

# MedLab Thematic Week

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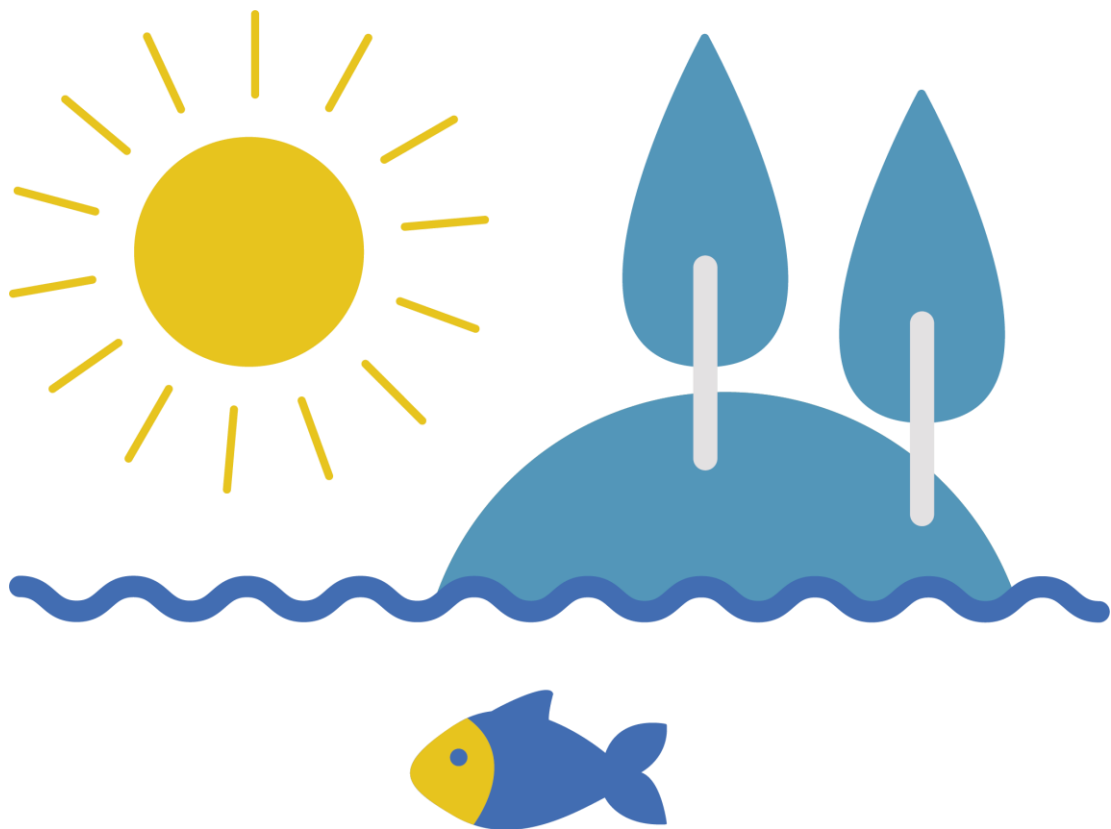


9, 10 and 11 of December 2024. From 10-12h CET

**MedLab Thematic Week: Connecting Mediterranean practitioners for better synergies**

Online: <https://zoom.us/j/95173553550?pwd=DQfboV5AxAXkiLHf9MUmZcui2TNba7.1>.

Meeting Password: MedLab





## MedLab Thematic Week: Connecting Mediterranean practitioners for better synergies.

9, 10 and 11 of December 2024.

### Purpose and vision

The Mediterranean's challenges don't stop at borders, nor should our solutions. This event is designed to explore how coordinated action can multiply our impact across the region through interactive and solution-focused sessions.

Our vision is to create a Mediterranean Community of Practitioners. This event aims to provide a space for discussions among Interreg programmes, country representatives, the EU Commission and practitioners; it is about building a network of experts whose experiences and insights will contribute to shaping actionable recommendations to enhance synergies across the Interreg programmes in the Mediterranean. Together, we strive to promote impactful collaboration across the region.

### Schedule: Three Thematic Sessions



10:00–12:00 CET each day

- **December 9: Sustainable Tourism**  
Balancing growth with preservation
- **December 10: Biodiversity, Parks & Green Infrastructure**  
Building ecological resilience
- **December 11: Natural Disasters**  
Tackling fires, floods, and droughts together

### What Makes This Special?

Rather than traditional project presentations, these sessions provide an interactive space where practitioners share solutions and reflect on what is needed to make the work on shared challenges more impactful. Drawing from experiences during the 2014–2020 programming period, we aim to foster dialogue and innovation to strengthen resilience across the Mediterranean.

### Key Questions:

- How can Mediterranean regions better coordinate on common challenges?
- What opportunities exist for territorial synergies?

### Who Should Attend?

This event is tailored for:

- Practitioners with hands-on experience working with EU funds
- Interreg and other EU project experts
- Programme managers and national contact points
- Policymakers and regional stakeholders
- Representatives from UfM, WestMed, and EUSAIR
- DG Regio and other relevant DGs



## MedLab Thematic Week: Connecting Mediterranean practitioners for better synergies.

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**Day One**  
**Monday,**  
**9/12/2024**

### **Sustainable Tourism: Balancing growth with preservation**

**10.00 – 10.10**

#### **Introduction and welcome words**

*Simona Pohlova. Deputy Head of Unit D2. DG Regio*  
*Mercedes Acitores, Interact*

**10.10 – 10.20**

#### **Interreg Key figures and Statistics on Sustainable Tourism**

*Rosario Sapienza, TESIM*

**10.20 – 11.55**

#### **Panel discussion (40 min)**

- **Anna Bellan. Interreg Italy Tunisia.** She is an EU Project Manager with over 15 years of experience in managing and implementing a diverse array of EU-funded projects across Europe and Africa, including EuropeAid, Interreg, Erasmus+, and CERV. Her expertise addresses social, environmental and cultural challenges.
- **Josep Rodríguez. Interreg Euro-Med.** He is responsible for International Relations, Tourism Department, Barcelona Provincial Council and Coordinator of the Euro-MED Sustainable Tourism Community. Engineer, degree in Humanities and postgraduate degree in Tourism Destinations Management. More than 25 years of experience in the management of European and international projects, for the past eight years focused on the tourism sector. Coordinator of the Community4Tourism project funded by Interreg Euro-MED focusing on sustainable tourism initiatives in the Mediterranean
- **Vasileios Papaioannou. Interreg Greece Italy.** He is an Electrical and Computer Engineer in the Municipality of Patras the last 27 years. He is Project manager in various EU Funded Projects, many of them related to Culture and Tourism. In his personal life he is also involved in the CCI sector, at an individual and group level.
- **Joelle Barakat. Interreg Next Med.** She has 12 years of experience at the Association for the Protection of Jabal Moussa (APJM), focusing on conservation and development in the Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve. With a Master's in Natural Resource Management, she coordinated the ENICBCMED-funded CROSSDEV project in Lebanon, promoting culture and sustainable tourism in less-visited areas.

*Moderated by Diana Kobayter, TESIM*  
*Reactions by DG Growth (tbc)*



**MedLab Thematic Week: Connecting Mediterranean practitioners  
for better synergies.**

**9, 10 and 11 of December 2024.**

**Debate with participants**

*Moderated by Diana Kobayter (TESIM) and Ilze Ciganska (Interact)*

**11.55 – 12.00**

**Conclusions and Next Steps**

*Interact and TESIM.*



**Day Two**  
**Tuesday,**  
**10/12/2024**

## **MedLab Thematic Week: Connecting Mediterranean practitioners for better synergies.**

**9, 10 and 11 of December 2024.**

### **Biodiversity, Parks & Green Infrastructure : Building ecological resilience**

**10.00 – 10.10**

#### **Introduction and welcome words**

*Olivier Baudalet. DG Regio*

*Mercedes Acitores, Interact*

**10.10 – 10.20**

#### **Interreg Key figures and Statistics on Biodiversity, Parks & Green Infrastructure**

*Rosario Sapienza, TESIM*

**10.20 – 11.55**

#### **Panel discussion (40 min)**

- **Broni Hornsbi – Interreg Italy Malta.** Broni has worked for many years in Sicily in the field of EU-funded research and collaboration projects, mainly focusing on innovation in environmental and Circular Economy systems. Apart from the CORALLO project, another international projects which was particularly important for the Region of Sicily, Bythos -Biotechnologies for Human Health and Blue Growth - sought to kick start a new value chain using side streams from the fisheries sector. Bythos won the Juror's award and public choice award for Smart and Competitive Europe at this year's EU RegioStars award in October 2024.
- **Latifa Bouselmi – Interreg ENI CBC Med.** Latifa is professor in Process engineering leading a team on Non conventional Water valorisation in the frames of local sustainable water management and cleaner production at the Centre for Water Research and Technologies (CERTE) in Tunisia. She is mainly involved in research and innovation (R&DI) related to water multi-uses towards zero discharge with the development and implementation of NBS and advanced technologies (AOP). She is co-founder of NGO for sustainable development « The Research in Action, REACT ».
- **Lorena Sasso, Interreg Italy Slovenia.** With a background is geological sciences, Lorena is project manager of the MEDS GARDEN project, under the INTERREG VA Italy-Slovenia 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme, aimed to develop and preserve the natural and cultural heritage, increasing its attractiveness, and preserving biodiversity in five educational gardens, between Mira (VE), Pordenone and Capodistria.
- **Daniela Guida. Interreg Italy Greece.** Daniela is a Project Manager at CIHEAM Bari, Senior Expert in EU Policies and Programmes - Rural



## **MedLab Thematic Week: Connecting Mediterranean practitioners for better synergies.**

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Development, Agriculture and Territorial Cooperation with over 15 years' experience in the design, coordination and management of projects financed by EU funds specialized in agriculture and rural development, research, and innovation projects in the agro-food sector.

*Moderated by Rosario Sapienza, TESIM*

*Reactions by CINEA and DG Research (tbc)*

### **Debate with participants**

*Moderated by Rosario Sapienza (TESIM) and Ilze Ciganska (Interact)*

**11.55 – 12.00**

### **Conclusions and Next Steps**

*Interact and TESIM.*



## MedLab Thematic Week: Connecting Mediterranean practitioners for better synergies.

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**Day Three**  
**Wednesday,**  
**11/12/2024**

### **Natural Disasters: Tackling fires, floods, and droughts together**

**10.00 – 10.10**

#### **Introduction and welcome words**

*Olivier Baudalet, DG Regio*

*Mercedes Acitores, Interact*

**10.10 – 10.20**

#### **Interreg Key figures and Statistics on Natural Disasters**

*Rosario Sapienza, TESIM*

**10.20 – 11.55**

#### **Panel discussion (40 min)**

- **Dr. Thanasis Hadzilacos. Interreg Greece Cyprus.** Dr Hadzilacos works at the Cyprus Institute. He is a computer scientist who, for the past decade, has been working on Natural Disasters and the Climate Crisis at three scales: [Eastern Med and Middle East](#) (international policy initiative), [Interreg Greece-Cyprus](#) (Floods) and [City Climate Neutrality](#) (Lemesos Net Zero Mission).
- **.Annelies Broekman. Interreg EuroMed.** She is a researcher at the Water and Global Change group at CREAM, develops different projects focusing on improving governance strategies for adaptation in the Mediterranean region. Her work aims at promoting scientific knowledge to be taken up in management and policy making processes, adopting an integrated view of socioecological systems and fostering co-production of solutions.
- **Juan Terrádez. Interreg Spain, France and Andorra (POCTEFA).** He has a degree in environmental sciences from the University of Valencia, master's degree in water resources management from the University of Cadiz. He has worked on climate change adaptation issues since 2010, especially in mountain areas. Since 2016 he has been working in the Pyrenean Observatory of Climate Change as a European project manager.

*Moderated by Mercedes Acitores, Interact*

*Reactions by CINEA and DG Research (tbc)*

#### **Debate with participants**

*Moderated by Mercedes Acitores and Ilze Ciganska (Interact)*

**11.55 – 12.00**

#### **Conclusions and Next Steps**

*Interact and TESIM.*