



Sustainable
tourism

Interreg
Euro-MED



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Terms of reference for the selection of an external expert to develop the 1st Thematic paper of the Mediterranean Cluster on Climate Change Adaptation:

“Climate resilience in tourism coastal destinations: solutions from Nature and Cultural Heritage”

in the framework of the Thematic Community
project of the Interreg Euro-MED Sustainable
Tourism Mission (Community4Tourism)

Developed by: Plan Bleu and NECSTour

Deadline for submission of offer: **December 14, 2025**



A project labelled by the UfM

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1. Background information

The responsible for the contract

This offer is developed by **Plan Bleu**, in the framework of the deliverable *D. 2.2.2 Policy documents and reports* for the Med Cluster (MC) Climate Change Adaptation of the Interreg Euro-MED Sustainable Tourism Mission (Community4Tourism).

Plan Bleu is established in the form of a French association (law 1901), based in Marseille, France. The Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) is one of the main components of the Regional Seas Programme of the **United Nations Environment Programme** (UNEP). It has a legal instrument: the Barcelona Convention and relies on six regional activity centres (“RACs”) responsible in particular for promoting the implementation of seven protocols attached to the convention. Plan Bleu is one of these six RACs mandated by the twenty-one countries, Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and the European Union. Plan Bleu acts as an observatory of the environment and sustainable development in the Mediterranean, and conducts thematic, systemic and prospective analyses to enlighten decision-makers of the region on the environmental risks and the challenges of sustainable development.

NECSTouR, the Network of European Regions for Competitive and Sustainable Tourism, is the community of European regions advocating for sustainable tourism – economic, social and environmental – as a crucial driver of destination competitiveness. Based in Brussels, NECSTouR is a not-for-profit association bringing together over 40 regional and local tourism authorities and more than 30 academic and associated members, representing 19 European countries.

Our mission is to lead and collaborate to strengthen the positive impact of tourism in European regions – for the benefit of businesses, communities, visitors, and the environment. The NECSTouR 2030 Pathway is our strategic framework, built around three thematic hubs - Governance, Data and



Climate Action - that help members implement the European Tourism Agenda and advance sustainable destination governance:

Introduction and contextualisation

The **Mediterranean Clusters** are one of the activities programmed under the Work Package 2 Transfer of the Thematic Community Project of the Mission Sustainable tourism of the [Interreg Euro-MED Programme](#).

The Interreg Euro-MED is a European Territorial Cooperation Programme that aims to make the Mediterranean region smarter, greener and improve the governance between its stakeholders. The Programme brings together partners from 69 regions of 14 countries from the Northern shore of the Mediterranean with a common objective: a climate neutral and resilient society for the benefit of its citizens. The total programme budget amount is 294 M € for the 2021-2027 programming period.

The programme funds projects willing to bring solutions to address 4 complimentary missions and to find concrete and shared solutions to global challenges such as the transition towards a climate-neutral and resilient society. These 4 missions are: (1) Strengthening an innovative sustainable economy, (2) Protecting, restoring and valorising the natural environment and heritage, (3) Promoting green living areas and (4) **Enhancing sustainable tourism.**

Each mission integrates two governance projects (the Thematic Community Project and the Institutional Dialogue Project, allocated under the governance priority), plus a number of Thematic Projects that will be approved through different calls (these allocated under the programme's priorities of Smarter Mediterranean and Greener Mediterranean).

The **Thematic Community Project (TCP) of the [Mission Sustainable Tourism](#)**, hereafter **Community4Tourism** project, is one of the projects approved under the Governance Priority of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme.

About Community4Tourism project

The **Community4Tourism** project is based upon the main objective of improving better governance of cooperation, both policy governance and



multi-sectoral, multi-level and transnational territorial governance, with a strong focus on environment and climate, promoting a smarter and greener Mediterranean, which is in line with the European Green Deal, the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations and the Territorial Agenda 2030 and other key initiatives such as the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism. The project is built upon the outputs of the Interreg MED 14/20 Sustainable Tourism and BleuTourMed Projects but reinforces its objectives to current new challenges.

The Interreg Euro-MED programme addresses the development of sustainable tourism as a transversal issue, meaning that the Sustainable Tourism Mission and consequently the Community4Tourism project (allocated under this Mission) integrate the 4 Specific Objectives of the programme:

- (1.1) consolidating a competitive innovation ecosystem,
- (2.6) supporting circular economy,
- **(2.4) promoting climate change adaptation and risks prevention and**
- (2.7) enhancing nature and biodiversity.

The project will therefore address its activities to pursue the consolidation of a competitive innovation ecosystem, support a circular economy, **promote climate change adaptation**, and enhance nature and biodiversity, involving all kinds of stakeholders, agents, and territories. As a result of its activities, it will produce jointly developed solutions and promote cooperation across borders.

More specifically, Community4Tourism aims at:

- facilitating the exchanges and the development of synergies between thematic projects at Med level;
- developing technical knowledge embedding the results of the projects and strategies;
- supporting the effective transfer of their results to other territories or stakeholders;

About the Mediterranean Clusters activity



With the aim to encourage the transfer of practices and results to other actors and territories and their integration into local, regional, national and European policies and strategies, the Community4Tourism project has, among other planned activities, created the **Mediterranean Clusters** to promote the dissemination of the results and the participation of actors beyond the partnership and the community of projects itself. These networks shall facilitate the dissemination of knowledge, the transfer and mainstreaming, the involvement of relevant external actors working in concrete thematics to produce further results, among others.

The Mediterranean Clusters (MCs), one of the main proposals of Community4Tourism project in the framework of Work Package 2 Transfer, is the place where the dialogue between the Thematic Projects and the Mediterranean stakeholders becomes concrete and creates the conditions for transferring and mainstreaming according to the [Results Amplification Strategy \(RAS\)](#) of the programme.

The aim of the MCs is to foster the continuous exchange of best practices, outputs, tools, ideas, policies, events coming from the Thematic Projects and to support the Institutional Dialogue Project (IDP) in its objectives of implementing transformative policies and capitalisation mechanisms.

Each MC is coordinated by 2 Thematic Coordinators (Project Partners) of the project, supported by a partner of the IDP to encourage the coordination of the activities. The MCs count on internal management and coordination tools. The MCs produce strategic deliverables and their members will participate in annual events and other activities.

The main goals of the Mediterranean Clusters is:

1. **Evaluate and assess the results of the thematic projects** so that this can be improved and levelled up;
2. Support the thematic projects in their processes of **transferring and capitalization** of their **results**;
3. **Generate a knowledge environment and debate** about the latest developments according to the thematic focus of each cluster;
4. **Generate policy recommendations** and orientations.

The MCs count with the active participation and involvement of the Thematic Projects of the Community4Tourism, the Institutional Dialogue project of the Interreg Euro-MED Sustainable Tourism Mission (Dialogue4Tourism), with representatives of the governance projects of



other missions of the Interreg Euro-MED programme, with the Associated Organisations of C4T project and with other external stakeholders.

The Mediterranean Clusters regularly organise internal working meetings, and one annual face-to-face meeting/event

The information above is summarized in the [Clusters Brochure](#).

Thematic distribution of the clusters

As indicated, the **Mission Enhancing sustainable tourism** is addressed transversally in the Interreg Euro-MED programme and integrates its 4 Specific Objectives (S.O). As each thematic project selected under the mission Sustainable Tourism will contribute only to one of the specific objectives, the Mediterranean Clusters are distributed according to the 4 objectives and, therefore, the projects of the missions will be thematically grouped in order to enable synergies and collaborations among them.

The object of this call concerns the MC Climate Change Adaptation, addressing S.O 2.4 of the Interreg Euro-Med Programme and tackling a list of concrete challenges :

S.O 2.4: Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco-system-based approaches (Greener Mediterranean Priority)

- foster sustainable tourism models which ensure the protection of the environment, including natural resources and cultural heritage.
- answer the central issue of climate change for the future of Mediterranean regions (accelerated warming).
- urge the environmental protection in view of both the pressure of human activities and/or climate change.
- enhance eco-system-based approaches in order to prevent disasters and improve resilience.
- Improve the prevention and mitigation of risks.
- Promote the importance of energy transition in the context of climate change.
- Tackle the climate change effects on health.
- Involve citizens in the greener transition of living areas with high touristic assets.



Thematic projects of the Members of the MC Climate Change Adaptation

Project	Short description	Duration
COOL NOONS	Adaptation of the urban tourism offer to face the heating in the Mediterranean	2024-2026
HERIT ADAPT	Reinforce the sustainability of destinations through natural and cultural heritage assets	2024-2026
NaTour4CChange	Nature-based solutions for increasing the resilience of coastal destinations	2024-2026
AQUAMAN	Reinforce the capacity of public authorities involved in water management to mitigate water scarcity.	2024-2026
Regenera4MED	Transform Mediterranean tourism by promoting regenerative practices that enhance climate resilience, support local communities, and preserve cultural heritage.	2025-2027
MED4REGEN	Turn museums & cultural institutions into catalysts for a cultural change towards regenerative tourism models in the Mediterranean.	2025-2027
WATERISE	Testing practical, low-impact solutions (natural wastewater treatment, rainwater harvesting, atmospheric water production) in tourist areas.	2025-2027

What we achieved within the Med Cluster Climate Change Adaptation so far



The Climate Change Adaptation Cluster has facilitated collaborative work among Mediterranean sustainable tourism projects through three major meetings between November 2024 and October 2025, generating structured collaborative outputs:

- **Mapping Challenges and Solutions** : The cluster initiated a participatory mapping exercise to identify common challenges faced by thematic projects and potential solutions. Through interactive workshops using Miro participants from projects such as COOL NOONS, HERIT ADAPT, MED-GIAHS, and NaTour4CChange contributed 46 distinct solutions. These were categorized into nine types: action plans, monitoring systems, alternative business models, network strengthening, thematic strategies, awareness campaigns, capacity building, and certification processes. A comprehensive mind map was produced to visualize synergies between projects and identify opportunities for cross-project knowledge transfer.
- **Replicability Framework** : The cluster developed a structured framework comprising five core criteria to ensure replicability of new sustainable tourism solutions: (1) flexibility, (2) stakeholder engagement and social acceptance, (3) governance, (4) feasibility, and (5) measurability. Collaborative ranking exercises validated these criteria, with flexibility and stakeholder engagement emerging as top priorities, providing projects with a practical tool to enhance output transferability across Mediterranean contexts.
- **Priority Challenges and Transferable Outputs** : The cluster identified three cross-cutting priority challenges:
 - ensuring sustained stakeholder engagement throughout project lifecycles,
 - bridging knowledge gaps to make complex concepts accessible, and
 - guaranteeing long-term project legacy beyond funding periods.

Each participating project presented its most transferable output according to the established criteria, including climate action strategies, catalogues of nature-based solutions, comprehensive methodologies for climate resilience, and regenerative tourism blueprints. These outputs are being compiled to inform future policy



frameworks and facilitate the scaling of successful approaches across the Euro-Mediterranean region.

2. Description of the Work

Purpose of the call and expected results

This call is part of the *Activity 2.2 - Creating and consolidating networks to facilitate transferring and mainstreaming processes* (WP2 Transfer), and its *Deliverable D 2.2.2 Policy documents and reports*.

The purpose of this call for tenders is to **select an expert that will be responsible to develop a Thematic Paper on *Climate resilience in tourism coastal destinations: solutions from nature and cultural heritage* - with inputs from the TPs and Best Practices gathering examples from the TPs.**

For this purpose, the contractor will be asked to:

- **Draft a Thematic Paper based on a provided template on *Climate resilience in coastal tourism destinations: solutions from nature and cultural heritage***
- The Thematic Paper aims :
 - to provide in-depth technical insights and perspective on Climate resilience through NbS and Cultural Heritage, to support knowledge sharing and capacity building ;
 - to showcase tools, methodologies, solutions developed by TPs to respond to the mentioned topic ;
 - to support transferability of project outputs to other stakeholders and destinations ;
 - Define key policy messages and key recommendations.
- **Collect data from Thematic Projects to feed the content of the Thematic Paper** (bilateral meetings, online surveys...)
- **Participate and coordinate 2 online Cluster meetings :**
 - to present and validate the outline and discuss first content draft with the cluster members (first meeting - Jan 2026)



- to agree on the final version of the document with the cluster members (Second meeting April/May 2026)
- **Present the Thematic paper** during the III Med Convention on 18-19 June 2026 in Barcelona

Expected schedule

The assignment with the contractor will start in December 2025 and will conclude at the end of July 2026.

A tentative schedule, which can be refined in the applicants' offers is the following:

Mid of December 2025	Formalisation of the contract & Working on the activities	Contract signature between Plan Bleu and External expert
End 2025 - Beg of 2026	Thematic Projects Understanding	Develop a clear understanding of the role, expected results, and ongoing actions of each thematic project based on provided documents
Beg of January 2026	Kick-off meeting with Plan Bleu and NECSTour	Reviewing the proposed work plan, methodology and plan regular coordination meetings to take stock of progress.
Mid Jan 2026	1st Cluster Meeting	To discuss and validate the outline/ first content draft with the cluster members
January-feb 2026	Collection data from Thematic Projects	Through Bilateral meetings, questionnaires or other to gather inputs from TPs
End of march 2026	Submission of first draft	Thematic Paper on <i>Climate resilience in tourism coastal destinations: solutions from nature and cultural heritage</i>
Mid April 2026	2nd Cluster Meeting	To collect feedback and to agree on the final version of the document with the cluster members



Mid of December 2025	Formalisation of the contract & Working on the activities	Contract signature between Plan Bleu and External expert
End 2025 - Beg of 2026	Thematic Projects Understanding	Develop a clear understanding of the role, expected results, and ongoing actions of each thematic project based on provided documents
Beg of January 2026	Kick-off meeting with Plan Bleu and NECSTour	Reviewing the proposed work plan, methodology and plan regular coordination meetings to take stock of progress.
Mid Jan 2026	1st Cluster Meeting	To discuss and validate the outline/ first content draft with the cluster members
Mid May 2026	Submission of final draft	Final draft submitted
18 & 19th of June 2026	III Med Convention in Barcelona	Presentation of the Thematic paper

3. Profile of the tender

PLAN BLEU and NECSTOUR are seeking a seasoned consultant with strong interpersonal skills and previous experiences in conducting work on sustainable tourism and climate change adaptation issues in coastal destinations, integrating nature and cultural heritage. The following criteria will be assessed:

Experience:

- Relevant experience (> 10 years) in the field of Climate Change adaptation issues, with good knowledge on sustainable tourism principles for coastal Mediterranean destinations;
- A good knowledge of Mediterranean sustainable tourism stakeholders;



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- Minimum knowledge on Interreg Euro Med Funding programme
 - Experience in designing institutional documents and best practices reports ;
 - Recognized expertise and strong reputation in the international tourism sector, enabling broad visibility of the thematic paper and effective dissemination beyond the Interreg Euro-MED community.

Competences:

- Strong experience in data collection management, harmonization and analysis related to a given project framework;
- Excellent analytical, synthesis and writing skills in English;
- Ability to mobilise stakeholders, follow the methodology provided and exploit the existing knowledge in an efficient way;
- Knowledge of the Mediterranean Basin and stakeholders related to sustainable tourism and marine protected areas with a focus on climate change adaptation issues.

The selection of the expert will be done based on a presentation of a technical offer, an economic offer, as well as a letter of interest and a resume making reference to these Terms of Reference.

4. Application procedure

The offer, containing :

- The methodological approach/plan of work that will be followed for the development of the contract,
- a description of the organisation's experience and/or the concise curriculum vitae of the candidate(s),
- and finally an economic offer.

must be sent in one file in PDF format to : **cmartin@planbleu.org** and **adriana.tramullas@necstour.eu** before 23:59 CET on **14th of december**.



Applications can be also submitted through Plan Bleu website: www.planbleu.org.

5. Contractual and Financial Terms

Administrative details of the Contracting Authority

This consultancy will run from the date of the contract signature by both parties to (DATE).

Potential travel and accommodation costs related to this mission will be covered separately by Plan Bleu and should not be included in the contract amount. Funding for these activities is secured through both EU-Interreg funding and co-financing from Plan Bleu.

The acceptance of the selected offer implies acceptance of the terms and detailed schedules outlined in these Terms of Reference, including the following payment schedule (negotiable) :

- 30% of the contract amount will be paid upon signature of the contract
- 70% of the contract amount will be paid upon validation of the final deliverable

A properly issued invoice will be required for the scheduled payments, containing the following mandatory details:

- Full name + address of the service provider
- SIRET number (France) or tax number (for non-France)
- Invoice issuance date
- Invoice number
- Service description (e.g., name of the deliverable)
- Amount excluding taxes (HT), VAT, and total amount (TTC), in the currency specified in the contract
- For individuals not subject to VAT (France): include the mention “TVA non applicable, article 293B du code général des impôts”

The payment term for invoices will be as follows: bank transfer within 15 days after the invoice date.



The tax legislation in force at the date of acceptance of the offer will be applied.

Budget

The maximum amount available for this service is € 4000 including VAT (total taxes included) to be paid at the end of the contract.

Contracting and Payment

The acceptance of the offer of the successful tender implies the acceptance of the conditions and schedules detailed in these ToRs. The payment term for the invoice will be made by bank transfer (bank account details will be asked).

Formalisation of the Contract

The contract must be formalised in writing by 31 December 2025. The contract shall enter into force by its signature and will last until 31 July 2026.

Conditions Governing the Use of AI within the Assignment

Clause 1 - Controlled use of artificial intelligence: The service provider is authorized to use generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, provided that their use is strictly limited to support functions: assistance with structuring, brainstorming, document exploration, or editorial optimization. The use of AI may under no circumstances replace the analytical work, source verification, or expert writing expected within the scope of the assignment. Artificial intelligence must under no circumstances replace human expertise or rigorous scientific methods. In particular, it may not be used to produce numerical estimates or to generate modeling results (economic, econometric, mathematical, or other), which must be based on validated, documented approaches implemented by the service provider. Any reference to a study, article, numerical data, or academic source must be rigorously traceable and verifiable through precise references (title, author, publication, date, or link).



Clause 2 - Responsibility for content and transparency: The service provider remains fully responsible for the quality, accuracy, reliability, and consistency of the deliverable, including in the case of partial use of artificial intelligence tools. All information, data, or quotations appearing in the final deliverable must have been verified by the Consultant, regardless of the method of production. In the event of a clear breach (fictitious sources, fabricated quotations, inconsistent data), Plan Bleu reserves the right to request a revision at no additional cost, or even to terminate the contract and cancel all or part of the payment in the event of failure to meet deadlines. The Consultant is obligated to explicitly declare any use of AI tools in the preparation of deliverables. The Consultant must transparently indicate the parts of the work that were carried out with the assistance of an AI tool and may be asked to provide the methodology or queries (prompts) used.

Clause 3 - Quality responsibility: The Consultant remains solely responsible for the accuracy, originality, verification, and professional quality of deliverables, including those produced or assisted by AI. The use of AI tools cannot, under any circumstances, justify factual errors, plagiarism, bias, or breaches of confidentiality.

Clause 4 - Non-compliance and consequences: In the event of non-compliance with this clause, the client may request the Consultant to:

- revise the deliverables at no additional costs
- or, in the event of serious or repeated breach, to apply the contractual provisions relating to non-conformity or termination.

Review of Proposal and Awards Criteria

Plan Bleu, as a contracting body, and with the support of **NECSTouR** will proceed to examine the documentation provided to verify compliance with the technical and economic requirements of the bids and may request from the tenderer any additional documentation required. The contracting authority shall exclude from the valuation and proposal of award the bids that do not comply with the requirements of the contract. Following the examination of the proposals, and after a detailed assessment of the



selected offer, a team - whose composition shall be determined internally - will formulate the corresponding final proposal of the award. In the event of observing omissions or deficiencies in the documentation provided, the applicable legislation for the correction of defects and omissions in documentation will apply.

The presentation of the certifications accrediting the fulfillment of the tax and social security obligations by the tenderer will be mandatory.

Selection Process

The selection of the consultant will be realised jointly by Plan Bleu and NECSTouR based on the evaluation of the technical and financial offer.

- Evaluation of methodological approach, maximum **30 points**.
- Evaluation of the experience of the organisation and/or concise resume of the candidate. Knowledge of the issues and prerequisites on **Climate Change Adaptation** (Ecosystem based Approaches, Culture based solutions, natural heritage...) for the tourism sector. **40 points**.
- Evaluation of the economic offer, maximum **30 points**.

The offer that gathers the maximum score will be selected.