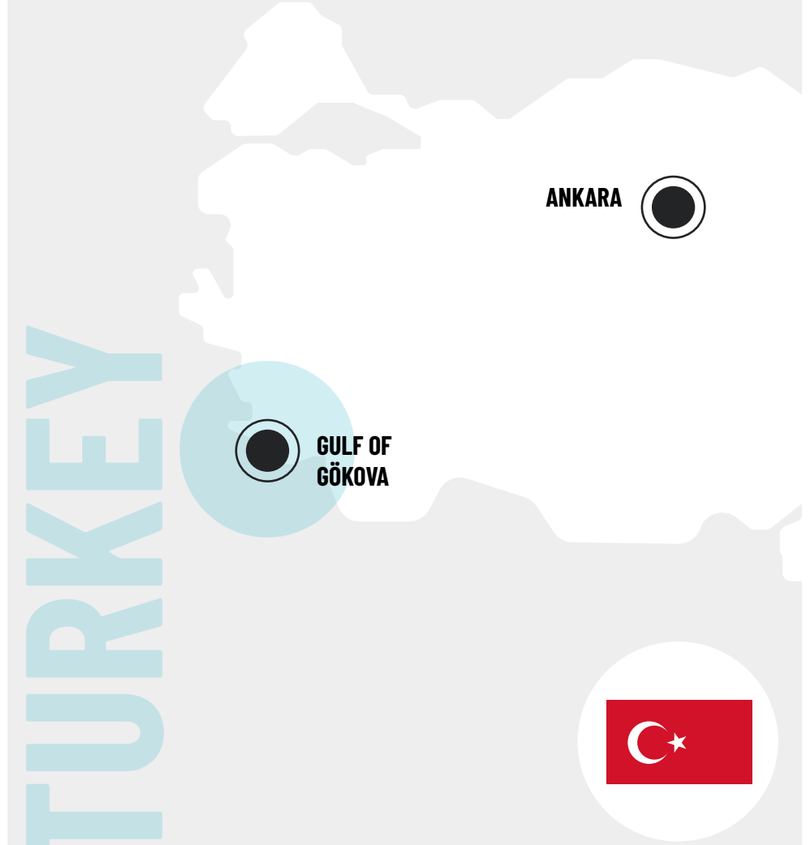
In this evolving landscape, collaborative initiatives are beginning to transorm this integrated vision into practice. European projects such as MIRAMAR and MedPROACT exemplify this new generation of Mediterranean cooperation, combining scientific monitoring, climate adaptation and local governance to better protect vulnerable coastal ecosystems.

Protecting the Mediterranean, or indeed any coastal ecosystem, requires an understanding of it as a living, dynamic whole. This means establishing a shared framework and common language among scientists, policymakers and communities.
The most significant change is in perspective: shifting from viewing problems in isolation to adopting a systemic and holistic vision that recognises the ecosystem's complexity and enables us to act accordingly to preserve its biodiversity and the resources it provides.

TURKEY

GÖKOVA: WHEN PROTECTION WORKS

From “paper park” to proven marine protected area: local fishers, scientists and rangers turned no-fishing zones into recovery—and higher incomes.



By Vahdet Ünal & Harun Güçlüsoy

For two decades after it was designated a protected area in 1988, for the Gökova Special Environmental Protection Area (SEPA) this protection was mostly in name - an expanse of rules on paper, and little more.
These days it is routinely held up as one of Turkey’s, and the Mediterranean’s, rare marine-conservation success stories.

The numbers help: of the SEPA’s 1,093 km^2, some 818 km^2 are marine waters, forming the Gökova Marine Protected Area (MPA). The ecology helps more. This is a biologically-rich corner of the Aegean with room—if carefully managed—for small-scale fishing and ecotourism. Surveys have recorded 723 macroscopic species across 19 taxonomic groups; 34 are protected under national and international agreements.

Gökova’s rescue was not driven by a grand bureaucratic plan so much as by persistence on the ground. A small coalition—activists with stamina, academics with data, and local fishers, stakeholders with a personal stake in the area —kept pushing for protection that actually protected. Public authorities were involved, and their mandates mattered. But at crucial moments, institutional caution and slow decision-making made it hard to scale what worked, to embed it, and to copy it elsewhere.

Population
85.5 million

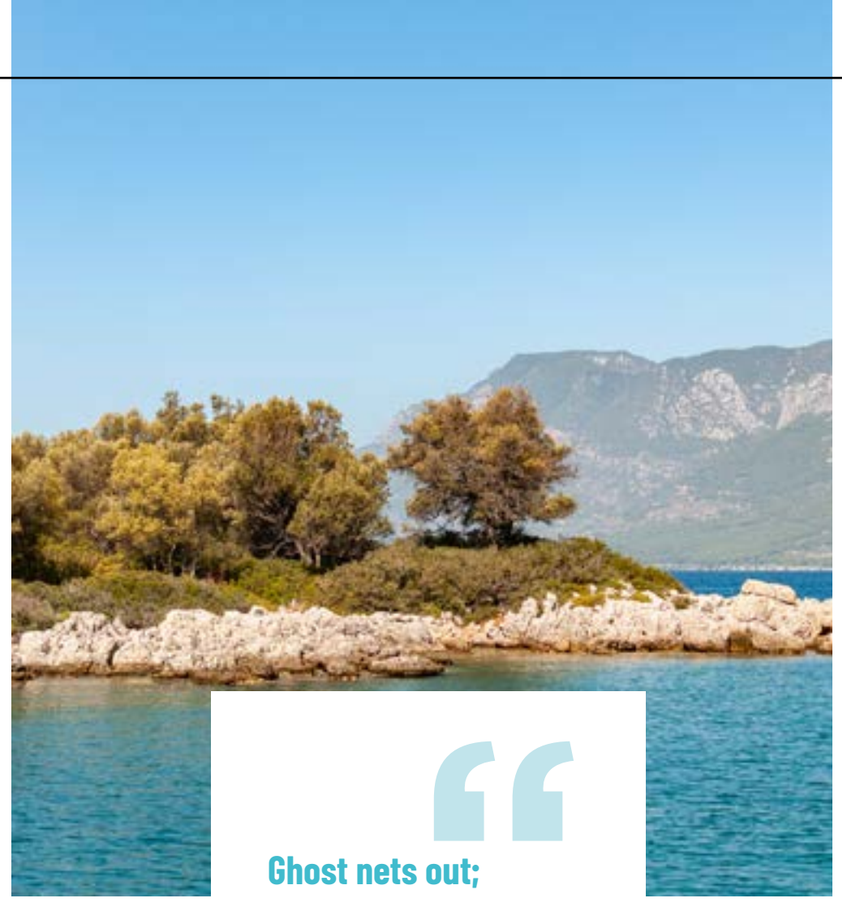
Average annual income
$ 15,500

Working in agriculture
3.6%
of the workforce

Agricultural workers by gender
M: **12.8%**
F: **25%**
of the workforce

Agricultural area
50%

The breakthrough came in steps. In 2010 SAD-EKOG — the ecology group of Turkey's Underwater Research Society — helped establish six No-Fishing Zones (NFZs) in Gökova, an idea that looked strong on maps and weak at sea. In the early years, enforcemente lagged and illegal fishing rose, as local fishers, asked to accept short-term restrainst, saw too few rewards. Real traction arrived in 2012, when the Mediterranean Conservation Society (AKD) launched a community-based marine ranger programme. Rangers recruited locally—and trained regularly—logging more than a thousand patrols a year. The message was simple: the rules would be seen, and therefore followed.



Ghost nets out; habitats back on the mend

Results followed, too. Fish diversity and biomass rose; so did fishers' incomes. In 2016 two NFZs were expanded, extending protection over rocky reefs, coralligenous habitats and Posidonia seagrass meadows. AKD complemented enforcement with the unglamorous work that makes recovery stick: removing ghost nets, developing market-oriented responses to invasive species, monitoring ecosystems methodically, and—most importantly—building credibility with the communities who depend on the sea.

Today the Gökova MPA sits within one of the Mediterranean's biodiversity hotspots and shelters emblematic species, from the Mediterranean monk seal (Monachus monachus) to dusky groupers (Epinephelus marginatus), sandbar sharks (Carcharhinus plumbeus), loggerhead turtles (Caretta caretta) and the seagrass Posidonia oceanica. International awards have followed, recognising not only the conservation gains but also the effort to keep small-scale fishers economically afloat. That is why Gökova is now cited as a model—regionally, and increasingly, globally. Its lesson is straightforward, and uncomfortable for those who prefer tidy organisational charts: durable conservation is a coalition sport. NGOs (especially AKD), public institutions, researchers and fishers all made the difference. Maintaining the progress made will require something less romantic but just as decisive: a firm legal framework, consistent policies, and ecosystem-based management grounded in good governance across the entire MPA. Gökova shows what is possible.

The question is whether it will be locked in—or allowed, once again, to fade back into paperwork.

1 Where are we?

We are in the **Gulf of Gökova**, in **southwestern Turkey**

2 What has been achieved?

Gökova is now a well-established and effective **marine protected area**: it removed ghost nets, developed market-based responses to invasive species, implemented systematic ecosystem monitoring, and earned the trust of the communities that depend on the sea.

3 When?

In **2010** when SAD-FKOG – the ecology group of **Turkey's Underwater Research Society** – helped estabilish six **No-Fishing Zones** (NFZs)

4 Why?

The project was launched to **address the gap** between **formal protection** and **ineffective on-the-ground management**, as the area functioned largely as a "paper park" with weak enforcement

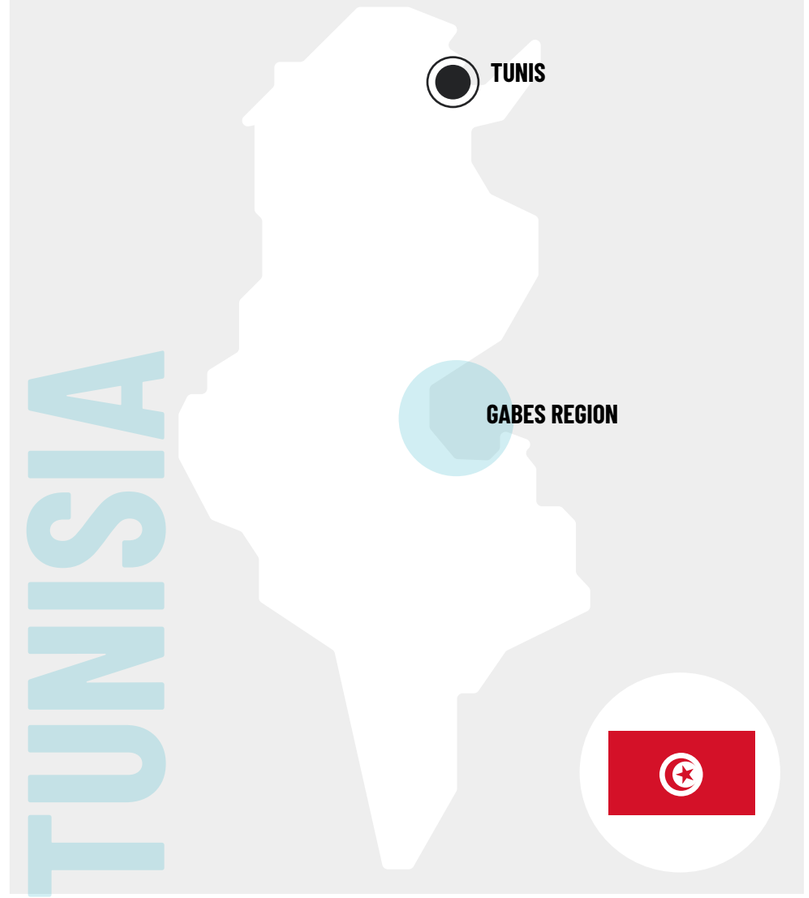
5 By whom?

The project, run by the **SAD-FKOG** with the support of the **Mediterranean Conservation Society (AKD)**, involved dedicated activists, academics providing data, local fishers, and **public authorities.**

TUNISIA

BLUE CRAB, TEN YEARS LATER

From invasion in the Gulf of Gabès to an economic asset: research, policy and Tunisia–Italy cooperation turned blue crab into exports.



Population
1.2 million

Average annual income
$ 11,000

Working in agriculture
15%
of the workforce

Agricultural workers by gender
M: 13%
F: 25%
of the workforce

Agricultural area
60%

By Asma Ben Abdallah, Ali Cheikh Sboui

Sometimes the sea changes its face without warning. In Tunisia, between 2014 and 2024, this upheaval took the form of a crustacean with a blue shell: the blue crab (Portunus segnis).

In ten years, it transformed fear into knowledge, constraint into opportunity, and invasion into an economic sector.

2014–2015: The Arrival of an Unexpected Guest

In 2014, in the shallow waters of the Gulf of Gabès, fishermen began hauling up an unknown, aggressive, voracious species. The blue crab spread quickly, tearing fishing gear, attacking catches, and unsettling marine balances. By 2015, its proliferation was evident, bringing concern and distress to coastal communities confronted with a sea they no longer recognized.

2015–2016: Understanding in Order to Act

Faced with the threat, and thanks to close collaboration between the General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture (DGPAq), the National Institute of Marine Sciences and Technologies (INSTM), and the Groupement Interprofessionnel des Produits de la Pêche (GIPP), the first structured responses emerged. In autumn 2015, awareness campaigns were launched across several coastal areas of the Gulf of Gabès; in November, a workshop in Sfax

gathered exporters and a Japanese expert, opening early reflections on the commercial valorization of the species.
In 2016, efforts intensified: three blue crab collection centers opened in Gabès and Médenine, and a subsidy of 2.6 dinars/kg (as an advance by the GIPP, totaling 110,000 dinars) supported a group of small-scale fishermen in the two governorates. Meanwhile, INSTM's specialized laboratory—working alongside professionals—tested trap models adapted to the crab's behavior. Production remained modest (268 tonnes), but a new idea took hold: turning invasion into a resource.

2017–2018: A National Strategy in the Gulf of Gabès

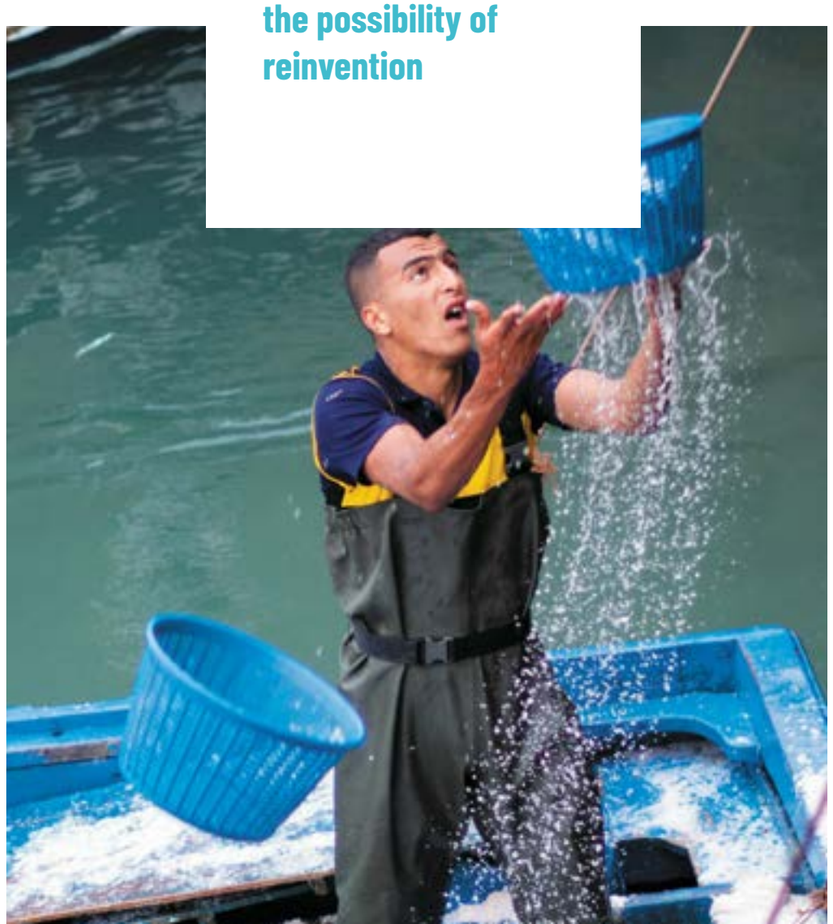
These years marked a turning point. The national strategy for the promotion of blue crab fishing, processing, and marketing was adopted, backed by 4.9 million dinars over two years. Built through a participatory approach, it mobilized public administration, scientific bodies, institutions, and local communities (small-scale fishermen, industrial actors, and others) to curb proliferation while fostering exploitation. The strategy aimed to deepen scientific knowledge, assess ecological and fisheries impacts, reduce spread, and expand commercialization on local and international markets. Nearly 6,000 traps were distributed to coastal fishermen, tasting and awareness initiatives multiplied, and fish-processing units received technical and financial support to process and export blue crab. Results followed: production climbed sharply, and the sector began to consolidate. Output rose from 268 tonnes (2016) to nearly 14,745 tonnes (2019). Exports grew from 141 tonnes valued at 622,000 dinars (2016) to about 4,762 tonnes valued at 41.5 million dinars (2019).

2019–2023: A Shared Mediterranean Adventure

From 2019 onward, the Tunisian response gained a regional dimension through the Tunisia–Italy cross-border project BLUE-ADAPT ("Marine biological invasion and fisheries: study, damage mitigation, and adaptation in the context of climate change"). With a budget of €1.13 million over four years, it focused on the Kerkennah Islands and Sicily, encouraging exchange among scientists, decision-makers, and fishermen through regional seminars. The initiative earned Mediterranean recognition: the Italian Agency for Cohesion ranked BLUE-ADAPT among the three flagship environmental projects of the Italy–Tunisia Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2014/2020, and it received the WestMED Projects Awards in 2023.

(Portunus segnis)

> **The sea can still offer the possibility of reinvention**



2014–2024: Ten Years Later, the Metamorphosis

A decade after its appearance, the blue crab has become a major component of Tunisian fisheries. Production peaked in 2022 at 24,596 tonnes and, in 2024, stabilized around 16,470 tonnes—signaling a mature sector. Exports followed the same trajectory, reaching several thousand tonnes and generating tens of millions of dinars while opening international markets to Tunisian blue crab.

Thus concludes—at least for now—the story of the blue crab in Tunisia: a story of resistance, learning, and adaptation. What began as a feared invasion has become a symbol of maritime resilience, reminding us that the sea, even when it disrupts, can still offer the possibility of reinvention.

1 Where are we?

In **Tunisia**, primarily along the **Gulf of Gabès** and its coastal fishing communities. The initiative later expands to a **broader Mediterranean context** through cooperation with Sicily.

2 What has been achieved?

The emergence of a **structured economic sector** based on harvesting, processing, and exporting blue crab. Production and exports surged, reaching tens of thousands of tonnes and **generating significant revenue**.

3 When?

Between **2014** and **2024**, from the sudden arrival of the blue crab to the consolidation of a mature sector.

4 Why?

To respond to a disruptive marine invasion threatening ecosystems, fisheries, and local livelihoods.
The goal was **to transform** an environmental and economic crisis into a **sustainable opportunity**.

5 By whom?

Through coordinated efforts of Tunisian **public authorities**, **scientific institutions**, and **fishing communities**. Supported by international partnerships, notably the **Tunisia–Italy BLUE-ADAPT** project.

Arrival & Spread

- Rapid expansion in the Mediterranean basin
- Spread driven by:
  - *Ship ballast water*
  - *Rising sea temperature and salinity*

Environmental & Economic Impacts

- Omnivorous predator
- Damage to fishing gear
- Competition with native species
- Among the 100 most invasive species

Significant economic losses for small-scale fisheries

Fisheries & Ecosystem Effects

- Decline in traditional fishery resources
- Disruption of coastal ecosystem balance
- Rapid population growth due to:
  - *High reproductive capacity*
  - *Lack of natural predators*

From Threat to Resource

- Response strategies:
  - *Development of commercial fishing*
  - *Export to international markets (especially Asia and Europe)*
  - *Creation of new local value chains*

Economic valorization as a control strategy

Current Exploitation

- *Strong increase in catches in recent years*
- *New income opportunities for coastal communities*

Blue crab is now an emerging fishery resource

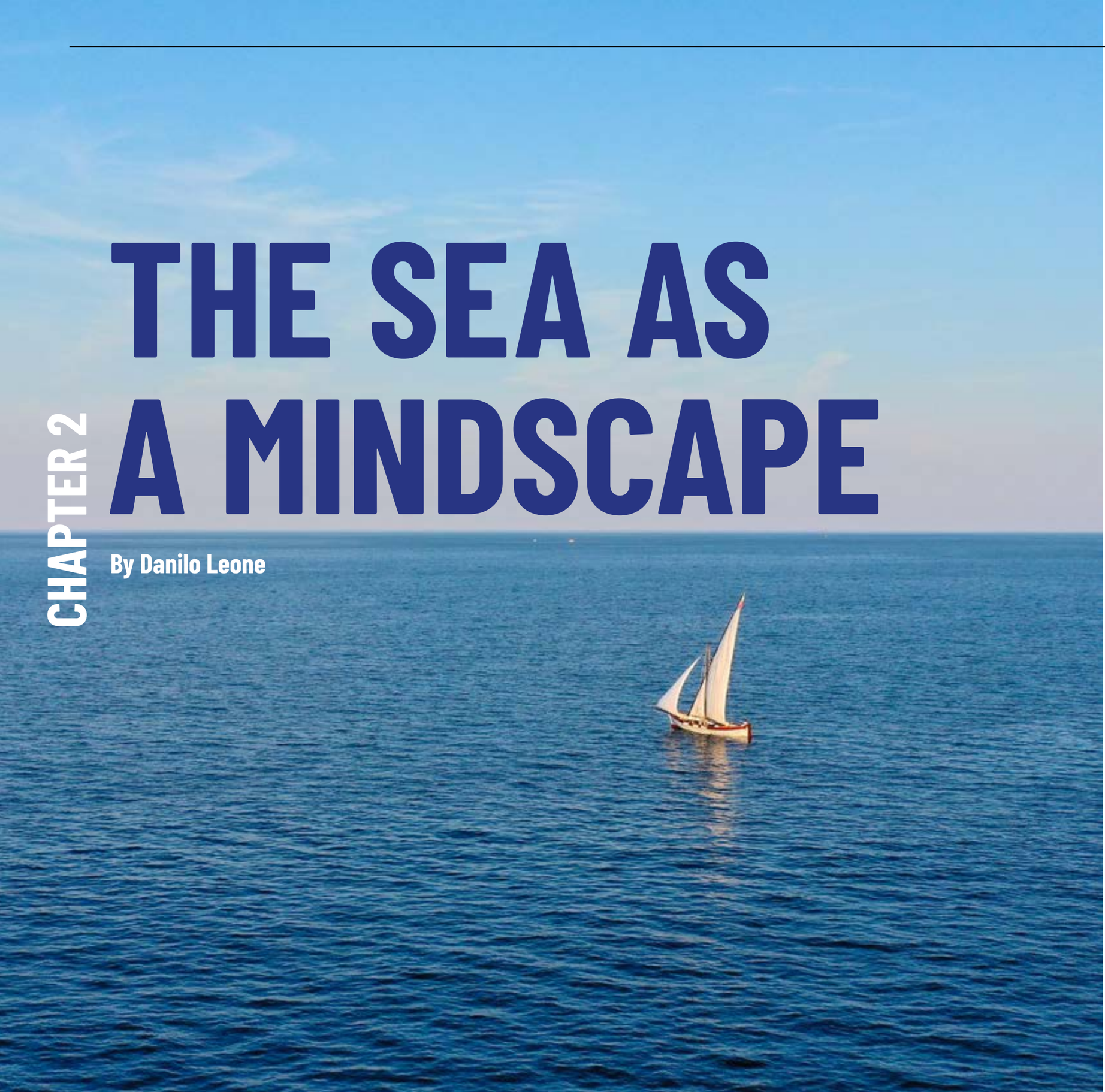
(Callinectes sapidus)

BLUE CRAB

CHAPTER 2

THE SEA AS A MINDSCAPE

By Danilo Leone



Throughout history, the sea has been far more than a natural resource or an economic infrastructure for coastal communities. It has been a horizon of meaning: a workplace and a space of social interaction where memories, identities, shared knowledge, and forms of organization take shape.

Coastal societies developed sophisticated adaptations to marine environments, generating integrated economies, technical expertise, layered cultural landscapes, and values tied to water, navigation, and fishing. The sea is not a "boundary," but an inhabited, lived, and interpreted space. For centuries this bond rested on a moving balance between use and ecological adaptation. Fishing techniques, navigation practices, meteorological knowledge, and rituals were transmitted as intangible heritage, strengthening belonging and cohesion. The sea was labor and risk, but also hope and exchange.

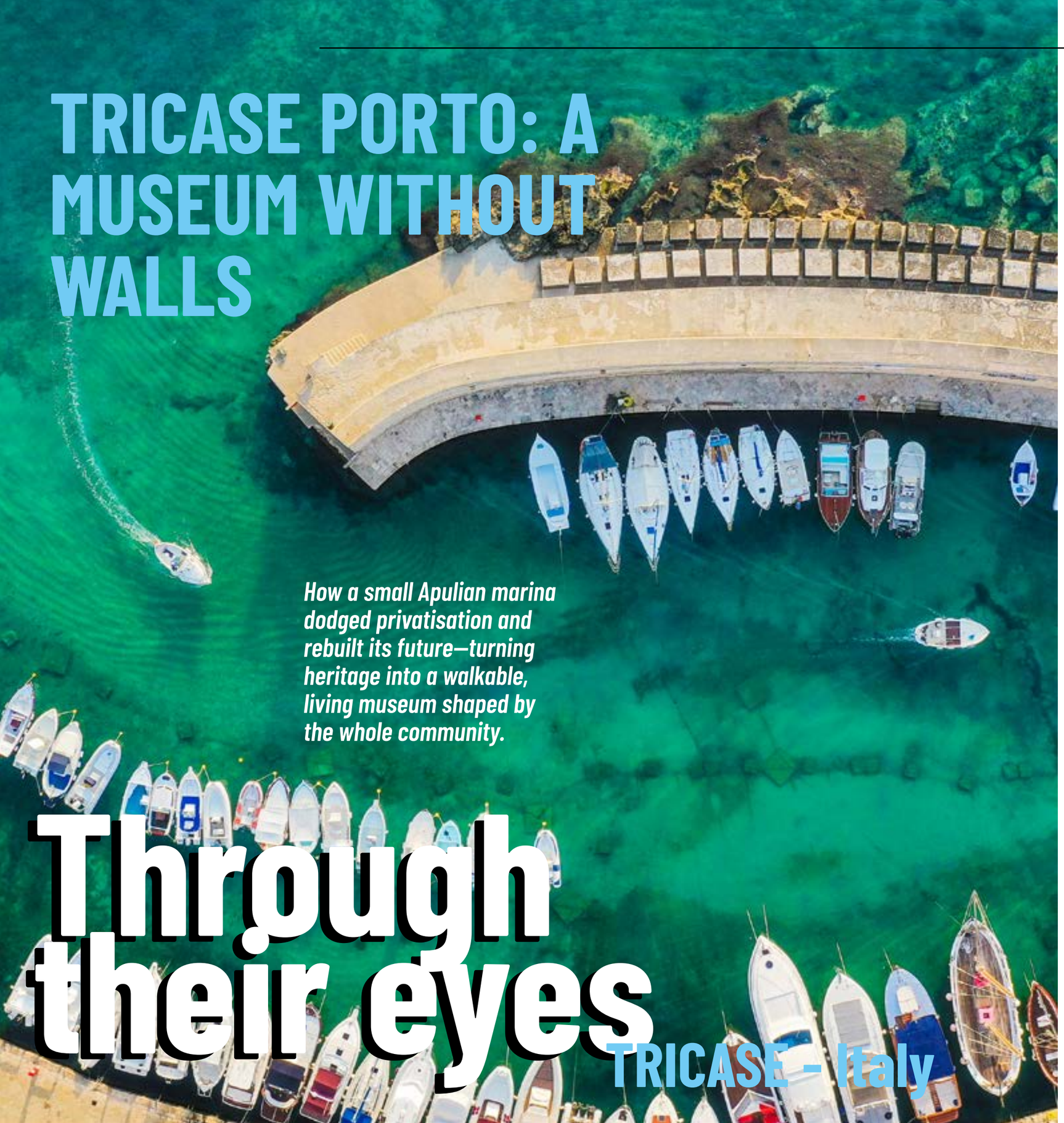
In the twentieth century, industrialization, coastal urbanization, and specialized ports produced a physical and symbolic separation between people and the sea. In many Mediterranean contexts, access to coastal spaces has been restricted or privatized, while the sea has been reduced to an economic asset or a scenic backdrop, losing its role as a shared space. The consequences are environmental and social, weakening traditional economies, solidarity networks, and collective memories.

Rebuilding the sea-community relationship today is not about nostalgia, but about recognizing local knowledge, historical practices, and social ties, and reinterpreting them for contemporary challenges. Participatory experiences—ecomuseums, community maps, shared heritage projects—can restore residents to the center of managing and narrating their heritage, nurturing care, responsibility, and participation.

At the heart of these processes lies the coastal landscape: altered, yet still rich in layers and potential. Landscape is not the sum of monuments or natural elements, but a stratified organism shaped by relationships between environment, practices, and perceptions. Here we move from landscape to mindscape: mental and cultural representations that vary with a community's identity, history, and sensibilities. The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as an area perceived by people, placing communities at the core of its meaning and transformation.

The goal, then, is not only protection, but the construction of "heritage communities" able to recognize the sea as a shared resource for sustainable development, quality of life, and democratic participation—restoring it as a space lived, narrated, and collectively designed.

TRICASE PORTO: A MUSEUM WITHOUT WALLS



How a small Apulian marina dodged privatisation and rebuilt its future—turning heritage into a walkable, living museum shaped by the whole community.

Through their eyes

TRICASE - Italy

By Valentina Demarchi & Andrea Magnolo

An open-ended story of stubborn hunger for the future, nourished by the collective rediscovery of a singular past: this is what Tricase Porto—and its Port Museum—has become.

In the early 2000s this small marina in Italy's deep south was almost caught in the wave of seaport privatisation reshaping the nearby coastline. Instead, it changed course thanks to a small "threefold miracle": a group of lifelong friends who chose to realign their lives; a joyful, sustained exploration of the port's history; and a rare talent for bringing that history into meaningful dialogue with the community.

Long before modern engineering, when nature alone determined what could be a harbour, the area known as Portus Veneris stood out as one of the few thriving seaports of lower Salento, shaped and sheltered by the coastline's natural contours. It was a living threshold between land and sea: a crossroads of cultures and crafts, goods and gods.

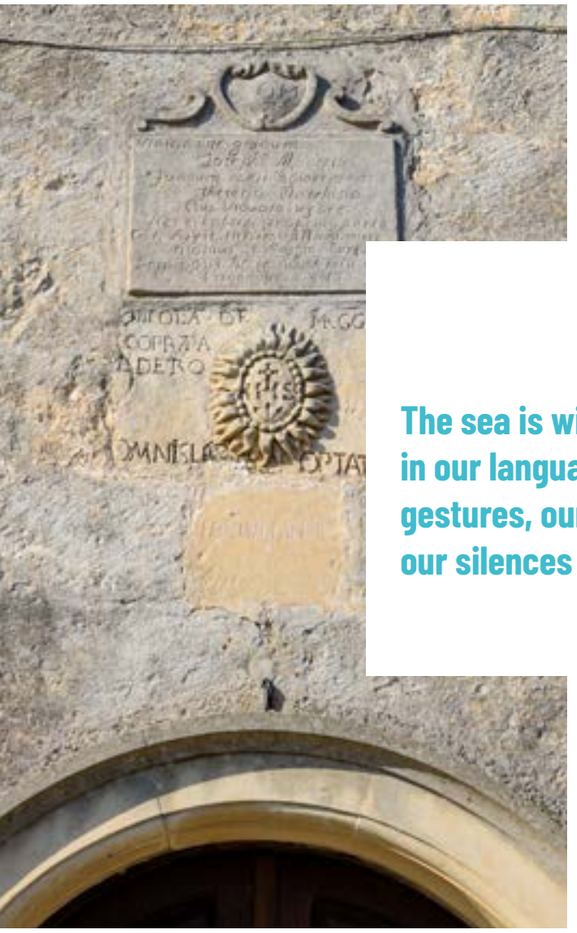
Centuries later, faced with a barren present, the great merit of Magna Grecia Mare—the extended family born from that first circle of friends—was to point back to that luminous past as sailors look to the stars, offering Tricase a way to navigate forward. Over more than two decades of shared aspiration—and with CIHEAM Bari later on board—a route was charted. A "Charter of Principles" was drafted and embraced by hundreds of local stakeholders. The forgotten caves, the Sette Bocche that were once the heart of the original harbour, were reopened. The Casotto—the old commander's house—became a home for maritime traditions, ancient instruments and contemporary encounters.

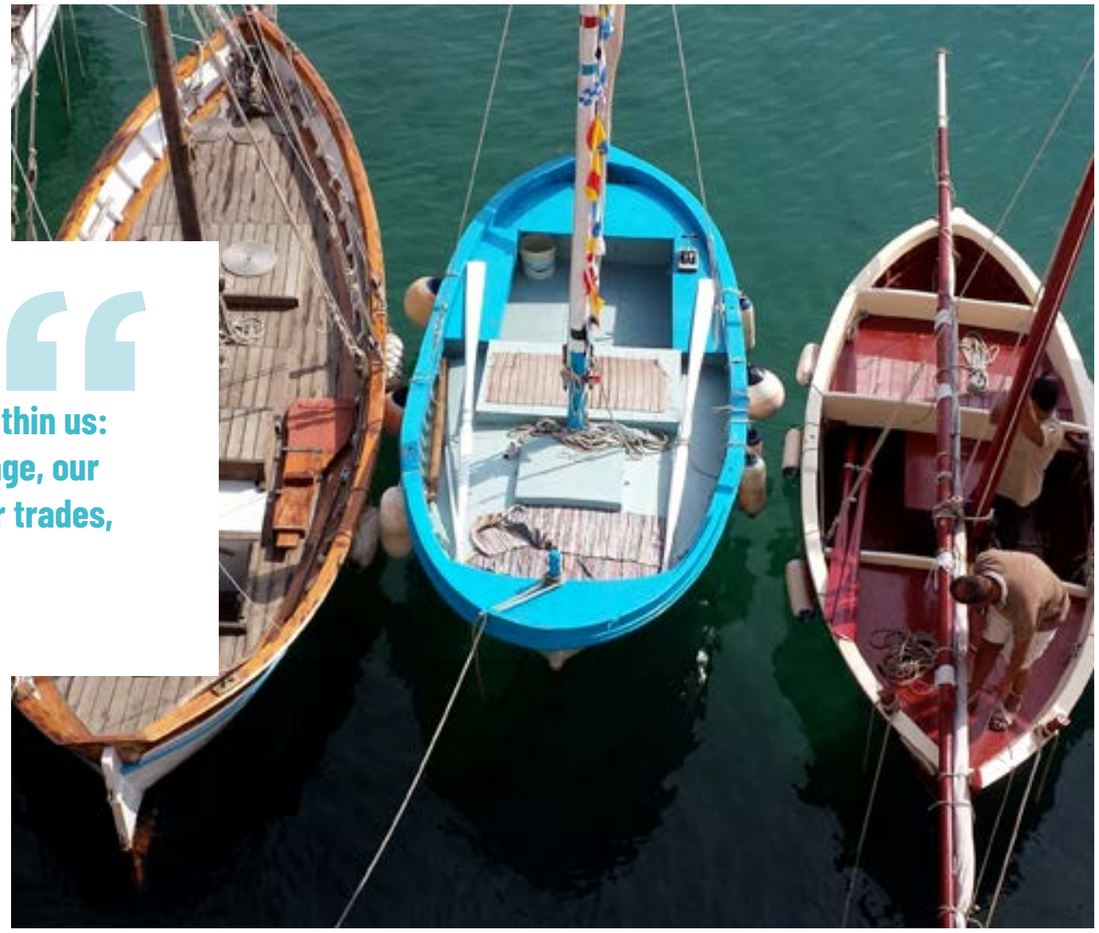
A gulet carrying refugees, tragically stranded long ago, was restored and rechristianed/renamed as the Portus Veneris and gifted to the city as a living heritage site.
The abandoned slaughterhouse became the Food 4 Health community lab for local producers; and the degraded southern waterfront became the Outpost, a hub for international cooperation where fishers, students and ambassadors can imagine fairer futures. None of these interventions stands alone; together they form a museum without walls, where regeneration is narrated in real space.

Since 2014 this evolving ecosystem of places and people has been known as the Port Museum of Tricase Porto: an immersive, walkable timeline in which each space—and each person, resident or newcomer—marks a turning point in a shared journey. It is less a showcase than a method: learning by doing, and doing by learning. It is a Mediterranean port in the deepest sense: rooted identities and open horizons, tradition and innovation, always meeting at the waterline.

Much more could be said about such richness. Even if its core is not visible. Genuine, culture-led coastal development is not only about restoring heritage or reviving traditions; it is about reshaping inner landscapes—changing how people perceive their world, widening their sense of what is possible within it. For anyone living—not merely visiting—the Port Museum, there is a before and an after. For many young Apulians, raised with the quiet belief that

continued ▶

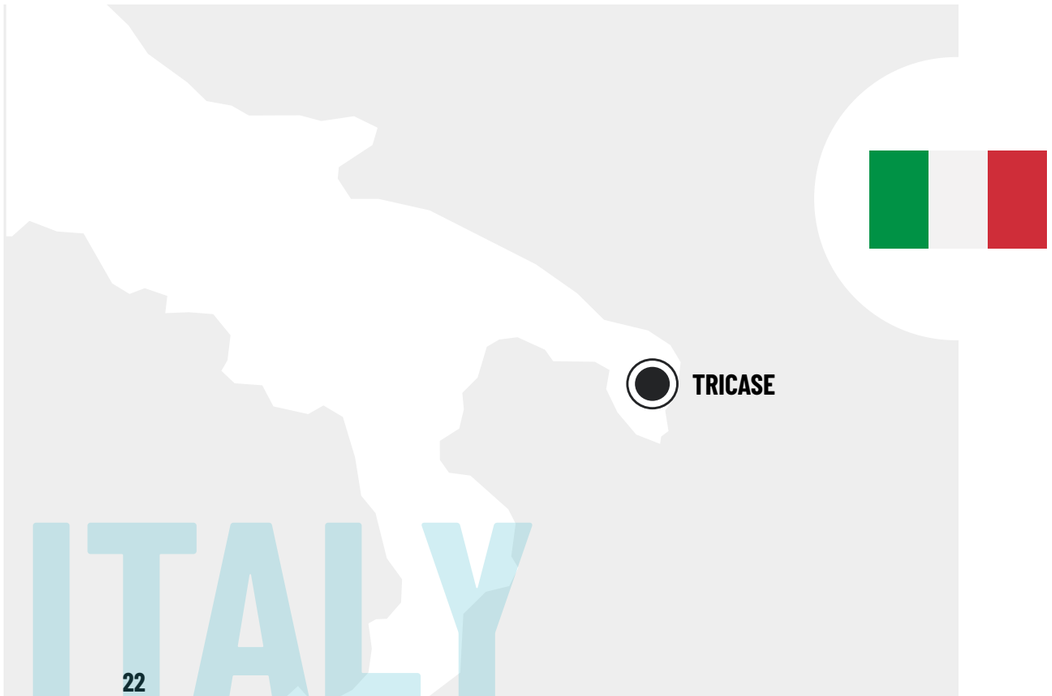




> **The sea is within us: in our language, our gestures, our trades, our silences**

"projects like this happen elsewhere", the shift runs deeper, etched not just in memory but in renewed purpose.

As Don Tonino Bello put it, it takes courage to it takes courage to do more: the exhilaration of walking together like a crew means caring for those who have lowered their sails, and sustaining the will to help raise them again. Perhaps that is the meaning of the light that still burns in the Casotto window.



Feed
the knowledge community

Focus

The "Casotto"

The "Casotto" is a restored port building dating back to the late **19th century**, once home to the **Local Coast Guard Maritime Office**. Abandoned for decades, exactly twenty years ago it was brought back to life by the **Magna Grecia Mare Association**, together with the **Municipality of Tricase**, and has since hosted the cultural and maritime activities of the **Port Museum of Tricase**. At the request of local fishers, a light is now always on, as both a promise of **safe return** for those who venture offshore, and a renewed pledge to **keep tradition alive**, celebrating the community's living heritage.

OUTLOOK

Where are we?

We are in **Tricase**, a small marine area in the deepest **south of Italy**

What has been achieved?

The area became an open-air **museum without walls** – an ecosystem of place and people.

When?

In 2014 the route was charted: a **"Charter of Principles"** was drafted and embraced by hundreds of local stakeholders

Why?

To **reshape inner landscapes** by putting together **identity, history and innovation**.

By whom?

Magna Grecia Mare—the extended family born from that first circle of friends – started the project with **Ciheam Bari** later on board.

Ode to the Sea

INNER TIDES

A voice from Tricase's coastal revival reflects on identity, memory and what the sea leaves behind—within us, and ahead of us.

By Antonio Errico

I was born, raised and shaped in Tricase, in Italy's heel—Apulia, province of Lecce—on the eastern coast of the Salento peninsula, ten kilometres from Cape Santa Maria di Leuca, in the heart of the Mediterranean. And when I look back on my story, on our story—the one you slowly discover, work through, and come to value as you grow and learn—I realise it is made, above all, of sea. A sea lived in, crossed, breathed in: a sea that is far more than scenery, a sea that is collective identity.

And yet we have let that identity slip into the background, forgetting that we were—and still are—helmsmen, sailors, fishers, travellers, boatbuilders, wood craftsmen, weavers of sails and wind, storytellers of routes.

To rediscover that we were born between sea and land, but shaped by the sea more than by the land itself, is like opening your eyes to a deep truth. We are sea people, often with our feet on solid ground—not only by geography, but by culture, by outlook, by instinct.
The sea is within us: in our language, our gestures, our trades, our silences, in the words we use and the ones we choose, in the rhythm of everyday life, in the stories we were told and the ones we still tell. And everything changes.

That immense body of water, always in motion, becomes a lens through which to read life. It changes how you look at yourself, at others, at the world. A profound bond flares up—almost a cultural and emotional code—that reshapes how we live, how we relate, how we imagine the future. Those who live with the sea—by choice, by fate or by inheritance—know words like responsibility, trust, sharing and courage. The sea teaches cooperation, the courage to face the unexpected, and respect for the others a readiness to welcome what comes from afar. It teaches patience, humility, silence, hope, tolerance, solidarity. It trains you to "hold the helm", in storms and in calms alike—and to do it together.

And so you discover you have been educated in cooperation, in trust, in shared responsibility, in solidarity, and in respect for difference in the capacity to face the unpredictable. You discover that the sea within us is not an escape from land, but a new way of giving it meaning.

It means reopening your gaze, recovering an identity that speaks of openness, movement, relationship, possibility, peace—an identity capable of generating more inclusive communities: communities that can listen, communities with a shared vision.
And then there are the ports: open arms ready to receive those who arrive; places of passage and return, of stories, exchanges, new routes. Ports, coasts and sea-lanes are stories in motion, like the communities bound to the sea since time immemorial—communities that preserve millennia-old values which, even today, can help to orient the future.

But we have not always been aware of this—and, alas, perhaps we still are not. We have shut ourselves inside land borders, inside our certainties, inside our fears, forgetting that we are children of routes and horizons,

continued ▶

> The sea is within us: in our language, our gestures, our trades, our silences

of hands salted by the sea and reddened by the soil, yet with our eyes fixed on the open water.

To reconnect with the sea is not merely a symbolic gesture. It is an act of rebuilding—of rebirth, of meaning, of community, of future. Because the sea, a living part of us, changes us. And it can change the way we inhabit the present and build what comes next.
We are at a crossroads. I feel myself at a crossroads.

And if the sea is within us, then it is time to listen—to let its movement guide us back to a common stride; to make room, within and without, for that culture of water that teaches us to flow together. For the sea does not divide: it unites. It does not close: it opens. It does not erase: it regenerates.

And if we keep it alive within us, perhaps we will finally be able to imagine—and trace—a new course.

"When
I look back
on our story
I realise
it is made,
above all,
of sea."

INNER TIDES

TUNISIA

KANTARA: A "BRIDGE" TO STAY (AND WORK)

On Tunisia's coasts—often marked by unemployment and migration routes—Nemo Kantara blends port upgrades, micro-finance and training to create local futures.

By Staff

Along Tunisia's shoreline, the Mediterranean is never just a postcard. At dawn the ports wake up with the salt-thick smell of diesel, fish boxes, and wet rope. Men mend torn nets on the concrete. Women move quickly with plastic buckets. Young people linger at the edge of the quay, phones in hand, watching boats return and the day's prices take shape—while, in the background, another calculation keeps returning: stay, or leave.

These coastal districts carry the weight of unemployment and fragile local economies; they are also places Europe often reads through a single, harsh lens—departure points for irregular migration.

But for the communities themselves, the coast is a living system where a broken engine, a lack of ice, an unsafe landing pier, or unreliable electricity can decide whether a family gets through the season.

This is where Nemo Kantara has chosen to work: not with isolated actions, but with a deliberately holistic approach to coastal development. Funded by the Italian Cooperation with a €5 million budget and implemented by CIHEAM Bari with Tunisian partners, the project operates across several governorates—from Gabes and Médenine to Sfax, Nabeul and Bizerte—seeking to improve incomes for young people, women and fishers while strengthening sustainable planning and management of coastal areas.

Its premise is simple: opportunities do not grow in a vacuum. Training without access to finance remains theory; microcredit without infrastructure becomes a gamble; renovated facilities without skilled local actors risk turning into empty shells. Nemo Kantara ties these pieces together—upgrading port and market infrastructure, supporting small enterprises, valuing traditional know-how, and investing in youth skills so that "building a life here" becomes plausible.

On the ground, impact is measured in practical details. Safer mooring and unloading points reduce accidents and speed up operations. Rehabilitated wholesale markets make hygiene and handling standards less aspirational, more routine. The project also introduces "smart" systems for managing water and electricity in ports, including tools that can be activated via SMS: infrastructure turned into a service that works when needed.

Then there are the stories that give numbers a face. Ameur spent years seeing the same problem on the docks of Zarzis: fish boxes reused without proper cleaning, a small everyday failure with big consequences for quality and safety. His startup now washes and sanitizes those boxes—and he has already hired two people. Iheb and Mouhamed, who met during the training program that repairs not only cars but also ageing fishing-boat engines: the kind of service that can mean the difference between a day's work and a missed week at sea.

Ala turned a passion for photography and video—once blocked by lack of equipment—into a small studio.

Khadija, previously a clam collector in a sector hit by a productivity crisis and extensive job losses, now speaks of herself with a new word—entrepreneur—and says her children are proud.

Walid left low income fishing to start a plastic recovery and recycling activity in Ajim, combining jobs with cleaner shores.

Moufida, who opened an artisanal bakery, adds one telling detail: her son, who migrated to Europe, is considering returning, drawn by the possibility that something can be built at home.

"Kantara" means bridge. Here, it is not a slogan: it is the difference between a coast people flee and a coast people can choose—one repaired engine, one clean fish box, one functioning port service at a time.

OUTLOOK

1 Where are we?
Along **Tunisia's shoreline**, across several governorates—from **Gabes** and **Médenine** to **Sfax, Nabeul** and **Bizerte**.

2 What has been achieved?
Nemo-Kantara ties these pieces together—**upgrading port and market infrastructure**, supporting small enterprises, valuing traditional know-how, and investing in youth skills so that "**building a life here**" becomes plausible.

3 When?
The Nemo- Kantara project was initiated in **November 2022**

4 Why?
The Nemo-Kantara project was launched to address increasing environmental degradation in Tunisia's coastal areas.
It aimed to **reduce socio-economic vulnerability** by supporting local communities and improving livelihoods.

5 By whom?
The project was led by the **Italian Cooperation** with a **€5 million budget** and implemented by **CIHEAM Bari** with **Tunisian partners**.

CHAPTER 3

A SUSTAINABLE BLUE MEDITERRANEAN

By Alessandra Sensi

Feed
the knowledge community

Over the past decade, Sustainable Blue Economy (SBE) has become a cornerstone of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation—an integrated, cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach that can generate environmental, social and economic benefits for people and ecosystems.

This momentum builds on the Union for the Mediterranean's (UfM) pioneering 2015 Ministerial Declaration on Blue Economy and the 2021 Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy, with its implementation roadmap. Endorsed by the UfM's 43 member countries, they provide a shared political, technical and operational framework to coordinate efforts and resources around concrete priorities, with sustainability at the core.

In line with the UfM's mandate, and reinforced by the EU Ocean Pact, the spotlight remains on coastal communities. They are drivers of the Mediterranean SBE—and the first to face sea-level rise, extreme events, urbanisation, tourism pressure, coastal erosion, biodiversity loss and socio-economic vulnerability.

As the region accelerates the green/blue transition—decarbonising and circularising sea-based economies, from maritime transport and ports to fisheries, aquaculture and tourism—the SBE is already translating into tangible gains: quality, locally rooted blue jobs; cleaner shores; restored blue-carbon ecosystems; stronger maritime clusters; and renewed entrepreneurial potential across established and emerging value chains.

These outcomes depend on territorial cooperation. Through collaboration with Interreg Euro-Med, Interreg NEXT-MED, ARLEM and CPMR-IMC, the UfM supports regional integration and common goal setting. The focus is on linking policy with progress on the ground by mainstreaming proven project results, enabling replicability and scale-up, keeping equity and justice as non-negotiables, and empowering local actors to lead conservation and restoration.

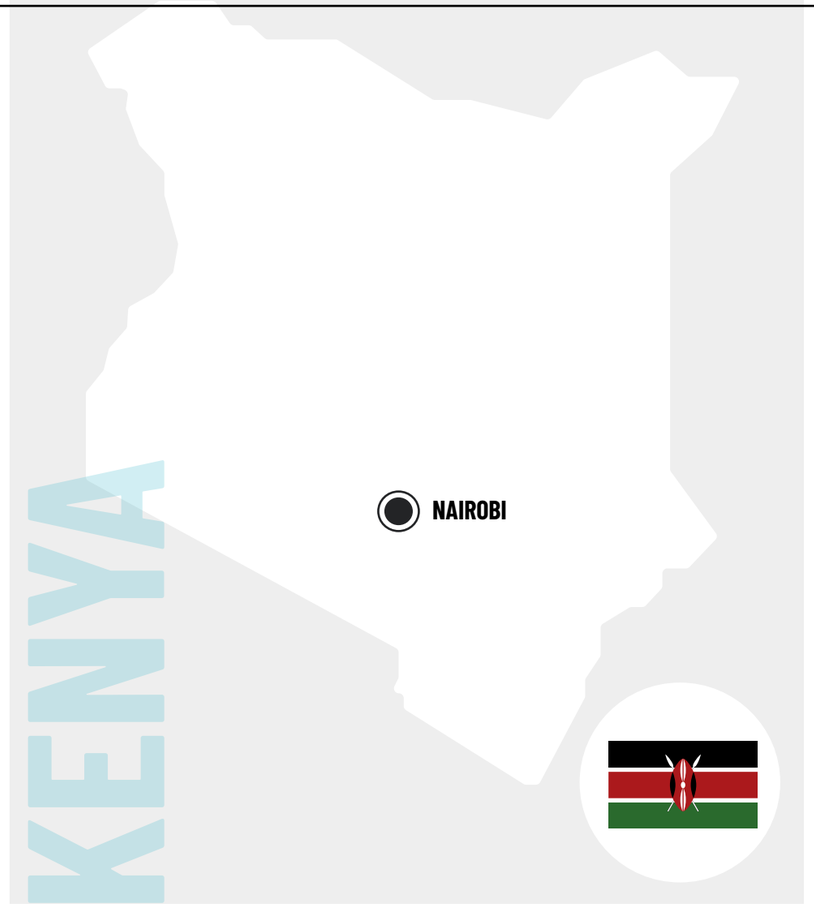
As highlighted during the UfM Segment on SBE at the Mediterranean Day of UNOC-3 (10 June 2025, Nice), this partnership is increasingly a model for other regions at national, European and international level, sustaining dialogue and embodying connectivity in line with recent EU Ocean and Mediterranean policy developments. The Strategy for EU Islands and Coastal Communities expected in 2026, will follow up on the Ocean Pact, tackling coastal communities specifically and providing pecific policy guidance and impulse for action.

With around one-third of the Mediterranean population living along the coast, protecting and enhancing the capacity of coastal communities to steward and drive the SBE remains vital. The UfM will keep investing in regional dialogue, partnerships, capacity building, and exchanges of experience and know-how across all Mediterranean shores.

KENYA

FROM BEACH CLEANING TO BIO-STIMULANTS

Meet Morganics: a Kenyan startup turning coastal waste management into community value—an exportable roadmap for the blue economy.



By Orazio Albano

There are entrepreneurial experiences that emerge from ancient practices and market demand, but also from tangible local problems where inventiveness becomes the decisive ingredient for success.

Along the coasts of East Africa, seaweed deposited on shore by tidal movements represents a long-standing challenge for tourist beaches: a recurring management cost and a material classified as waste, often destined for landfills or open burning. For Mohdhar Mohame this biomass was the starting point of a different vision, capable of transforming waste into an economic, social, and productive resource.

The path that led to the creation of Morganics Enterprises Ltd, a private company based in Kenya, is a clear example of how environmental awareness, understanding of natural processes, and entrepreneurial vision can converge into a sustainable and replicable business model.

The collection of stranded seaweed, its processing through controlled fermentation, and the production of a liquid organic fertilizer form an integrated set of activities that generate employment, build local technical skills, and create income opportunities at the community level.

Population
55 million

Average annual income
$ 21,000

Working in agriculture
35%
of the workforce

Agricultural workers by gender
M: **30%**
F: **40%**
of the workforce

Agricultural area
48%

At a time when chemical fertilizers are increasingly expensive, often inaccessible to small-scale farmers, and responsible for significant negative impacts on soils and groundwater, the Morganics experience demonstrates that viable, local, and organic alternatives do exist.

Fermentation, supported by appropriate technologies adaptable even to small-scale facilities and by targeted workforce training, opens the door to an organic industry that can be extended to different biomass streams, offering new opportunities for young entrepreneurs and stimulating the development of innovative projects.

The technical relevance of the initiative lies in its positioning at the interface between the blue economy and the green economy, offering an integrated model that combines environmental management, biological processing, and agricultural input production.

The message is clear for coastal and rural African communities: with attention to processes, understanding of markets, and entrepreneurial vision, even small-scale initiatives can achieve operational viability, grow over time, and generate sustainable value.

> **The relevance of the initiative lies at the interface between the blue economy and the green economy**

1 Where are we?

In **Kenya** along the coasts of **East Africa**

2 What has been achieved?

The initiative has created **local employment**, developed technical skills within the community, and provided small-scale farmers with an affordable, sustainable **alternative to chemical fertilizers**.

3 When?

In **2021** although Mohdar mentioned that he had been working on the idea for several years before starting it.

4 Why?

To solve a tangible local problem **giving new life to the seaweed** deposited on shore by tidal movements, classified as waste.

5 By whom?

By **Mohdhar Mohamed**, a Kenyan entrepreneur and marine conservationist from Mombasa, and the founder of Morganics Enterprises LTD.

OUTLOOK

Mohdhar Mohamed is a Kenyan entrepreneur and marine conservationist from Mombasa, and the founder of Morganics Enterprises LTD.

By Brigida Mininni

Q **HOW DID THE IDEA COME ABOUT?**

A *It grew out of my work in marine conservation. During beach clean-ups we collected huge amounts of seaweed, which was usually burned or dumped. That never sat right with me, so I started looking for alternatives. I learned that Irish farmers use seaweed to restore overgrazed pastures, and that in parts of Asia it has long been used as a natural fertiliser.*
I began experimenting at home—fermenting it and testing it in my garden—and the results were excellent. I later sent samples to a lab in Nairobi. After several rounds of feedback and trials, I developed a stable, effective product.

Q **HOW DO YOU SOURCE THE SEAWEED USED IN YOUR FERTILISER?**

A *We practise what we call ethical harvesting: we never remove seaweed from the ocean. We only collect what has already washed ashore. That way we keep beaches clean—supporting hotels and local communities—while turning "waste" into a resource.*
We do clean-ups every two weeks and collect only what remains after the second high tide, so anything the sea still needs can naturally return.

Q **WHAT EXACTLY IS THE FERTILISER AND HOW DOES IT WORK?**

A *Morganic Liquid Seaweed Fertiliser is 100% organic and highly concentrated. The dilution rate is 50 ml to 20 litres of water—so one litre can cover about four acres. That makes it very cost-effective. A one-litre bottle costs around 800 Kenyan shillings, which works out to roughly 40 shillings per spray pump.*

Q **WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT FROM CONVENTIONAL CHEMICAL FERTILISERS?**

A *Morganics works as a bio-stimulant. Its natural phytohormones are compatible with most plant species. Rather than simply "feeding" plants, it activates soil biology—boosting microbial activity, stimulating root growth, and improving access to nutrients and water. The result is stronger plants and better resilience to pests and environmental stress.*

Q **WHAT KIND OF RESULTS HAVE FARMERS SEEN AFTER USING IT?**

A *Our customer return rate is 100%: everyone who tries it comes back. Farmers report healthier soils and stronger, more productive plants. Morganics is also the official fertiliser of Mombasa County and is used at agricultural shows. We've tested it on over 30 plant varieties, and Mombasa is now regarded as one of Kenya's best demonstration areas for organic inputs.*

Q **WHAT SUPPORT IS NEEDED TO ENHANCE THE INITIATIVE AND EMPOWER LOCAL COMMUNITIES?**

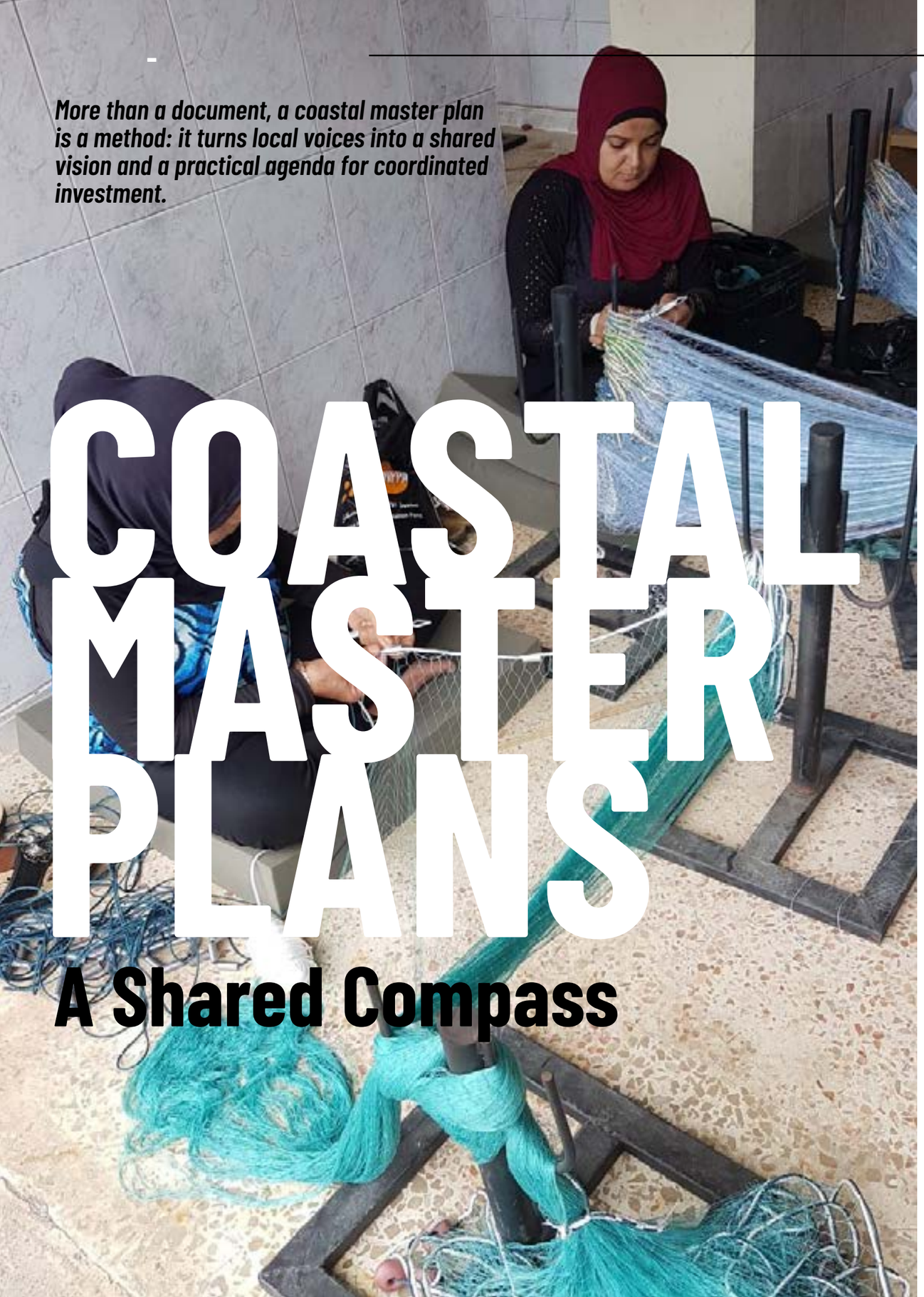
A *We need support with marketing and expansion. Awareness is still low, and many farmers are slow to move from chemicals to organics. We also need investment to expand our facilities, upgrade machinery, and improve safety and working conditions. Production has grown by 200% in a year, and we need resources to meet demand while continuing to support local farmers with sustainable alternatives.*

Q **WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE GOALS FOR MORGANICS?**

A *We're expanding training programmes in counties such as Mombasa and Kilifi to raise awareness of organic farming. I also sit on the board of an association of certified organic fertiliser manufacturers. Together, we're encouraging local governments to invest in farmer training, increase organic inputs, and tackle fake fertilisers in the market. Our goal is to scale production and build a strong community around sustainable agriculture.*

Q **WHAT MESSAGE WOULD YOU SHARE WITH YOUNG AFRICAN FARMERS WHO WANT TO INNOVATE?**

A *Think outside the box. Don't just wait to be employed—look around your community and identify real needs you can meet. When I started collecting seaweed seven years ago, people called me crazy. Today, we have one of the strongest organic foliar fertilisers on the market. Consistency and belief matter.*
And above all, we must help people eat better. Too many health problems are linked to chemical-based production. Moving from chemical dependency to organic fertilisers is good for the soil, good for people, and good for the planet.



More than a document, a coastal master plan is a method: it turns local voices into a shared vision and a practical agenda for coordinated investment.

COASTAL MASTER PLANS

A Shared Compass

By Massimo Zuccaro

Coastal communities sit on the front line of the climate crisis—and, paradoxically, on some of the richest ground for inclusive growth. Fisheries, tourism, agriculture, services, and maritime and rural cultures meet along the waterline. But without a shared direction, these sectors often expand in silos, consuming coasts and ecosystems rather than regenerating them. That is why a coastal master plan matters: not as another technical report, but as a strategic investment in the long-term economic sustainability of coastal territories.

At its best, a master plan is less a document than a method. It is an exercise in listening and collective design, where expertise does not replace local voices but helps structure them—turning lived experience into workable priorities. Around the same table sit fishers and farmers, tourism operators and local authorities, young people and women. Together they map constraints and opportunities, agree on what matters most, and sketch the interventions that can unlock investment. The result is a plan that captures a wide range of interests—many linked to the blue economy, but closely connected to inland rural development, water management, and the protection of landscape and cultural heritage.

Kenya offers a clear example.
Its Master Plan for the development of small-scale coastal and marine fisheries transformed the needs of 96 coastal communities into an "investment agenda" for five coastal counties. The process was organised around four pillars: infrastructure and value chains; stronger fisheries institutions; training for fishers and workers; and governance plus marine ecosystem protection. Crucially, the plan provides a common compass for donors, county governments and private actors, steering resources towards coherent, place-specific actions while keeping a wider coastal-district perspective. By doing so, it reduces duplication, limits the dispersion of funds and raises the likelihood that investment will translate into higher incomes and more sustainable small-scale fisheries.

Lebanon adapted the same logic to a different setting. The Master Plan for the Sustainable Development of the Lebanese Coast applied a LEADER/CLLD-style approach across seven coastal cities, linking fisheries with agriculture, tourism, crafts, the environment and cultural heritage. The outcome was a set of local plans that aim to boost value-chain competitiveness while also promoting eco-tourism, circular-economy initiatives, the enhancement of local resources and stronger human capital—paying particular attention to the role of young people and women in innovation.

Despite their differences, both experiences rest on the same premise: ecosystem services—coastal protection, biodiversity, carbon storage and landscape quality—are not obstacles to development, but conditions for development that lasts. When the process is participatory and evidence-based, a coastal master plan becomes a kind of territorial contract between communities and nature. It helps to orient investment, reduce conflict between competing uses of land and sea, create decent work and make local economies more resilient.

Perhaps its most practical benefit is also the least glamorous: it gives donors and investors a shared reference point. Priorities become clearer, needs and opportunities are mapped, the risk of fragmented or competing projects falls.

These are still evolving experiences—more pathway than recipe—but they point to a simple lesson: planning, done well, can reopen the relationship between coastal communities, the sea and the rural hinterland. In that sense, coastal master plans are not an endpoint.

They are a common space from which to start investing in the future.

continued ▶

Two first-person accounts from Kenya and Lebanon on the hard, hopeful work of building a shared plan—balancing interests, data, trust and time.

BUILDING THE MASTERPLAN FROM WITHIN

By Brigida Mininni

KENYA

"Map it, cost it, then invest wisely"

Enrico Nerilli, International Project Coordinator at CIHEAM Bari, led the design of a comprehensive blueprint for Kenya's small-scale coastal and marine fisheries. Developed under the EU-funded Go Blue project (2020–2024), implemented by AICS and CIHEAM Bari, the Master Plan mapped the needs of Beach Management Units (BMUs)—the backbone of fisheries co-management along Kenya's coast—to guide sustainable investment and inclusive growth.

"We started by designing a Master Plan for Kenya's entire coastline, focusing on marine waters and coastal fishing communities. The work grew out of the earlier Share Blue project, where we had begun exploring the creation of new Beach Management Units. With Go Blue, we decided to broaden the assessment and include all existing BMUs, to understand their real needs.

> **Change is possible, but it takes time, inclusion and shared ownership**

The process was fully participatory. County governments were essential, because only their technical officers could collect reliable field data. In total, we surveyed around 100 BMUs and gathered information on core requirements—boats, ice, nets and training. The lack of boats came up everywhere. Many fishers do not own their vessels and are forced to rent them from intermediaries who take the largest share of profits. In the Master Plan we built a simple model to show how revenues are divided—middleman, engine, nets, boat—and what is left for the fisher.

We also looked at market access, road conditions and transport links to understand each community's value chain. Using procurement estimates, we calculated the budget needed to cover the main needs of every BMU. The idea was straightforward: if a donor or investor arrives in an area, they can immediately see what is missing and plan targeted interventions.
Another strength is the geographic component. Using GIS, we mapped fishing grounds, key species and market flows, and used this to estimate catch volumes and income potential.

Data collection was not always easy. Sometimes communities withheld or distorted information; in a few cases, even data collectors fabricated figures. We had to monitor the process closely. In places like Lamu, near the Somali border, access was restricted and we had to rely on local reporting. Even so, the output is highly detailed: each BMU has six or seven pages of questionnaires, producing a dataset of real value.

And it was never meant to remain a technical document. We distributed printed copies to all counties and shared it with the Ministry of Blue Economy so local governments and partners can use it as a planning tool. The goal is to enable well-targeted, area-based programmes—strengthening one community at a time, in ways that can be replicated across the coast."

LEBANON

"Listening was our real infrastructure"

Tamara Nicodeme coordinated the Lebanon Coastal Communities Master Plan, implemented by CIHEAM Bari and the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), in partnership with the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture and financed by MAECI/DGCS through AICS. The project supported seven coastal communities—Batroun, Bebnine-Abdeh, El Mina, Enfeh, Sarafand and Tyre—through the elaboration of seven local sustainable development plans, with a focus on women, youth, farmers, fishers and handicraft producers.

"We started from coastal areas because they were under pressure on many fronts—environmental stress, fragmented governance, and limited economic opportunities. Our first task was to bring people into the same conversation: fishers, women's cooperatives, mayors, and local representatives of civil society, in order to create a space for dialogue.

The approach drew on the EU LEADER method, adapted to Lebanon's highly centralised context. In practice, it meant sitting with communities, listening carefully to needs as voiced by community representatives, and converting these into project fiches. Every proposal had to be context-specific: no one-size-fits-all solutions, but realistic, locally grounded actions—from supporting small-scale fisheries to protecting both visible and "invisible" heritage.

For me, the Master Plan was a listening exercise. In a country where many decisions are made in Beirut, identifying priorities from the ground up became a meaningful act in support of decentralisation. It was also a lesson in mediation—between institutions that didn't always speak with one voice, and across different social and religious groups sharing the same coastline. One of the most inspiring moments was taking our Lebanese counterparts to Puglia. Visiting practical examples of sustainable tourism, diversified livelihoods, and rural development through long-term multi-stakeholder collaborations at the local level, provided Lebanese counterparts learning opportunities, for potential replication and adaptation across Lebanon. They recognised themselves in that experience: change is possible, but it takes time, inclusion and shared ownership.

In the end, what mattered was not the number of pages or the technicalities, but the human process behind them. It built trust, connected people, and offered a model for international cooperation that can be rigorous while remaining deeply rooted in local realities."

RECOMMENDATIONS

BEYOND BEST PRACTICE

By Gianfranco Cataldi

Potential & Challenges

The good practices described are ripe for replication. Yet scaling them up will require tackling a set of stubborn, structural constraints. Local resources—skilled people, organisational capacity, and access to patient finance—are unevenly spread across coastal territories, leaving some areas well-positioned and others stranded. Context matters, too: participatory models that thrive in cohesive communities can falter where social ties are weak and trust in collective action is scarce. Knowledge gaps remain significant, both technical and managerial, making it hard to move from promising pilots to robust territorial systems. Meanwhile, basic deficits in infrastructure—logistics, digital connectivity, and essential services—still limit integration across blue, agricultural, and tourism value chains. And then there is resistance to change, often rooted in entrenched business models or dependence on intermediaries who profit from the status quo. Scaling up, in short, is less about copying "best practice" and more about building local critical mass—through negotiated processes that turn isolated innovations into shared development projects.

Research & Territory

Applied research and practical innovation have played a growing role in the success stories presented. Ecosystem monitoring, biological processing technologies, participatory planning tools and GIS-based mapping have all helped convert ideas into workable solutions. The weak link lies elsewhere: too often, scientific knowledge is produced faster than it is absorbed, adapted and applied on the ground. The most visible gaps concern social translation—how to fit innovations into local cultures, how to systematise traditional knowledge rather than treating it as anecdotal, and how to assess impacts over the medium and long term. What is needed are stronger platforms for knowledge co-creation, where communities, researchers and economic actors learn from one another and design together. Continuous learning programmes and locally rooted experimentation can then connect ecological, economic and identity dimensions. Research, in this view, should not only deliver technical fixes; it should also strengthen the social machinery of transition: local leadership, inclusive governance and the capacity to negotiate competing uses of coastal resources.

Public-Private Partnerships

Public–private collaboration emerges as a key driver of success, but it is still too often occasional rather than structural. In several cases, alliances among communities, social enterprises, NGOs and local institutions have co-designed solutions that generate both economic value and environmental benefits—proof that shared stewardship can work. The problem is scale: partnerships rarely evolve into stable co-investment models. Private actors tend to chase short-term returns, while public administrations move slowly, constrained by fragmented mandates and long decision cycles. To grow, collaboration must shift from project-by-project cooperation to territorial co-investment ecosystems—able to align blue economy activities, sustainable tourism and local production chains. Instruments such as shared coastal master plans can serve as practical "alignment platforms", clarifying priorities, reducing perceived risk, and steering both public and private resources toward regenerative development trajectories.

Policies & Regulations

The initiatives described are only partly supported by enabling policy and regulatory frameworks. Policies for sustainable blue economy and integrated coastal management exist, but they often fail to treat local communities as co-managers of development, not merely stakeholders to consult. At the same time, rigid regulatory tools make it difficult to integrate environmental protection with economic innovation and cultural heritage valorisation. What coastal territories need are policies that move beyond sectoral silos and back multifunctional development models—where ecology, livelihoods and identity reinforce each other rather than compete. New frameworks should reward participatory governance, invest in human capital, and strengthen the link between coastal and inland systems. Just as importantly, public support must be tied to local capacity-building, so incentives do not create dependency but help communities gain autonomy. A stable and coherent regulatory environment, finally, is what can turn promising experiments into durable pathways for sustainable coastal development.

PHOTO CREDITS

Cover:
Wirestock - iStock

Frontlines of Transition:
Seif Eddin Khayat - Unsplash

Chapter 1
A fragile balanc:e
Archive Magna Grecia Mare Association

Gokova: when protection works:
Vahdet Ünal & Harun Güçlüsoy
Selim Aysolmaz - iStock

Blue crab, ten years later:
TomekD76 - iStock
Lois Spencer Carter - Usplash
Thiebaud Faix - Unsplash

Blue Crab:
Gennaro Leonardi

Chapter 2
The sea as a mindscape:
Archive Magna Grecia Mare Association

Through their eyes:
Archive Magna Grecia Mare Association

Ode to the sea:
Archive Magna Grecia Mare Association

Kantara: a "bridge" to stay (and work) :
Stefano Carbonara

Chapter 3
A suistanable blue Mediterranean:
Archive Magna Grecia Mare Association

From beach cleaning to bio-stimulants:
Karen - Chew - Unsplash
Mohdhar Mohamed

Coastal Master Plan:
Tamara Nicodeme

Recommendations:
Anastasia Palagutina - Unsplash
Tadeu - jnr - Unsplash

Feed
the knowledge community


Feed
the knowledge community