

Joint Statement

TouMaLi 2022 International Conference
**“Contribution of sound waste management systems to sustainable
tourism and the protection of marine ecosystems”**

Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Marine Transport

*10th and 11th of October 2022
Alexandria, Egypt*

Representatives of the TouMaLi project, Participating countries, organizations, guests from:

- **Egypt**

The Governorate of Alexandria, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Waste Management Regulatory Authority, the Egyptian Hotel Association, Nahdet Misr, Arab Academy for Science, Technology And Maritime Transport (Alexandria-Egypt).

- **Morocco**

The Ministry of Energy, Mines and Environment, the Ministry of Tourism, Air Transport, Craft & Social Economy, Regional Association of the Hotel Industry Marrakech-Safi.

- **Tunisia**

The Ministry of Interior, the National Waste Management Agency, the Tunisian Coastal Protection Agency, the Tunisian Hotel Federation, the International Center for Environmental Technologies, Econnexions.

- **Europe**

Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), Water And Environment Support Project (WES) of the European Union, CPMR Intermediterranean Commission, Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE), Interreg MED Programme, Plastic Busters CAP, Climate Change ENI CBC Med Programme.

- **Germany**

Funder of the TouMaLi Project; the German Government through the Ministry of Environment, University of Rostock, Leibniz-Institute for Baltic Sea Research (IOW), BlackForest Solutions, Landbell Group, Adelphi.

We, the above-mentioned participants in the First TouMaLi 2022 International Conference held in Alexandria in Egypt on October 10th and 11th, 2022, entitled “Contribution of sound waste management systems to sustainable tourism and the protection of marine ecosystems”, agreed on the following joint statement:

We would like to express our thanks and appreciation to:

- The Arab Republic of Egypt through the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Marine Transport in Alexandria of the League of Arab States, for coordinating and providing technical assistance in Egypt as part of the TouMaLi project and for successfully hosting and organising the First TouMaLi International Conference-2022 in Egypt;
- The Arab Republic of Egypt through the Ministry of Environment in Egypt and the Governorate of Alexandria for the hospitality and for providing all the necessary support for our works in the framework of this conference in Egypt;
- The Federal Republic of Germany through the Ministry of Environment in Germany for supporting the TouMaLi project;
- The Cadi Ayyad University in Morocco for coordinating and providing technical assistance in Morocco as part of the TouMaLi project;
- The International Center for Environmental Technologies of Tunisia, for coordinating and providing technical assistance in Tunisia as part of the TouMaLi project;
- The University of Rostock in the Federal Republic of Germany for coordinating and providing technical assistance as part of the TouMaLi project;
- The TouMaLi Project Consortium Partners: University of Rostock, Landbell Group, Adelphi, Leibniz-Institute for Baltic Sea Research (IOW), Econnexions, BlackForest Solutions for successfully implementing the TouMali project components on marine litter reduction and promotion of green and circular economy in the tourism sector;
- The TouMaLI Steering Committees Members in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, for renewing their engagement and for coordinating the TouMaLi project within the respective countries;
- The European Union, Union for the Mediterranean, United Nations Environment Program, through their directives, strategies, ministerial declarations, agendas, programs and projects within the Mediterranean region as indicated hereabove,
- The guests and participants in the 2022 First TouMaLi International Conference in Egypt, from national and local administrations, civil society, academia and private sector as well as the supporting partners and donors for their contribution to this conference and the fruitful discussion that led to the following recommendations;

Considering the importance of sound waste management systems leading to a sustainable tourism and the protection of marine ecosystems, efforts to guarantee integrated and sustainable development, the environmental, economic and social challenges in concerned countries as well

as the necessity to establish a mechanism for regional cooperation and consolidation of efforts in this field;

We expected from the 2022 International TouMaLi Conference in Egypt an active exchange and a sharing of best practices among participants, in order to better understand the major issues related to solid waste management in touristic areas and to explore innovative and sustainable mechanisms for the tourism sector, including Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), as well as waste prevention promoting sustainable behaviour change.

This first Conference of TouMaLi project focused on impact of marine litter on the tourism sector, mitigation measures, waste management and promotion of circular economy models with focus on EPR, sharing lessons and exchanging within the Euro and Mediterranean region on regional efforts on marine litter and plastic pollution, sustainable tourism and biodiversity protection, relaunching a sustainable post COVID-19 tourism model, converging around the regional priorities on marine litter and sustainable tourism within the Green and Blue Agendas. The recommendations and results of our discussion can be summarized as follows:

- To address the above challenges, the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region are expected to further improve their institutional and legal frameworks. The enforcement of improved policies will play a pivotal role in the success of these interventions, with a throughout distribution of responsibilities within government departments, and local, and regional authorities, as well as among private stakeholders.
- The waste sector is requested to become an activity capable of simultaneously preserving the environment, generating income, and optimizing resource use. Comprehensive regulatory frameworks and incentivizing schemes to promote proper collection and treatment of each type of waste will enable this. The introduction and/or enforcement of innovative policy and economic instruments towards Extended Producer and Consumer Responsibility are crucial to achieving the objective.
- The tourism industries have to advance and promote sustainable operations and embrace the principle of the circular economy such as reuse, reduce, and redesign. To reach this goal and adopt these changes the tourism sector needs the proper financial and institutional support. Interface with and integration in EPR schemes will provide a structuring framework and an equitable allocation of costs.
- Training and capacity building on the problematics of Single Use Plastics (SUPs) and the subsequent formulation of laws and replacement of SUPs with sustainable and circular alternatives (i.e. refillable bottles, etc.) will support the reduction of the number of plastics generated in the region.
- The adoption of best practices for waste management will increase the economic and environmental benefits. The transfer of knowledge, enhancement of enabling conditions and conduction of capacity-building programs targeting involved stakeholders in the tourism sector will make the latter a forerunner in proper waste management. The use of toolboxes, manuals or digital platforms can potentially foster this knowledge exchange and upscaling of best practices across the partner countries.

- Stringent objectives and quantitative indicators must be set. A monitoring system for waste avoidance efforts, particularly on marine litter and plastic reduction, should be promoted and reinforced. Developing and reinforcing the environmental impact assessment and the monitoring systems will enable marine litter and plastic reduction in the countries of the MENA region.
- The role of the informal sector including waste pickers, associations, and social enterprises has to be assessed, considering the local context as well as the technical needs and the existing systems. Public authorities, at national and local levels, must therefore develop specific and adequate strategies towards informal sector integration by providing the relevant social security, health protection, training, and counselling.
- Building on current work, a regional/national database systems of the various waste subsectors should be reinforced/connected.
- Cooperation and joint actions towards the reduction of pollution in the Mediterranean Sea should be fostered and the position of environmental policies as a key development priority be strengthened. Through the UfM Green and Blue Agendas and ongoing actions, convergence of efforts of the MENA countries towards harmonized protocols for marine litter monitoring and promotion of locally-based mitigation actions shall supported. Further sharing of international/ongoing regional experiences and know-how about monitoring and mitigation of marine litter impacts will benefit the whole region. The TouMaLi project, which is already integrated in the GreenerMed agenda, could be advanced for UfM labelling to complement the existing efforts.
- The role of civil society and the participation of private enterprises in tracking pollution and in implementing clean-up activities and sustainable waste collection and processing operations has to be boosted. Education and Awareness-raising programs must be reinforced in the entire region as part of the action plan of the Mediterranean Strategy of Education for Sustainable Development 2030. The paradigm of waste being a fatality to get rid of at any expense must be shifted into waste as a resource which can lead to economic and environmental benefits.
- Specific training and dialogue sessions with press specialists, press reporters, specialized journalists, media advisors, and communicators from all countries in the Mediterranean and Arab region should be enhanced;

We recommend to engage the TouMali project within the countries in developing necessary capacities and providing policy advice for decision-making, as well as further promoting the cooperation with research centers and academics to mitigate marine litter impacts, promote circular economy and advocate for sustainable tourism.

We would like to address our gratitude to the German government for its support to the TouMaLi project and call the German Government as well as other Supporting partners

and countries to further support and expand TouMaLi's area of intervention to other partner countries within the Mediterranean region.

We express our deep support to the TouMaLi project and ask TouMaLi partners and the hosting partners in Egypt to consider the recommendations stated in this Declaration.

We would like to emphasize our commitment to actively participate in the follow-up and implementation of the recommendations of this First TouMaLi International conference and to promote and disseminate its results at the level of decision-makers of participating countries and all stakeholders.

We also take the opportunity to thank the Egypt Government, the German Government, the League of Arab States, the European Union, the Union for Mediterranean, for supporting the objectives and recommendations of this Conference and for encouraging the activities and objectives of TouMaLi and involving the project in decision-making in relation with Marine Litter mitigation and integrated Solid Waste Management in HoReCa sector. In this respect, we ask to advance this declaration in the League of Arab States' Meetings of the Minister of Environment and in the upcoming COP 27 meeting to be held in Charm El Cheikh in Egypt from 6th to 18th of November 2022.

We, as TouMaLi team, take this opportunity to thank all participants in this 1st TouMaLi International Conference 2022 and for supporting its objectives and recommendations as well as engaging the project in providing necessary policy advice for decision-making in matters related to Solid Waste Management, Circular Economy and Marine Litter mitigation within the HoReCa sector. We also welcome the proposal of the Moroccan delegation to hold the next 2023 TouMaLi International conference in Marrakech in Morocco.

Alexandria, on 11 October, 2022