

Webinar 11 - Coastal Cities & Blue Economy:

Local experiences from Piraeus, Barranquilla, and Genoa

The webinar, organised on January 25th, 2023, explored different perspectives about Blue Economy and reflected on the importance of sea and coastal areas as a platform to generate social benefits, economic development, and environmental sustainability.

Piraeus (Greece)

The **Blue Growth Strategy** has been implemented since 2014, with the creation of a hub to **promote business ideas related to the sea** and its resources. It promotes innovation related to the blue economy while taking care of sustainability and bringing socio-economic benefits to the city (Business Support Centre of the Municipality of Piraeus; StartUPiraeus; Blue Lab, Educational programmes, etc.).

Barranquilla (Colombia)

The project was inaugurated in 2017 to **recover the riverfront** and its surroundings through integral **environmental and urban interventions**. It has been transformed into a meeting place for the community featuring green areas, local businesses, recreative facilities, and cultural initiatives. The **Gran Malecon** is now an example of resilience, promoting social interaction, sustainability, cultural promotion and economic development.

Genoa (Italy)

The **Genoa Blue District** is a physical and virtual space created to **promote innovation and growth-oriented urban ecosystems**. It was created in 2020 and managed to bring together entrepreneurs, startups and community members to create alliances around blue economy strategies. To achieve this objective, events were organized to bring together different needs and foster innovation, benefitting the city and its economy.

What is Blue Economy?

The European Commission defines it as “all economic activities related to oceans, seas and coasts. It covers a wide range of interlinked established and emerging sectors”, including marine renewable energy, Blue bioeconomy and biotechnology, desalination, maritime defense, security and surveillance, research and infrastructure, amongst others.





LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Lessons Learned

- 1 Involvement of multiple stakeholders and sectors: government and businesses, with active participation of the local community, integrating their aspirations and needs into interventions.
- 2 Strategies generating economic momentum through maritime resources should integrate sustainability at the centre of their efforts to ensure long-term benefits on quality of life.
- 3 Networking is key to boost the generation of business ideas and collaboration around maritime economy: organization of events and activities bringing together different actors and investors.
- 4 Promotion of entrepreneurial culture is key to create new opportunities and innovation around Blue Economy.

Recommendations

- 1 A Blue Economy Strategy should attract start-ups and jobs related to sustainable use of sea resources, promoting economic growth and livelihoods.
- 2 Provide an acceleration programme for entrepreneurial ideas to develop and materialize into a business model.
- 3 Provide accessible educational programmes and learning opportunities around technology, equipment, products, and concepts linked to Blue Economy. Mentoring for SMEs or start-ups.
- 4 Establish a physical and symbolic connection between the city and the seafront, with adequate collaborative spaces.
- 5 Call for a vision of innovation: showcase activities, attract new talent and capital, design a communication strategy and promote involvement of local communities.

