

The blue economy – a fundamental pillar to build the New Development Model of Morocco



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Morocco has real potential for the blue economy (BE). It enjoys a significant maritime capital with two seabords extending up to 3,500 km, an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of around 1.2 million km², along with a vast potential in both fisheries and other renewable resources.

The Council notes in this report that over the past 20 years, Morocco has adopted several sectoral strategies covering a range of activities directly or indirectly linked to maritime capital. It goes on to explain that the need is, however, for the country to adopt a new vision with an inclusive, sustainable and integrated approach aimed at harnessing the potential to create wealth and jobs, while recognizing and promoting the significant contributions of major sectors to the blue economy and preserving marine ecosystems.

It is against this backdrop that the Council calls for the adoption of a national strategy for a sustainable, inclusive blue economy. The need for a territorial dimension in this strategy, the Council explains, is important to develop traditional sectors (fishing, tourism and port activity) and to promote new sectors with high growth potential like aquaculture, ecotourism, marine biotechnology, shipbuilding and renewable energies. The strategy's aim is also to strengthen Morocco's competitive position on the international stage and enhance its standing as a credible regional partner, by taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the new blue economy and climate financing instruments.

The strategy execution projects should be developed in consultation with citizens and relevant stakeholders, with the overriding objective of promoting access to maritime services and resources for all social categories. The implementation of this strategy shall be guided and evaluated, for optimal coordination of different sectoral policies, by an ad hoc ministerial committee reporting to the Head of Government.

In addition to this recommendation of prime importance, the report presents a series of other proposals to unlock the potential of the blue economy. These recommendations are categorized as follows:

- Ensure ecosystem-based maritime spatial planning (MSP) at territorial level, while strengthening the central role of the territories in the development of blue economy sectors in the context of advanced regionalization.
- Achieve better exploitation and sustainable use of sea products and services, while accelerating development of eco-responsible aquaculture and innovative port services.
- Promote the development of new blue economy sectors, including marine biotechnologies, ocean-based renewable energy, ecologically responsible desalination and mining and fossil exploration and exploitation activities.
- Boost cruising, yachting and other water sport activities and launch cultural initiatives for the sea and water activities, while highlighting the culture and traditions of coastal communities (maritime festivals, competitions, etc.).
- Invest in research and innovation activities in the different areas of the blue economy.
- Introduce blue economy professions into the education and vocational training system, by creating more specialized university courses in the maritime fields, for the emergence of a qualified and competent blue workforce.