

BLUEAIR Innovation Community Manifesto

*Blue economy thrives,
Innovation leads the way,
Adriatic-Ionian.*

*Manifesto's not key,
Action drives innovation,
Seas of progress.*

A call for action!

The blue economy presents significant opportunities for economic growth and job creation in the Adriatic and Ionian Region, but it also faces significant challenges related to sustainability and environmental protection. To address these challenges and fully realize the potential of the blue economy, stakeholders from across the region should work together to promote innovation and cooperation and the sustainable use of blue resources. We must adopt and develop new technologies and business models, foster collaboration between industry, research, and government and support the exchange of best practices and knowledge-sharing at the transnational level. By working together, we can ensure that the blue economy in the Adriatic and Ionian Region continues to grow and thrive in a sustainable and innovative way.

So let us join forces and take action to promote coordinated innovation cooperation in the blue economy of the Adriatic and Ionian Region.

BLUEAIR Innovation Community

The BLUEAIR Innovation Community is an open platform that aims to enhance and streamline innovation collaboration at both regional and macro-regional levels in order to drive a sustainable blue economy in the Adriatic and Ionian Region.

The BLUEAIR Innovation Community invites existing frameworks and initiatives, as well as new stakeholders (both organizations and individuals representing government, research and education, business, and civil society) from the macro-region and beyond, to collaborate on its mission to advance the blue economy, leverage the work that has already been done, pool existing resources and avoid duplication of effort. By working together, the Community can create a more coherent and effective innovation ecosystem that benefits all stakeholders in the blue economy in the Adriatic and Ionian Region.



The main tasks of the BLUEAIR Innovation Community include building innovation capacity across the Adriatic and Ionian Region for a new wave of transformative innovation policies, promoting collective innovation actions, exploiting cooperation opportunities, and strengthening the macroregional innovation ecosystem in the blue economy. The Community facilitates the development of innovative solutions, encourages knowledge sharing, and promotes networking opportunities. It also serves as a platform for stakeholders to engage with policymakers and funding bodies and influence policy and funding decisions that support innovation, cross-regional smart specialisation and sustainable blue economy development in the Region.

Objectives of the BLUEAIR Innovation Community

BLUEAIR Innovation Community is committed to supporting the Adriatic and Ionian Region's blue economy in its transition towards a more sustainable, inclusive and innovative approach to economic and social growth by:

- **Promoting collective innovation actions** by facilitating collaboration between different stakeholders in the blue economy, identifying areas of common interest and opportunities for collective action to drive innovation and growth.
- **Building strong partnerships across sectors and disciplines** to leverage our collective expertise and resources and ensure the coherence of local initiatives with EU priorities.
- **Building innovation capacity** across the macro-region, developing skills, knowledge, and resources needed to support transformative innovation in sustainable blue economy sectors.
- **Increasing the visibility of blue innovation and its potential at the transregional scope**, by highlighting new products, services, and technologies that contribute to a more sustainable future and sharing experiences and best practices while strengthening the macro-regional innovation ecosystem.
- **Supporting the development of a macro-regional innovation system** for the Adriatic and Ionian Region.
- **Advocating for policies and practices** that support innovation and transregional S3 collaboration, entrepreneurship, and social and environmental impact in the blue economy, addressing the main challenges of the Region.
- **Empowering and supporting** the next generation of innovators and leaders in the blue economy through education, mentorship, and access to resources, while promoting concrete actions at the regional, national and macroregional levels.
- **Fostering cross-regional collaboration** by engaging with innovation ecosystems, communities, and actors from other sea basins to drive sustainable innovation in the blue economy.



Principles that shape the BLUEAIR Innovation Community

The BLUEAIR Innovation Community is shaped according to the following pillars:

- **A multilevel governance pillar**, which connects existing transnational frameworks, networks, and initiatives already in place with territorial realities.
- **A quadruple helix pillar**, which brings together government, research and education, business and civil society, and bridging organisations to facilitate collaboration.
- **A transformative innovation policy pillar**, which aims to address grand societal challenges and align with the European Green Deal.
- **A sustainable development pillar**, which takes the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals as a reference framework.

The BLUEAIR Innovation Community's functioning is grounded on the following principles:

- **Collaboration and Co-creation:** To enhance the success of the BLUEAIR Innovation Community, it promotes collaboration and co-creation among quadruple helix stakeholders from diverse sectors, regions, and countries. This requires involving all stakeholders in the design and implementation of innovation projects.
- **Inclusivity:** The BLUEAIR Innovation Community welcomes all quadruple helix stakeholders from the Adriatic and Ionian Region, both organizations and individuals and regardless of their size or level of development. This inclusive approach ensures that all stakeholders can contribute to and benefit from the collective knowledge and experience of the community.
- **Sustainability:** The BLUEAIR Innovation Community is committed to fostering a sustainable blue economy in the Adriatic and Ionian Region. To achieve this goal, it supports innovation projects that are environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.
- **Innovation:** The BLUEAIR Innovation Community aims to build innovation capacity across the macro-region, promote collective innovation actions, and seize cooperation opportunities. This approach strengthens the macro-regional innovation ecosystem.
- **Networking:** Networking is a crucial factor in the success of the BLUEAIR Innovation Community. It provides a platform for stakeholders to connect, share ideas, and collaborate on innovation projects, increasing the visibility of innovations in sustainable blue economy sectors relevant to the Adriatic and Ionian Region.
- **Flexibility:** The BLUEAIR Innovation Community is flexible and adaptable to the evolving needs of its stakeholders. It welcomes diverse stakeholders and focuses on building a dynamic and collaborative innovation ecosystem that responds to changing needs and priorities.
- **Governance:** The BLUEAIR Innovation Community operates under a transparent, participatory, and accountable governance model. This approach facilitates collaboration, co-creation, and collective decision-making among stakeholders.



The governance model of the BLUEAIR Innovation Community

The Community is an open platform that brings together all quadruple helix stakeholders in the blue economy from across the Adriatic and Ionian Region and beyond:

- **Governments and local authorities** promote inclusive economic growth and job creation in the blue economy, as well as address environmental challenges and social issues related to the sector.
- **Universities and research centres** collaborate with other stakeholders and contribute to the development of innovative solutions for the blue economy.
- **Companies and clusters** access new business opportunities, expand their networks, and collaborate with other stakeholders in the sector.
- **Civil society and NGOs** contribute to the development of a more sustainable and equitable blue economy and ensure that different voices are heard and represented.

The governance model of the BLUEAIR Innovation Community is designed to facilitate collaboration and communication across different levels of the Community and ensure that activities are aligned with the priorities and strategies of relevant stakeholders at the local, regional, and macro-regional levels:

- **At the micro-level**, individual stakeholders collaborate within thematic/working groups to develop innovative solutions and projects related to sustainable blue economy sectors/value chains.
- **At the meso-level**, thematic/working groups collaborate with other stakeholders to scale up innovative solutions and projects, promote collaboration and networking, and share best practices.
- **At the macro-level**, the BLUEAIR Innovation Community works with regional and national governments, macro-regional actors, the European Union, and international initiatives to influence policy, develop funding opportunities, and promote the macro-regional innovation ecosystem.

