



**National Blue Economy Strategy for Jordan**

**Draft 1**

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**The Vision for 2035**  
**By 2035, Jordan will have:**

A resilient, competitive Blue Economy  
Protected ecosystems and restored coral reefs  
Clean energy powering coastal industries  
Modern ports and sustainable tourism  
Skilled youth and thriving BlueTech startups  
Climate-resilient waterfronts and public access  
Transparent, digital, science-based governance

**A coastline that delivers long-term value for people, nature, and the national economy.**

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As the lead United Nations agency on international development, UNDP works in 170 countries and territories to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality. They help countries develop policies, leadership skills, partnerships and institutional capabilities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Their work is centred around six core development areas, known as UNDP's signature solutions: poverty and inequality, governance, resilience, environment, energy and gender equality.

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#### **Gulf of Aqaba Resilient Reefs Programme**

The Gulf of Aqaba Resilient Reefs programme will identify and protect coral reef climate refugia, advance science on reef resilience and restoration, and implement finance mechanisms to ensure the sustainable financing of MPAs and OECMs that harbour critical coral reef ecosystems.

The programme will also accelerate the development of reef-positive business models, especially in the ecotourism, aquaculture, and waste management sectors, through a newly established Centre for Sustainable Blue Economy Innovation, which will also develop blended finance solutions for businesses and projects in these sectors that support coral reef conservation, community livelihoods, and enhanced community resilience to climate change. With the additional finance for conservation and investment from the private sector, the programme is expected to leverage at least an additional USD 30 million to support coral reef conservation in the Gulf of Aqaba.

#### **Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority**

The Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) was established in 2001 by the government of Jordan to ensure that Aqaba's commercial and cultural prominence continues into the 21st Century. In terms of location, Aqaba covers the total Jordanian coastline (27 km), and hosts the 12 seaports of Jordan, an international airport, and the historical city of Aqaba.

The Authority is an independent institution that deals with the development and management of the Aqaba Special Economic Zone and provides integrated services to investors and registered companies. The Authority is administered by a six-member Board of Commissioners headed by the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners, each responsible for organizing and managing legislative, legal and regulatory activities in the region.

# Jordan's National Blue Economy Strategy 2026–2035

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## Table of Contents

### Acronyms and Abbreviations

### National Blue Economy Strategy for Jordan (2026–2035)

- Executive Summary

### Part I — Strategic Foundations

1. Introduction
2. The need and opportunity for a National Blue Economy Strategy
3. A national definition of the Blue Economy for Jordan
4. Mandate and sectoral scope
5. Eight pillars for coordinated and efficient implementation
6. Institutional context for marine & coastal governance
7. Governing structures for the Blue Economy
8. Jordan-specific governance framework
9. Proposed governance mechanisms
10. Policy and legislative context

### Part II — Strategic Rationale and National Benefits

11. Socioeconomic benefits of a Blue Economy Strategy
12. Expected benefits for Jordan
13. Cost–benefit Narrative: action vs. inaction
14. Economic valuation of marine & coastal assets
15. Economic & environmental regulation and incentives
16. Financing the Blue Economy
17. Cross-cutting enablers
18. Linkages with the Economic Modernization Vision (EMV)

- Conclusion

### Part III — The Eight Pillars of Implementation

- **Pillar 0 — Governance & Policy Coherence**  
Context & Justification - Vision, Strategic Goal & Outcomes - Priority Areas (0.1–0.8) - Full Implementation Tables (Outputs, KPIs, Tasks, Partners, Timeline)
- **Pillar 1 — Sustainable Marine & Coastal Tourism**  
Context & Justification - Vision, Strategic Goal & Outcomes - Priority Areas (0.1–0.8) - Full Implementation Tables (Outputs, KPIs, Tasks, Partners, Timeline)
- **Pillar 2 — Sustainable Fisheries & Aquaculture**  
Context & Justification - Vision, Strategic Goal & Outcomes - Priority Areas (0.1–0.8) - Full Implementation Tables (Outputs, KPIs, Tasks, Partners, Timeline)
- **Pillar 3 — Ports, Maritime Transport & Logistics**  
Context & Justification - Vision, Strategic Goal & Outcomes - Priority Areas (0.1–0.8) - Full Implementation Tables (Outputs, KPIs, Tasks, Partners, Timeline)
- **Pillar 4 — Marine Renewable Energy**  
Context & Justification - Vision, Strategic Goal & Outcomes - Priority Areas (0.1–0.8) - Full Implementation Tables (Outputs, KPIs, Tasks, Partners, Timeline)
- **Pillar 5 — Marine Environmental Protection & Climate Resilience**  
Context & Justification - Vision, Strategic Goal & Outcomes - Priority Areas (0.1–0.8) - Full Implementation Tables (Outputs, KPIs, Tasks, Partners, Timeline)
- **Pillar 6 — Blue Innovation, Research & Skills**  
Context & Justification - Vision, Strategic Goal & Outcomes - Priority Areas (0.1–0.8) - Full Implementation Tables (Outputs, KPIs, Tasks, Partners, Timeline)
- **Pillar 7 — Sustainable Coastal Infrastructure & Resilient Urban Development**  
Context & Justification - Vision, Strategic Goal & Outcomes - Priority Areas (0.1–0.8) - Full Implementation Tables (Outputs, KPIs, Tasks, Partners, Timeline)

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
ASEZ	Aqaba Special Economic Zone
ASEZA	Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority
BE House	Blue Economy House
BECI	Blue Economy Centre for Innovation
BES	Blue Economy Strategy
BEsec	Blue Economy Secretariat
BOD	Board of Commissioners (ASEZA)
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CCM	Climate Change Mitigation
CC	Climate Change
CDS	Catch Documentation System
CRID	Climate Resilient Infrastructure Design
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DMO	Destination Management Organization
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMV	Economic Modernization Vision
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
EV	Electric Vehicle
EWDS	Early Warning & Detection System
FAD	Fish Aggregating Device
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FS	Floating Solar
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GH2	Green Hydrogen
GIS	Geographic Information System
GoJ	Government of Jordan
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IMTA	Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture
IMO	International Maritime Organization
ISPS	International Ship and Port Facility Security Code
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (Fishing)
JREDS	Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LME	Large Marine Ecosystem
LMP	Local Management Plan (tourism)
LRT	Light Rail Transit
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation

<b>MENA</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>MFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>MoEnv</b>	Ministry of Environment
<b>MoITS</b>	Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply
<b>MoPIC</b>	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
<b>MoT</b>	Ministry of Transport
<b>MoTA</b>	Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
<b>MoWI</b>	Ministry of Water and Irrigation
<b>MPA</b>	Marine Protected Area
<b>MSP</b>	Marine Spatial Planning
<b>MTR</b>	Mid-Term Review
<b>NBS</b>	Nature-Based Solutions
<b>NDC</b>	Nationally Determined Contribution
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OECM</b>	Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measure
<b>ODP</b>	Open Data Portal
<b>PCS</b>	Port Community System
<b>PPP</b>	Public-Private Partnership
<b>R&amp;D</b>	Research & Development
<b>RE</b>	Renewable Energy
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise
<b>STEM</b>	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
<b>SWM</b>	Solid Waste Management
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>TWG</b>	Technical Working Group
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>VMS</b>	Vessel Monitoring System
<b>VTS</b>	Vessel Traffic Service
<b>WQ</b>	Water Quality

## Executive Summary

Jordan's 27-kilometre coastline along the Gulf of Aqaba is one of the country's most strategic national assets. Despite its limited geographic extent, it plays an outsized role in national development: it is Jordan's only maritime outlet, a gateway for more than 80 percent of the country's imports and exports, a hub for tourism and investment, and home to some of the world's most climate-resilient coral reefs. The Gulf of Aqaba is therefore not simply a coastal zone — it is a national lifeline whose sustainable management is essential for Jordan's economic competitiveness, environmental stewardship, and long-term resilience.

The *National Blue Economy Strategy (2026–2035)* provides Jordan's first integrated framework for the sustainable development, governance, and protection of its marine and coastal resources. It aligns with the Economic Modernization Vision (EMV), the ASEZA Strategic Plan, the ASEZ Urban Development Master Plan 2024–2040, and Jordan's international commitments under the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, the Union for the Mediterranean, and regional Red Sea cooperation mechanisms. The Strategy responds to urgent pressures — including rapid coastal development, expanding port operations, pollution, and climate change — while unlocking opportunities in sustainable tourism, low-carbon logistics, aquaculture, renewable energy, and marine innovation.

At the heart of the Strategy is a nationally tailored *definition* of the Blue Economy:

*The sustainable development, governance, and protection of the Gulf of Aqaba's marine and coastal resources to drive economic growth, create quality jobs, enhance community wellbeing, strengthen climate resilience, and preserve the health of Red Sea ecosystems.*

This definition reflects Jordan's unique geographic reality and its ambition to become a regional leader in sustainable coastal development.

To overcome institutional fragmentation and strengthen national coordination, the Strategy establishes a *comprehensive governance architecture*. A National Blue Economy Council provides high-level leadership, supported by a Blue Economy Secretariat hosted by ASEZA to coordinate implementation. The Blue Economy Centre for Innovation (BECI) serves as a national hub for research, entrepreneurship, and blue finance. Sectoral Technical Working Groups ensure technical depth and stakeholder engagement, while integrated tools such as marine spatial planning (MSP), integrated coastal zone management (ICZM), environmental safeguards, and a national Blue Economy dashboard ensure coherence, transparency, and accountability.

The Strategy is organized around eight strategic pillars that together capture the full spectrum of Jordan's Blue Economy:

1. *Governance & Policy Coherence*
2. *Sustainable Marine & Coastal Tourism*
3. *Sustainable Fisheries & Aquaculture*
4. *Ports, Maritime Transport & Logistics*

5. *Marine Renewable Energy*
6. *Marine Environmental Protection & Climate Resilience*
7. *Blue Innovation, Research & Skills*
8. *Sustainable Coastal Infrastructure & Resilient Urban Development*

These pillars are supported by a set of *cross-cutting enablers* — including blue finance mobilization, digital transformation, environmental safeguards, climate resilience, skills development, and public–private partnerships — which provide the institutional, financial, and technological foundations for successful implementation.

The Strategy is closely aligned with the *Economic Modernization Vision (EMV)*, directly contributing to national priorities in tourism, logistics, green growth, innovation, human capital, and investment promotion. This alignment ensures policy coherence, political support, and access to national and international financing.

A diversified financing architecture underpins the Strategy. It combines national public investment, ASEZA revenues, private capital, public–private partnerships, blue and green bonds, blended finance instruments, and international climate finance from mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility, and Adaptation Fund. A flagship Blue Economy Investment Facility will mobilize and coordinate finance, de-risk private investment, and support feasibility studies, early-stage projects, and innovation.

The Strategy delivers significant socioeconomic and environmental benefits. It will increase GDP contribution, create high-quality jobs for youth and women, strengthen food security through sustainable aquaculture, modernize ports and logistics, expand renewable energy, enhance tourism competitiveness, and protect coral reefs and biodiversity. The cost of inaction — environmental degradation, economic losses, and increased climate vulnerability — far exceeds the cost of implementing the Strategy.

Implementation is structured through a clear, phased plan running from 2025 to 2035. It begins with establishing governance and regulatory foundations, followed by scaling infrastructure and pilot projects, and culminating in full transformation. Monitoring and evaluation are ensured through annual reporting, mid-term and final reviews, and a digital dashboard that tracks progress across all pillars.

Jordan’s Gulf of Aqaba is a national treasure and a global asset. Through this Strategy, Jordan commits to protecting it, investing in it, and unlocking its full potential for generations to come.

The National Blue Economy Strategy provides the roadmap for a resilient, competitive, and inclusive Blue Economy that strengthens national prosperity while safeguarding one of the world’s most exceptional marine ecosystems.

**To build a thriving, inclusive, and climate-resilient Blue Economy that enhances national prosperity while safeguarding the Gulf of Aqaba's globally significant marine and coastal ecosystems.**

**Diversify Jordan's coastal economy**

Expand high-value sectors such as sustainable tourism, aquaculture, logistics, and marine renewable energy to reduce reliance on traditional industries and increase economic resilience.

**Protect and restore marine and coastal ecosystems**

Ensure that coral reefs, seagrass beds, and coastal habitats are preserved and restored as the ecological foundation of the Blue Economy.

**Strengthen climate resilience**

Integrate climate-risk management into all coastal planning, infrastructure development, and economic activities to protect communities, assets and ecosystems.

**Enhance competitiveness in key blue sectors**

Modernize ports, improve tourism offerings, develop sustainable aquaculture, and adopt digital technologies to increase productivity and market access.

**Expand renewable energy and low-carbon technologies**

Pilot and scale marine-based renewable energy solutions, including floating solar, offshore wind, and green hydrogen, to support decarbonization and energy security.

**Build a skilled workforce and innovation ecosystem**

Develop human capital, research capacity, and innovation systems that support emerging blue sectors and create opportunities for youth and women.

**Ensure inclusive and equitable growth**

Promote SME participation, community engagement, and equitable access to coastal resources and opportunities.

**Strengthen governance and institutional coordination**

Establish coherent policies, regulatory frameworks, and institutional mechanisms to manage the Blue Economy effectively and sustainably.

**Support the emergence of a Blue Community**

Create a safe space for stakeholders in the Blue Economy to share, create, innovate, collaborate.

## 1.Introduction:

Jordan's Blue Economy Strategy (BES) sets out a comprehensive national framework for transforming the Gulf of Aqaba into a resilient, competitive, and sustainable engine of economic growth. Despite having only 27 km of coastline, Jordan possesses unique natural assets, strategic geographic positioning, and institutional strengths that can support a thriving Blue Economy. The strategy recognizes that the country's limited coastal space must be managed with exceptional care, ensuring that every hectare delivers maximum economic, social, and environmental value.

The Gulf of Aqaba is home to some of the world's most climate-resilient coral reefs with over 150 kinds of corals and over 500 species of fish, a deep-water port that serves as Jordan's maritime lifeline, and a rapidly growing tourism sector. These assets, combined with Jordan's stability, governance capacity, and commitment to climate action, position the country to become a regional leader in sustainable coastal development.

However, the Blue Economy also faces significant challenges. Climate change threatens marine ecosystems and coastal infrastructure. Rapid development pressures risk degrading natural habitats. Fisheries remain small and under-regulated. Aquaculture is underdeveloped. Port infrastructure requires modernization to remain competitive. Coastal communities face limited economic opportunities, and youth unemployment remains high.

This strategy responds to these challenges by establishing a long-term, integrated approach that balances economic growth with environmental protection and climate resilience. It aligns with Jordan's national development priorities, including *Vision 2025, the Economic Modernization Vision (EMV)*, and the National Climate Change Policy. It also reflects global best-practices and international frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement, and Union for the Mediterranean.

The strategy is built on the principle that economic prosperity and environmental stewardship are mutually reinforcing. Healthy ecosystems support tourism and fisheries. Modern ports and logistics attract investment. Renewable energy reduces emissions and operational costs. Innovation and skills development create new opportunities for young people. Climate-resilient infrastructure protects communities and assets.

The Blue Economy is not a single sector—it is a system. This strategy therefore adopts a systems approach, integrating *eight strategic pillars* supported by cross-cutting enablers, a clear implementation plan, and a strong monitoring and evaluation framework.

The result is a roadmap for transforming Jordan's coastline into a model of sustainable development, economic diversification, and climate resilience.

## 2. The need and opportunity for a National Blue Economy Strategy in Jordan

Jordan's unique geographic, economic, and environmental context creates both a compelling need and a strategic opportunity to adopt a comprehensive National Blue Economy Strategy. Although the country possesses only 27 kilometers of coastline along the Gulf of Aqaba, this narrow coastal strip plays an outsized role in national development. It is the country's sole maritime outlet, a gateway for international trade, a hub for tourism and investment, and home to globally significant marine ecosystems. The Gulf of Aqaba is not simply a coastal zone; it is a national asset of strategic, economic, and ecological importance.

The coastline hosts twelve seaports, including specialized terminals for containers, phosphates, grain, and passengers. These ports handle more than 80 percent of Jordan's imports and exports, making Aqaba indispensable for national supply chains and regional connectivity. The port system is also a major employer and a driver of economic activity in southern Jordan. As global trade patterns evolve and regional logistics corridors expand, Aqaba's role as a maritime gateway will only grow in importance.

Tourism is another pillar of Aqaba's economy. The city attracts domestic and international visitors drawn to its beaches, warm climate, and world-class diving and heritage sites such as Wadi Rum. The Gulf of Aqaba's coral reefs — among the most thermally resilient in the world — are a unique natural asset that positions Jordan as a potential global leader in climate-resilient marine tourism and research. These reefs support a vibrant diving industry, contribute to coastal protection, and provide essential habitat for marine biodiversity.

Yet these opportunities are accompanied by significant challenges. Jordan's coastal zone is under increasing pressure from rapid urbanization, expanding port operations, growing tourism demand, and climate change. Pollution from land-based sources, including wastewater, solid waste, and industrial effluents, threatens marine ecosystems. Coastal development, if not carefully managed, can degrade habitats, increase erosion, and reduce the resilience of coral reefs. Climate change poses additional risks, including rising sea temperatures, extreme weather events, and potential impacts on water security.

These pressures expose a structural challenge: Jordan's marine and coastal governance is fragmented across multiple institutions, each with partial mandates. ASEZA plays a central role in managing the Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZ), while national ministries retain authority over specific sectors. Municipalities and local authorities also play important roles in service delivery and community engagement. Without a unified national framework, coordination gaps emerge, leading to inefficiencies, overlapping mandates, and missed opportunities for investment and innovation.

The National Blue Economy Strategy addresses these challenges by providing a coherent, integrated framework for sustainable marine and coastal development. It establishes a shared national vision, clarifies institutional roles, and strengthens coordination across government. It aligns marine and coastal policies with the Economic Modernization Vision (EMV), the ASEZA Strategic Plan, and Jordan's international commitments under the SDGs, the Union for the Mediterranean, and regional Red Sea cooperation mechanisms.

The strategy also provides a platform for mobilizing Blue Finance, including climate funds, development finance, and private investment. Global interest in sustainable blue investments is rising, with new instruments such as blue bonds, blended finance, and impact investment gaining traction. Jordan's unique assets — its coral reefs, its strategic location, its stable governance, and its emerging innovation ecosystem — position the country to attract such investment.

The opportunity extends beyond economic growth. The Gulf of Aqaba's coral reefs are a rare climate refuge, capable of withstanding temperature increases that would devastate reefs elsewhere. This positions Jordan as a potential global leader in climate-resilient marine science, offering opportunities for research partnerships, innovation, and international visibility. Protecting these ecosystems is not only an environmental imperative but also an economic and scientific opportunity.

A national strategy is therefore essential for safeguarding Jordan's marine and coastal assets while unlocking their full economic, environmental, and social potential. It provides the foundation for sustainable growth, climate resilience, and regional leadership. It ensures that development in Aqaba is guided by long-term planning, environmental stewardship, and inclusive prosperity. And it positions Jordan to benefit from emerging global trends in sustainable blue growth, including low-carbon shipping, advanced aquaculture, blue biotechnology, and ocean-based renewable energy. In short, the need for a National Blue Economy Strategy is clear — and the opportunity is significant. By acting now, Jordan can secure the long-term health of its marine ecosystems, strengthen its economic competitiveness, and build a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future for generations to come.

### 3. Blue Economy definition for Jordan

Developing a *national definition* of the Blue Economy is a foundational step in establishing a coherent and widely accepted framework for policy development, investment planning, and stakeholder engagement. Because the Blue Economy is a broad and evolving concept, countries must tailor their definitions to reflect their geographic realities, institutional structures, and development priorities. For Jordan, this process is particularly important given the country's unique coastal geography, its reliance on the Gulf of Aqaba as a strategic economic and environmental asset, and the central role of ASEZA in coastal governance.

The concept of the Blue Economy has evolved significantly over the past decade, becoming a central pillar of sustainable development discourse at global, regional, and national levels. Yet despite its growing prominence, there is no single, universally accepted definition. Instead, the term has been shaped by the perspectives of international organizations, regional bodies, and national governments, each adapting it to their own geographic realities, economic priorities, and policy objectives. This diversity is not a weakness; it reflects the flexibility of the concept and its ability to accommodate a wide range of contexts — including countries like Jordan, whose coastline is limited but strategically vital.

At its core, the Blue Economy refers to sustainable use, stewardship, and governance of ocean and coastal resources to promote economic growth, improved livelihoods, social inclusion, and

long-term ecosystem health. It recognizes that marine and coastal ecosystems are not only sources of economic value but also providers of essential environmental services such as biodiversity support, carbon sequestration, and coastal protection. These services underpin the resilience of coastal communities and economies, particularly in the face of climate change.

Common elements across definition: Despite their differences, global definitions converge around several key principles which provide a foundation for Jordan's national definition and strategic approach.

- **Sustainability:** Economic activities must not compromise the health and resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems.
- **Economic value:** The Blue Economy encompasses both established sectors (ports, tourism, fisheries) and emerging industries (biotechnology, renewable energy).
- **Livelihoods and equity:** The Blue Economy must support job creation, community well-being, and inclusive development.
- **Ecosystem services and natural capital:** Marine ecosystems provide essential services that must be valued and protected.
- **Climate resilience:** The Blue Economy must strengthen resilience to climate change, particularly in vulnerable coastal zones.
- **Innovation and technology:** New technologies and business models are essential for sustainable growth.
- **Good governance:** Effective institutions, policies, and coordination mechanisms are critical for managing complex marine systems.

Jordan's geographic and institutional context: For Jordan, the Blue Economy must reflect the country's unique geographic reality: a short but strategically vital coastline, a water-scarce environment, and a governance system in which ASEZA plays a central role. The Gulf of Aqaba is the country's only maritime outlet, supporting critical trade flows, tourism, and marine biodiversity. Its coral reefs are globally significant, offering opportunities for scientific research, eco-tourism, and climate resilience. Jordan's institutional landscape is complex, with responsibilities for marine and coastal governance distributed across multiple ministries and authorities. This complexity underscores the need for a clear, nationally relevant definition that provides a common understanding among stakeholders and guides policy development.

Need for a Jordan-specific definition: A clear and nationally relevant definition is essential for establishing a shared understanding among stakeholders, guiding policy development, and ensuring coherence across sectors. It must reflect Jordan's geographic reality, institutional architecture, environmental priorities, and development aspirations. It must also be flexible enough to accommodate emerging sectors and evolving global trends.

*“The Blue Economy in Jordan refers to the sustainable development, governance, and protection of the Gulf of Aqaba’s marine and coastal resources to drive economic growth, create quality, jobs enhance community well-being, strengthen climate resilience, and preserve the health of Red Sea ecosystems.”*

#### 4. Mandate and sectoral scope for Jordan's Blue Economy

Jordan's Blue Economy *mandate* must reflect the country's unique geographic, economic, and institutional realities. The Gulf of Aqaba is the country's only maritime outlet, a hub for tourism and logistics, and home to globally significant coral reefs. ASEZA plays a central role in coastal governance, while national ministries retain authority over environment, transport, fisheries, water, and tourism. The mandate must therefore balance economic development, environmental protection, and social inclusion.

*"To sustainably develop, govern, and protect the Gulf of Aqaba's marine and coastal resources in order to drive economic growth, enhance community well-being, strengthen climate resilience, and preserve the health of Red Sea ecosystems."*

This mandate reflects several strategic priorities:

- **Economic diversification** through sustainable tourism, logistics, aquaculture, and emerging blue sectors.
- **Environmental stewardship** to protect coral reefs and marine biodiversity.
- **Climate resilience** to safeguard coastal infrastructure and ecosystems.
- **Social inclusion** to ensure that local communities benefit from Blue Economy activities.
- **Innovation and research** to position Jordan as a regional leader in marine science.

**Sectoral Scope for Jordan:** Jordan's Blue Economy includes both established and emerging sectors.

##### Established Sectors

- **Ports and Maritime Transport:** Aqaba's port system is central to national supply chains and regional trade. The Blue Economy Strategy supports modernization, digitalization, and low-carbon shipping.
- **Coastal and Marine Tourism:** Tourism is a major source of employment and revenue. The strategy promotes sustainable, high-value tourism that protects natural assets.
- **Fisheries:** Although small, the fisheries sector supports local livelihoods. The strategy promotes sustainable management and improved monitoring.
- **Aquaculture:** Aquaculture is an emerging sector with significant potential. The strategy supports environmentally responsible development.
- **Marine Environmental Protection:** Protecting coral reefs and marine biodiversity is essential for sustaining tourism, fisheries, and ecosystem services.

##### Emerging Sectors

- **Blue Biotechnology:** Jordan's coral reefs offer opportunities for research and innovation in pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and bio-materials.
- **Renewable Marine Energy:** While large-scale deployment is limited, pilot projects in offshore solar and wave energy are possible.

- **Marine Research and Innovation:** Jordan can become a regional leader in climate-resilient marine science.

The strategy is reinforced by essential supporting systems that enable long-term sustainability and effective implementation, including (i) skills development to build a capable workforce, (ii) digitalization to modernize services and data management, (iii) climate adaptation measures to strengthen resilience, and spatial planning tools such as (iv) marine spatial planning (MSP) and (v) integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) to ensure coordinated, science-based use of coastal and marine resources.

These sectors and supporting systems are reorganized under eight pillars that form the heart of the Blue Economy strategy:

- ❖ *Pillar 0 – Governance & Policy Coherence*
- ❖ *Pillar 1 – Sustainable Tourism & Recreation*
- ❖ *Pillar 2 – Sustainable Fisheries & Aquaculture*
- ❖ *Pillar 3 – Ports, Maritime Transport & Logistics*
- ❖ *Pillar 4 – Marine Renewable Energy*
- ❖ *Pillar 5 – Marine Environmental Protection & Climate Resilience*
- ❖ *Pillar 6 – Blue Innovation, Research & Skills*
- ❖ *Pillar 7 – Sustainable Coastal Infrastructure & Resilient Urban Development*

## 5. Eight pillars for coordinated and efficient implementation

The Blue Economy is not a single sector. It is an integrated system of activities — tourism, fisheries, aquaculture, ports, logistics, renewable energy, environmental protection, innovation, and coastal development — that must work together to generate sustainable growth.

This Strategy therefore organizes Jordan's priorities into **eight mutually reinforcing pillars**, each addressing a critical dimension of coastal and marine development. Together, they form a **coherent national framework** that balances economic opportunity with environmental protection, social inclusion, and climate resilience.

*Pillar 0 – Governance & Policy Coherence* establishes the institutional architecture, regulatory frameworks, and decision-making processes that enable all other pillars to function as a coordinated system. It strengthens national–local alignment, modernizes regulations, integrates climate and environmental data, and ensures transparent, efficient, and science-based governance.

*Pillar 1 – Sustainable Tourism & Recreation* positions Aqaba as a world-class, environmentally responsible destination. It focuses on high-quality visitor experiences, sustainable tourism infrastructure, cultural heritage, and the protection of natural assets that underpin the tourism economy.

*Pillar 2 – Sustainable Fisheries & Aquaculture* supports the recovery of fish stocks, modernizes fisheries management, and expands sustainable aquaculture systems — including offshore and innovative technologies — to enhance food security and economic opportunity.

*Pillar 3 – Ports, Maritime Transport & Logistics* strengthens Aqaba’s role as a regional logistics hub by improving port efficiency, safety, digitalization, and environmental performance, while ensuring compatibility with MSP, ICZM, and climate-resilient coastal planning.

*Pillar 4 – Marine Renewable Energy* accelerates the deployment of floating solar, offshore wind micro-turbines, wave-energy pilots, and green hydrogen, reducing emissions and powering coastal industries with clean, reliable energy.

*Pillar 5 – Marine Environmental Protection & Climate Resilience* safeguards Jordan’s globally significant coral reefs, biodiversity, and marine habitats. It strengthens pollution control, expands Marine Protected Areas, deploys nature-based solutions, and builds resilience to climate change.

*Pillar 6 – Blue Innovation, Research & Skills* develops the knowledge, technology, and human capital required for a future-ready Blue Economy. It establishes the Aqaba Blue Innovation Hub (Blue Economy Center for Innovation), strengthens research networks, supports startups, and builds a skilled workforce aligned with industry needs.

*Pillar 7 – Sustainable Coastal Infrastructure & Resilient Urban Development* guides how land and coastal spaces are planned and developed. It integrates MSP and ICZM, promotes climate-resilient infrastructure, expands public access, modernizes utilities, and supports sustainable, inclusive urban growth.

Together, these eight pillars form a comprehensive national framework for transforming Jordan’s coastline into a resilient, competitive, and environmentally responsible Blue Economy. The pillar implementation tables (part II of the NBE strategy) are designed to be practical, investment-ready, and adaptable — enabling Jordan to respond to emerging opportunities, manage risks, and ensure that coastal development delivers long-term value for communities, ecosystems, and the national economy.

Jordan’s Blue Economy is not just a sectoral plan. It is a national commitment to stewarding one of the country’s most important assets — the Gulf of Aqaba — with vision, responsibility, and ambition. The next decade will determine whether this coastline becomes a model of sustainable development for the region. This pillar approach provides the roadmap to get there.

## 6. Institutional context for Blue Economy in Jordan

Jordan’s institutional landscape for marine and coastal governance is characterized by a combination of national ministries, specialized authorities, and local institutions. Understanding this landscape is essential for designing a governance framework that is both effective and realistic.

*The Central Role of ASEZA:* The Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) is the most influential institution in Jordan’s coastal governance system. Established in 2001, ASEZA is responsible for economic development, environmental protection, and regulatory oversight within the ASEZ (Aqaba Special Economic Zone). It manages ports, tourism, coastal development, and environmental monitoring. ASEZA’s broad mandate and operational capacity make it a natural anchor for the Blue Economy.

ASEZA's strengths include a clear legal mandate, strong administrative capacity, experience in integrated coastal management, a close relationship with the private sector and a proven track record of implementing large-scale development projects. However, ASEZA's authority is geographically limited to the ASEZ, while some Blue Economy sectors fall under national ministries.

**National Ministries and agencies:** Several national ministries have responsibilities relevant to the Blue Economy. These ministries play essential roles but often operate independently, leading to fragmented decision-making.

- The **Ministry of Environment** oversees environmental policy, biodiversity protection, and compliance with international agreements.
- The **Ministry of Transport** regulates maritime transport, port operations, and shipping safety.
- The **Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities** promotes tourism development and regulates tourism activities.
- The **Ministry of Agriculture**, through its fisheries department, manages fisheries resources and aquaculture development.
- The **Ministry of Water and Irrigation** oversees water policy, including desalination and wastewater management.
- The **Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation** coordinates development finance and international partnerships.
- The **Ministry of Investment** promotes private-sector investment and facilitates business development.

**Local authorities and municipalities:** Local authorities support implementation at the community level, including waste management, tourism services, and community engagement. They play a key role in promoting inclusive development and ensuring that local communities benefit from Blue Economy activities.

**Academia and research institutions:** Jordan hosts strong marine research institutions, including the Marine Science Station in Aqaba. Universities and research centers contribute scientific expertise, conduct environmental monitoring, and support innovation. Their role is essential for developing emerging blue sectors such as aquaculture, blue biotechnology, and marine renewable energy.

**Private sector:** The private sector is a central driver of investment, innovation, and job creation. It includes port operators, tourism companies, fishermen, diving centers, aquaculture enterprises, logistics firms, and renewable energy developers. Private-sector engagement is essential for scaling up Blue Economy activities.

**Civil society** organizations support community engagement, environmental protection, and social inclusion. They play a key role in awareness-raising, monitoring, and advocacy.

## 7. Governing structures for the Blue Economy in Jordan

Effective governance is the backbone of any successful Blue Economy strategy. Jordan's governance landscape is unique. ASEZA plays a central role in managing ports, tourism, environmental protection, and coastal development within the ASEZ. National ministries retain authority over specific sectors. Municipalities and local authorities support implementation at the community level. This complexity creates challenges for coordination, policy coherence, and investment planning. *Pillar 0 – Governance & Policy Coherence* will respond to these challenges.

A successful governance framework for Jordan must therefore:

- Clarify institutional roles and responsibilities to reduce overlap and improve efficiency.
- Strengthen coordination mechanisms across ministries, ASEZA, and local authorities.
- Ensure alignment with national strategies, including the Economic Modernization Vision.
- Promote stakeholder engagement, including the private sector, academia, and civil society.
- Support evidence-based decision-making through data sharing, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Enable innovation and flexibility, allowing the governance system to adapt to emerging opportunities and challenges.

## 8. Jordan-specific governance framework for the Blue Economy

Jordan's governance framework for the Blue Economy must reflect the country's unique institutional architecture, geographic constraints, and development priorities. The proposed framework is built around four components:

**National Blue Economy Council or Team:** The National Blue Economy council / team will provide high-level political leadership and strategic direction. Chaired at ministerial level, the council will bring together key ministries, ASEZA, and other national institutions to ensure policy coherence, approve national strategies, and oversee financing and investment. The council will serve as the primary decision-making body for the Blue Economy, ensuring alignment with the Economic Modernization Vision and other national strategies.

**Technical Secretariat (hosted by ASEZA):** The technical secretariat will provide technical coordination, data management, and operational support. It will be responsible for preparing policy proposals, coordinating sectoral working groups, managing stakeholder engagement, and monitoring progress. The secretariat will serve as the central point of contact for national and international partners.

**Blue Economy Hub/Centre for Innovation in Aqaba:** The Blue Economy Centre for Innovation will function as a national innovation and coordination hub. It will support research and development, promote private-sector engagement, facilitate access to blue finance, and provide training and capacity-building programs. The Centre could also play a key role in implementing marine spatial planning, integrated coastal zone management, and environmental monitoring.

**Sectoral Working Groups:** Sectoral working groups will bring together stakeholders from specific sectors — such as ports, tourism, fisheries, and environment — to coordinate policies, share information, and address sector-specific challenges. These working groups will support the

secretariat and provide technical input to the council.

## 9. Proposed Jordan Blue Economy governance mechanisms

A governance structure is only as effective as the mechanisms that enable it to function. While institutions define roles and responsibilities, governance mechanisms determine how coordination, decision-making, monitoring, and accountability actually occur in practice. For Jordan, the challenge is not only to establish new structures but to ensure that these structures are supported by processes that promote transparency, collaboration, and evidence-based decision-making.

**Annual National Blue Economy Forum** The Annual National Blue Economy Forum will serve as the country's primary platform for dialogue, coordination, and strategic review. Bringing together government officials, private-sector leaders, researchers, civil society organizations, and international partners, the Forum will: (i) review progress on strategy implementation, (ii) identify emerging challenges and opportunities, (iii) share best practices and innovations, (iv) strengthen partnerships and investment pipelines and (v) provide a space for public accountability. This mechanism ensures that the Blue Economy remains a living, adaptive agenda rather than a static document.

**National Blue Economy dashboard**: A digital dashboard will provide real-time data on key indicators, including economic performance, environmental health, social outcomes, and investment flows. The dashboard will be managed by the Technical Secretariat and updated regularly in collaboration with ministries, ASEZA, research institutions, and private-sector partners. The dashboard will (i) support evidence-based decision-making, (ii) enhance transparency and public trust, (iii) enable early detection of risks and (iv) facilitate reporting to national and international bodies. This mechanism aligns with global best practices in digital governance and open data.

**Sectoral coordination platforms**: Sectoral platforms will bring together stakeholders from specific sectors — such as ports, tourism, fisheries, aquaculture, environment, and innovation — to coordinate policies, share information, and address sector-specific challenges. These platforms will (i) provide technical input to the National Blue Economy Council, (ii) support the development of sectoral action plans, (iii) facilitate public–private dialogue and (iii) promote cross-sectoral synergies. For example, a tourism–environment platform could coordinate coral reef protection with sustainable tourism development.

**Environmental and social safeguards** are essential for ensuring that Blue Economy activities are conducted in a sustainable and socially responsible manner. These safeguards will include (i) environmental impact assessments (EIAs), (ii) social impact assessments (SIAs), (iii) climate risk screening, (iv) community consultation requirements and (v) compliance monitoring and enforcement. Such mechanisms protect ecosystems, reduce risks, and ensure that development benefits local communities.

**Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)** provide a framework for managing competing uses of coastal zones. It integrates environmental, social, and economic considerations into a single

planning process. For Jordan, ICZM will (i) coordinate land–sea interactions, (ii) guide coastal development, (iii) protect sensitive habitats, (iv) reduce conflicts between sectors and (v) support climate adaptation. ASEZA will lead ICZM implementation within the ASEZ, in coordination with national ministries.

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is a forward-looking tool that allocates marine space to different uses based on sustainability criteria. It is essential for balancing tourism, shipping, conservation, aquaculture, and research. MSP will (i) identify suitable areas for development, (ii) protect ecologically sensitive zones, (iii) reduce user conflicts, (iv) support investment planning and (v) enhance climate resilience.

## 10. Policy and legislative context for Blue Economy in Jordan

Jordan's Blue Economy is supported by a complex policy and legislative landscape that spans national strategies, sectoral policies, and environmental regulations. Understanding this landscape is essential for identifying gaps, aligning priorities, and ensuring coherence.

### National Strategies:

The Economic Modernization Vision (EMV) provides a comprehensive framework for economic diversification, innovation, and sustainable development. The Blue Economy contributes directly to EMV priorities in tourism, logistics, green growth, innovation, and human capital.

The National Climate Change Policy and National Adaptation Plan emphasize climate resilience, which is essential for protecting coastal infrastructure and ecosystems.

The National Water Strategy addresses water scarcity, desalination, and wastewater management - all of which have implications for coastal governance.

ASEZA Strategic Framework: ASEZA's strategic plans and the ASEZ Urban Development Master Plan 2024–2040 guide development within the Aqaba Special Economic Zone. These plans emphasize sustainable tourism, port modernization, environmental protection, urban development and investment promotion.

Environmental Legislation: Jordan's Environmental Protection Law provides a legal framework for environmental management, including pollution control, biodiversity protection, and environmental impact assessments. Additional regulations govern marine pollution, waste management, protected areas and environmental monitoring. These laws support the implementation of ICZM and MSP

Fisheries and Aquaculture Regulations: Fisheries are regulated by the Ministry of Agriculture, but enforcement and monitoring remain limited. Aquaculture regulations are emerging but require modernization to support sustainable development.

Maritime Transport Legislation: Maritime transport is governed by laws and regulations covering port operations, shipping safety, maritime security, ballast water management, hazardous materials.

## 11. Socio-economic benefits of a Blue Economy strategy

A well-designed Blue Economy Strategy can generate significant socio-economic benefits. Global evidence shows that sustainable marine and coastal development can increase GDP contribution and create high-quality jobs. The BES can further attract foreign investment, strengthen community resilience and enhance environmental protection.

**Economic growth and diversification** The Blue Economy offers opportunities to diversify Jordan's economy beyond traditional sectors. Sustainable tourism, port modernization, aquaculture, blue biotechnology, and marine research can generate new revenue streams and reduce economic vulnerability.

**Job creation and skills development** Blue Economy sectors create jobs across skill levels, from tourism and port operations to research and innovation. Training programs can equip young Jordanians with the skills needed for emerging blue industries.

**Community well-being**: Coastal communities benefit from improved livelihoods, enhanced services, and greater resilience. Community-based tourism, sustainable fisheries, and environmental stewardship strengthen social cohesion.

**Environmental protection**: Healthy ecosystems support tourism, fisheries, and coastal protection. Coral reefs, in particular, provide essential ecosystem services and contribute to climate resilience.

**Investment and innovation**: The Blue Economy attracts investment in infrastructure, technology, and research. Blue finance instruments — such as blue bonds and blended finance — can mobilize additional resources.

**Climate resilience**: Climate-resilient infrastructure, ecosystem restoration, and sustainable resource management reduce vulnerability to climate change and protect national assets.

## 12. Socio-Economic benefits for Jordan

Jordan stands to gain significantly from the implementation of a Blue Economy Strategy. The Gulf of Aqaba's unique assets — its coral reefs, its strategic location, its stable governance, and its emerging innovation ecosystem — position the country to capture new opportunities.

**Tourism and hospitality**: Sustainable tourism can increase revenue, extend visitor stays, and enhance Jordan's global brand. High-value tourism products — such as diving, eco-tourism, and cultural experiences — can attract new markets.

**Ports and maritime transport**: Modernizing ports and adopting low-carbon shipping technologies can improve efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance competitiveness. Aqaba can become a regional logistics hub.

**Fisheries and aquaculture**: Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture can support food security, create jobs, and reduce reliance on imports. Innovation in aquaculture can position Jordan as a regional leader.

Marine research and innovation: Jordan's coral reefs offer unique opportunities for scientific research. Partnerships with international institutions can attract funding, talent, and visibility.

Environmental protection: Protecting coral reefs and marine biodiversity enhances tourism, supports fisheries, and strengthens climate resilience.

Community development: Blue Economy activities can improve livelihoods, strengthen social cohesion, and support inclusive development in coastal communities.

### 13. Cost–benefit narrative: comparing action vs. inaction

A compelling cost–benefit narrative is essential for demonstrating why Jordan must invest in a National Blue Economy Strategy now. The comparison between action and inaction is stark: proactive investment in sustainable marine and coastal development yields long-term economic, environmental, and social benefits, while inaction carries escalating costs that threaten national assets, livelihoods, and future opportunities.

*The cost of inaction:* If Jordan does not adopt a coordinated Blue Economy Strategy, several risks will intensify:

Environmental degradation: Without integrated coastal management, coral reefs — among the most climate-resilient in the world — face increasing threats from pollution, sedimentation, unregulated tourism, and coastal development. Degradation of these ecosystems would result in the loss of biodiversity, reduced coastal protection, and diminished tourism appeal.

Economic losses: Tourism revenues would decline as environmental quality deteriorates. Port inefficiencies would increase operational costs and reduce competitiveness. Opportunities in aquaculture, blue biotechnology, and marine research would remain unrealized.

Increased vulnerability to climate change: Rising sea temperatures, extreme weather events, and coastal erosion pose significant risks to infrastructure, ecosystems, and communities. Without climate-resilient planning, the costs of adaptation and disaster response will escalate.

Fragmented governance and inefficiency: Overlapping mandates and weak coordination lead to inefficiencies, duplication of efforts, and missed opportunities for investment. Fragmentation also undermines compliance with international commitments.

Lost investment opportunities: Global interest in blue finance is rising, but investors require clear strategies, governance frameworks, and bankable projects. Without a national strategy, Jordan risks missing out on grants, loans, and private investment.

*The benefits of action:* A coordinated Blue Economy Strategy generates substantial benefits:

Economic growth and diversification: Sustainable tourism, port modernization, aquaculture, and emerging blue sectors can increase GDP, create jobs, and diversify the economy. Jordan can position itself as a regional hub for sustainable coastal development and marine research.

Environmental protection and ecosystem resilience: Healthy ecosystems support tourism, fisheries, and coastal protection. Coral reef conservation enhances climate resilience and

strengthens Jordan's global scientific profile.

*Improved governance and efficiency:* A national governance framework clarifies roles, strengthens coordination, and improves policy coherence. This leads to more efficient use of resources and better outcomes.

*Enhanced climate resilience:* Climate-resilient infrastructure, ecosystem restoration, and integrated planning reduce vulnerability and protect national assets.

*Increased Investment and Innovation:* A clear strategy attracts investment in infrastructure, technology, and research. Blue finance instruments — such as blue bonds and blended finance — can mobilize additional resources.

*The strategic imperative:* The cost–benefit analysis is unequivocal: the benefits of action far outweigh the costs. A National Blue Economy Strategy is not only a development opportunity but a necessity for safeguarding Jordan's marine and coastal assets, strengthening economic competitiveness, and building a resilient future.

#### 14. Economic valuation of Jordan's marine and coastal assets

Understanding the economic value of marine and coastal assets is essential for informed decision-making, investment planning, and policy development. Jordan's Gulf of Aqaba hosts ecosystems and infrastructure that generate significant economic, social, and environmental benefits, yet these assets are often undervalued or overlooked in traditional economic analyses.

*The importance of natural capital accounting:* Natural capital accounting provides a framework for quantifying the economic value of ecosystems and the services they provide. For Jordan, this includes coral reefs, beaches and coastal landscapes, marine biodiversity, coastal protection services, tourism and recreation, fisheries and aquaculture, and marine research potential. Valuing these assets helps policymakers understand trade-offs, prioritize investments, and justify conservation measures.

*Coral reefs as economic assets:* Jordan's coral reefs are among the most thermally resilient in the world. They support diving and snorkeling tourism, coastal protection, biodiversity and ecosystem services as well as scientific research. Studies from comparable regions show that coral reefs can generate millions of dollars annually in tourism revenue alone, while their replacement value in terms of coastal protection is even higher.

*Tourism and recreation:* Tourism is a major contributor to Jordan's economy. The Gulf of Aqaba's beaches, reefs, and recreational activities attract domestic and international visitors. Valuation tools such as travel cost analysis and willingness-to-pay surveys can quantify the economic benefits of tourism and recreation.

*Fisheries and Aquaculture:* While small, the fisheries sector supports local livelihoods and aquaculture has significant potential for expansion. Valuation of fish stocks and aquaculture potential supports sustainable management and investment planning.

*Ports and Maritime Transport:* Aqaba's port system is a critical national asset. Valuation of port

infrastructure, logistics services, and supply chain benefits supports investment decisions and modernization efforts.

*Ecosystem Services:* Marine and coastal ecosystems provide essential services, including carbon sequestration, water filtration, habitat provision and coastal protection. Valuing these services strengthens conservation and climate-resilience planning.

Economic valuation matters because it strengthens the case for conservation, supports blue-finance mobilization, and informs cost-benefit decisions. By enhancing policy coherence and guiding sustainable development choices, it ensures that marine and coastal resources are managed wisely.

Jordan's Blue Economy Strategy includes a commitment to developing a national natural capital accounting system for marine and coastal assets.

## 15. Economic and environmental regulation and incentives

Regulation and incentives are essential tools for guiding sustainable development. Jordan's Blue Economy Strategy adopts a balanced approach that integrates regulatory measures with economic incentives to promote responsible practices across all sectors of the marine and coastal economy.

*Environmental regulations* will play a central role in protecting coral reefs and marine biodiversity, reducing pollution from land-based sources, ensuring sustainable coastal development, strengthening environmental impact assessments, and improving compliance and enforcement. These measures align with international standards and directly support the implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP).

*Economic incentives* will complement regulatory measures by encouraging sustainable practices. These include tax incentives for low-carbon shipping, grants for sustainable tourism certification, subsidies for environmentally responsible aquaculture, incentives for waste-to-value initiatives, and targeted support for blue innovation and research. Together, these tools stimulate private-sector investment and foster a culture of innovation.

*Regulatory reforms* will further strengthen the enabling environment for the blue economy. Key priorities include modernizing fisheries regulations, updating maritime transport legislation, enhancing environmental monitoring, and improving data sharing and transparency. These reforms reinforce sustainable development objectives and align Jordan's regulatory frameworks with international commitments.

A balanced approach to regulation and incentives ensures that environmental protection is enforced, economic development is supported, innovation is encouraged, compliance is achievable, and investment remains attractive. This integrated framework creates a regulatory environment that supports sustainable growth while safeguarding Jordan's marine and coastal assets.

## 16. Funding mechanisms and financing opportunities for the Blue Economy in Jordan

Financing is a central pillar of Jordan's Blue Economy, enabling the country to translate its strategic vision into tangible outcomes across sustainable tourism, port modernization, ecosystem protection, innovation, and climate resilience. Achieving these ambitions requires a diversified and well-structured financing architecture that mobilizes national public resources while leveraging international development finance, private investment, and emerging blue finance instruments.

National budget allocations will continue to underpin essential public functions such as environmental monitoring, MSP and ICZM, wastewater treatment, coastal protection, and institutional strengthening, but public funds alone are insufficient. Jordan must therefore use public financing strategically to unlock concessional loans, guarantees, and technical assistance from development partners including UNDP, the World Bank, the EU, USAID, GIZ, and regional development banks, all of which can support climate adaptation, biodiversity protection, sustainable tourism, waste management, and research and innovation.

International development finance: development finance institutions (DFIs) can also provide concessional loans, guarantees, and technical assistance to de-risk private investment.

At the same time, Jordan is well positioned to tap into the rapidly expanding field of blue finance through instruments such as blue bonds, blended finance structures, impact investment, and green or blue credit lines that incentivize sustainable tourism, low-carbon port operations, aquaculture, and renewable marine energy:

- Blue Bonds: Jordan could issue sovereign or sub-sovereign blue bonds to finance conservation, sustainable tourism, and climate-resilient infrastructure.
- Blended Finance: Combining public, philanthropic, and private capital can reduce risk and attract investment in sectors such as aquaculture, renewable marine energy, and waste-to-value.
- Impact Investment: Investors increasingly seek projects with measurable environmental and social outcomes. Jordan's coral reefs and sustainable tourism potential are strong candidates.
- Green/Blue Credit Lines: Banks can offer preferential loans for sustainable tourism, low-carbon shipping, and environmental technologies

The private sector will play a decisive role, with opportunities spanning eco-tourism, diving and marine recreation, aquaculture, logistics, digitalization, renewable energy pilots, and blue biotechnology. To attract this investment, Jordan must ensure regulatory clarity, streamlined permitting, and strong investment facilitation through ASEZA and the Ministry of Investment.

Public-private partnerships will be essential for delivering large-scale infrastructure such as wastewater treatment, coastal protection, port upgrades, and renewable energy pilots, building on Jordan's established PPP framework.

The Blue Economy Centre for Innovation in Aqaba will further accelerate investment by preparing

bankable projects, conducting feasibility studies, facilitating investor matchmaking, and mobilizing blue finance while supporting startups and SMEs.

Ultimately, financing is not a technical afterthought but a strategic enabler: without adequate and diversified funding, even the strongest policy frameworks cannot deliver impact. A robust financing ecosystem ensures that Jordan can protect its marine assets, modernize its coastal economy, strengthen climate resilience, and generate inclusive, sustainable growth for communities along the Gulf of Aqaba.

## 17. Cross-cutting enablers

The strategic pillars of Jordan's Blue Economy cannot succeed in isolation. Their impact depends on a set of *cross-cutting enablers* that provide the financial, technological, environmental, institutional, and social foundations required for effective implementation. These enablers form the *horizontal infrastructure* of the Strategy, ensuring that blue-sector investments are coherent, inclusive, climate-resilient, digitally empowered, and financially viable. By addressing systemic constraints and strengthening national capabilities, they create the conditions for long-term, sustainable blue growth.

***Strategic rationale:*** Jordan's Blue Economy faces several structural challenges that cut across all sectors. Access to finance remains limited, particularly for early-stage or innovative projects. Data systems are fragmented, digital tools are underutilized, and skills shortages persist in key blue sectors. Climate resilience is not yet fully integrated into planning processes, and environmental safeguards require stronger enforcement. Small and medium enterprises often struggle to participate in blue-sector opportunities, while public-private partnerships remain underdeveloped. Institutional coordination is improving but still insufficient for the complexity of coastal and marine management. The cross-cutting enablers directly respond to these systemic issues, ensuring that the BE Strategy is not only visionary but also implementable.

***Blue Finance mobilization:*** Financing is one of the most critical enablers of the Blue Economy. Implementing the strategy will require a diversified mix of public funding, private capital, blended finance, and international climate resources.

***Blue Economy Investment Facility:*** A central component of the financing architecture will be the establishment of a Blue Economy Investment Facility. This institution will mobilize climate and development finance, structure blended finance instruments, and provide grants or concessional loans for early-stage initiatives. It will support feasibility studies, technical assistance, and risk-mitigation mechanisms to attract private investment into innovative sectors. The Facility will also coordinate donor contributions and partnerships, operating within a national institution such as the Blue House, the Blue Economy Centre for Innovation (BECI), or ASEZA, under strong governance and transparency standards.

***Blended Finance Instruments:*** To attract private capital into priority sectors—including sustainable tourism, aquaculture, renewable energy, and coastal infrastructure—Jordan will deploy a suite of blended finance tools. These include concessional loans, guarantees, equity co-investment, results-based financing, and the issuance of green and blue bonds. Impact investment funds will further support enterprises that deliver measurable environmental and

social benefits.

*Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs):* PPPs will play a major role in delivering large-scale blue-sector infrastructure. They will be used for port modernization, tourism facilities, aquaculture parks, renewable energy installations, waterfront development, and waste and wastewater systems. Clear regulatory frameworks, transparent procurement, and balanced risk-sharing models will be essential to attract credible investors and ensure long-term sustainability.

*Access to International Climate Finance:* Jordan will actively pursue international climate finance from mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility, Adaptation Fund, Blue Action Fund, multilateral development banks, and bilateral donors. Priority areas for funding include climate-resilient coastal infrastructure, renewable marine energy, coral reef protection, and sustainable tourism. These resources will complement domestic financing and help scale transformative projects.

*Digital Transformation:* Digital transformation is a core enabler of competitiveness, transparency, and sustainability across all blue sectors. Jordan will modernize its digital governance systems by developing integrated permitting and licensing platforms, GIS-based marine spatial planning and ICZM systems, environmental monitoring dashboards, digital enforcement tools, and open-data portals. These systems will streamline processes, reduce administrative burdens, and improve decision-making.

Sector-specific digital solutions will further enhance performance. In tourism, digital visitor management, smart ticketing, interpretation apps, and data analytics will improve visitor experiences and destination management. In ports and logistics, a Port Community System, vessel-traffic management, digital customs, and cargo-tracking tools will increase efficiency and reduce costs. Fisheries and aquaculture will benefit from digital catch documentation, vessel monitoring systems, and AI-enabled aquaculture management. Environmental agencies will deploy real-time water-quality sensors, coral-monitoring systems, and climate-risk mapping tools to strengthen ecosystem protection. As digital systems expand, Jordan will reinforce cybersecurity protocols, data-privacy regulations, and the resilience of digital infrastructure to ensure trust and continuity.

*Environmental Safeguards and Compliance:* Environmental protection is a prerequisite for sustainable blue growth. Jordan will strengthen its environmental safeguards by updating EIA guidelines for marine and coastal projects, requiring cumulative impact assessments, integrating climate-risk analysis, and enhancing public participation. Monitoring and enforcement capacities will be expanded to ensure compliance.

Pollution control and waste management will also be improved through upgraded wastewater treatment, reduced plastic pollution, better solid-waste management in tourism zones, stricter industrial discharge standards, and expanded port waste-reception facilities. A national marine environmental monitoring network will be established, including water-quality stations, coral-health monitoring sites, pollution-detection sensors, and satellite-based environmental surveillance. Data from this network will feed into public dashboards, strengthening transparency and accountability.

## 18. Linkages with Jordan's Economic Modernization Vision (EMV)

Jordan's Economic Modernization Vision (EMV) is the country's most ambitious development framework in decades, designed to unlock economic potential, stimulate private-sector growth, and generate one million jobs by 2033. The Blue Economy Strategy is conceived as a direct implementation mechanism for several EMV pillars, ensuring that coastal and marine development contributes meaningfully to national transformation. By aligning with the EMV, the Strategy strengthens policy coherence, enhances investment readiness, and positions Aqaba as a central driver of Jordan's future economy.

Tourism and hospitality are among the EMV's priority sectors, recognised for their capacity to generate high-value employment and diversify national income. The Blue Economy Strategy reinforces these ambitions by advancing sustainable coastal and marine tourism, improving environmental quality, and elevating visitor experiences. By promoting eco-tourism, diving, and cultural tourism, and by safeguarding coral reefs as strategic natural assets, the Strategy enhances Aqaba's competitiveness as a world-class destination and broadens Jordan's tourism offering.

Transport and logistics form another cornerstone of the EMV, with Aqaba's port system serving as the country's primary gateway to regional and global markets. The Blue Economy Strategy supports this agenda through port modernization, digitalization, and the promotion of low-carbon and energy-efficient shipping. Strengthened maritime safety, improved environmental compliance, and enhanced regional connectivity contribute to a more competitive logistics ecosystem, reducing operational costs and reinforcing Jordan's role as a regional trade hub.

Green growth and climate resilience are cross-cutting enablers within the EMV, and the Blue Economy Strategy operationalises these priorities along the coast. Through marine spatial planning, integrated coastal zone management, improved waste management, and the protection of coral reefs and marine biodiversity, the Strategy safeguards natural capital while reducing environmental pressures. Pilot initiatives in renewable marine energy and investments in climate-resilient infrastructure further strengthen Jordan's adaptation and mitigation efforts.

Innovation, research, and digital transformation are central to the EMV's vision of a modern, knowledge-driven economy. The Blue Economy Strategy contributes by establishing the Blue Economy Centre for Innovation as a national hub for innovation, research, and entrepreneurship. Digital tools for environmental monitoring, port management, and marine resource assessment enhance efficiency and transparency, while research in marine science, aquaculture, and biotechnology supports the emergence of new industries and high-skilled employment opportunities.

Human capital development is another EMV priority, and the Blue Economy Strategy plays a key role in preparing Jordan's workforce for emerging blue sectors. New training programs in marine sciences, aquaculture, tourism, and logistics, combined with strengthened vocational certification and youth engagement initiatives, ensure that Jordanian talent is equipped to participate in a modern, innovation-driven coastal economy.

*Investment promotion* is a final area of strong alignment. The EMV emphasises private-sector-led growth, and the Blue Economy Strategy supports this by creating a predictable regulatory environment, developing bankable projects, and promoting blue finance instruments. Through ASEZA and the Blue Economy Centre, investors gain clearer pathways to project development, enabling the Blue Economy to contribute significantly to national investment targets.

#### **Why EMV and BES linkages matter?**

Integrating the Blue Economy Strategy with the EMV ensures coherence across national frameworks, strengthens political and institutional support, and opens access to national and international financing. It embeds coastal and marine development within Jordan's long-term planning architecture, ensuring continuity, sustainability, and impact.

The eight Blue Economy pillars collectively reinforce the EMV by diversifying Jordan's economy, strengthening environmental resilience, modernizing infrastructure, and creating high-quality jobs. They translate EMV priorities into practical action across tourism, logistics, energy, water, innovation, and sustainability, while improving governance and quality of life.

Together, they position Aqaba — and Jordan — as a regional leader in sustainable, innovation-driven coastal development. The Blue Economy is therefore not a niche agenda; it is a core pillar of Jordan's economic future.

## Conclusion

Jordan's Blue Economy Strategy sets out a bold and forward-looking vision for transforming the Gulf of Aqaba into a model of sustainable development, economic diversification, and climate resilience. Although the country has only 27 kilometres of coastline, it possesses exceptional natural assets, strong institutions, and a strategic geographic position that together create the foundations for a thriving Blue Economy. This strategy articulates a clear vision for sustainable and inclusive growth, supported by eight strategic pillars, a set of cross-cutting enablers, a bankable investment pipeline, and a robust implementation plan.

The Blue Economy is not a single sector but an interconnected system. Its success depends on coordinated action, environmental stewardship, innovation, and meaningful community participation. Through this strategy, Jordan commits to protecting its globally significant coral reefs, creating high-value jobs for youth and women, strengthening food security through sustainable aquaculture, modernizing ports and logistics, expanding renewable energy, enhancing tourism competitiveness, and building climate-resilient infrastructure. It also aims to attract global research and innovation while ensuring that growth remains inclusive and equitable.

Designed to be dynamic and adaptive, the strategy will evolve as environmental, economic, and technological conditions change. Its Implementation Plan translates the vision into a sequenced and accountable programme running from 2025 to 2035. Governance is anchored in a Steering Committee, Secretariat, and technical working groups, with delivery structured across three phases: establishing foundations, scaling infrastructure and pilot projects, and achieving full transformation. Responsibilities are clearly defined across government, ASEZA, the private sector, research institutions, and local communities, supported by transparent monitoring systems, annual reporting, and mid-term and final evaluations.

Financing is central to successful implementation. The plan relies on a diversified mix of public investment, private capital, blended finance, climate funds, and development-partner support. Funding needs vary across flagship projects, sectoral programmes, and enabling systems, and will be met through national budget allocations, ASEZA revenues, PPPs, blue and green bonds, and international climate finance instruments such as the Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility, and Adaptation Fund. Multilateral development banks and bilateral donors will play a critical role in mobilizing large-scale capital. This diversified financing architecture ensures that the strategy is not only visionary but fully bankable and implementable through 2035.

The Gulf of Aqaba is a national treasure. With this strategy, Jordan commits to protecting it, investing in it, and unlocking its full potential for generations to come.