



BLUEINVEST DAY 2026 FLASH REPORT

OPPORTUNITIES
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DAY 1 | 02 March

96

Attendees

8th

Investor Capacity Building

INVESTOR CAPACITY BUILDING VIII

INNOVATIVE FINANCIAL VEHICLES TO SCALE UP OCEAN INVESTMENT

Speakers



Marie EKELAND
Founder & CEO, 2050
Opening speech



Martin POULSEN
Business Owner, Acacia
Sustainable Business
Advisors



Dirk LAMMERS-KÖTTER
Eurazeo, Sustainable
Maritime Infrastructure Fund



Ole NIXDORFF
CEO,
Deutsche Nachhaltigkeit



Jeroen KELDER
Partner, Infinity
Recycling



Christophe LEFEBVRE
Investment Director,
Atlante Marine



More than 80 participants attended the 8th session of the [BlueInvest Investor Capacity Building series](#) on the blue financing landscape. Discussions emphasised that the blue economy's financing gap is driven **less by a lack of opportunity than by misaligned risk, return and impact frameworks**. Scaling investment will require blended and co-investment models, better risk structuring, deeper corporate engagement, and clearer evidence of financial and impact performance.

The session was opened by **Marie Ekeland of 2050**, who highlighted that Europe's ocean is a strategic asset for sovereignty, resilience, and climate mitigation, yet remains critically underfinanced due to a failure to recognise its economic value and systemic importance.



She called for a forward-looking, science-based approach to 2050, **combining research, data, new investment vehicles, and stronger collaboration with corporates** to better structure risk and unlock large-scale investment.

Panel key takeaways

- Shipping decarbonisation regulation is creating **large, immediate equity needs**, as fleets must be renewed at scale.
- The market is shifting from debt-heavy structures toward **more equity and blended solutions**.
- The core challenge is **risk structuring, not technology** (offtake, pricing, guarantees, engineering).
- **Blended finance is essential** at both company and fund level to de-risk early stages.
- Corporates and retail investors can play a role via **strategic fund participation and innovative instruments** (e.g. bonds).

INVESTOR CAPACITY BUILDING VIII

LP & ASSET OWNER PERSPECTIVES: INVESTING IN THE OCEAN ECONOMY

Insights

Panelists highlighted strong interest in the blue economy, but noted persistent gaps at seed and scale-up stages. They stressed that Europe's main challenge is not talent or innovation, but outdated investment toolkits and fragmented approaches.

Innovation clusters, supply-chain thinking and cross-sector collaboration were seen as essential to de-risk investments and accelerate scale.

Public institutions play a critical ecosystem role by deploying debt, guarantees and co-investment vehicles, particularly where private funds face size or timing constraints. However, the lack of large funds, visible success stories and comparable impact metrics continues to limit capital mobilisation.

Corporates are increasingly engaged through CVCs, accelerators and open innovation, with growing interest in dual-use technologies and later-stage opportunities.

Stronger collaboration between corporates, investors and policymakers, combined with clearer evidence of performance, was identified as key to unlocking capital at scale.

Speakers



Andrew GIDDINGS
Partner,
PwC



David BUYCK
Head of Advisory,
Buyck Family Advisory
Office



Ana PIMENTA
Chief Impact Strategist,
Blink Family Office



Lars GROENVELD
Senior Investment
Manager,
Invest-NL



Franck JÉSUS

Senior Department Climate
Advisor, European Investment
Bank



PUBLIC FINANCING PERSPECTIVE: EIB AND THE BLUE ECONOMY

Insights

- Public actors play a **catalytic role**, de-risking projects and crowding in private capital rather than substituting it.
- EIB's toolkit spans the full investment lifecycle, including **venture debt, SME credit lines via intermediaries, direct financing from Series B onwards, and co-investment facilities**.
- Co-investment vehicles allow public capital to scale alongside private investors, but remain **effective yet underused** in the blue economy.
- EIB increasingly targets **mature, scalable opportunities**, including larger debt tickets and partnerships with funds and corporates.
- Across all instruments, **sustainability, strategic alignment with EU priorities, and financial viability** remain non-negotiable investment criteria.

Speakers



Daniela CEDOLA
Partner
PwC Luxembourg



Anton GIGOV
Partner,
Aquamarine Impact
Investment Bank



Gwen SALLEY
Marfret Ventures



Inkeri HUTTU
RDI funding, Partnerships,
Compliance, ABB
Marine & Ports



Lars ØSTERÅS
SVP Strategy & Business
Development,
Kongsberg Discovery



Jonas SCHNEIDER
Head of ZEBOX
UK | CMA CGM



CORPORATE CAPITAL FOR BLUE INNOVATION

Insights

The session explored the role of corporates across the blue economy value chain, highlighting their importance as investors, customers, and partners in scaling innovation.

Panelists shared practical insights on how corporates engage with start-ups through CVCs, accelerators, and open innovation platforms, particularly in areas such as decarbonisation, digitalisation, and dual-use technologies.

While collaboration with start-ups was seen as essential to accelerate innovation and de-risk solutions, participants acknowledged challenges linked to speed, procurement processes, and capacity constraints.

Several examples demonstrated how structured ecosystems and clear engagement models can reduce friction and improve outcomes.

The session concluded that lowering transaction costs, clarifying collaboration frameworks, and aligning long-term value creation across corporates, investors, and public actors are key to scaling the blue economy.

Brainstorming session

The brainstorming session focused on identifying the main barriers to investing in the blue economy and collecting practical ideas to improve future BlueInvest activities. Participants highlighted persistent challenges around fundraising, limited awareness of the blue economy as an investable asset class, and the lack of exits and visible success stories. Discussions emphasised the need to move beyond good ideas toward commercially viable, investor-ready propositions, with clearer demand signals and better risk-sharing across the capital stack. The session also gathered concrete suggestions on formats, speakers, and tools - particularly around co-investment facilities - to better support investors and accelerate collaboration across the ecosystem.

Key takeaways

- Fundraising remains difficult due to **low awareness, limited exits, and misaligned risk–return expectations** in a still-nascent asset class.
- Investors stressed the importance of **commercial viability and demand certainty**, not just innovation or impact narratives.
- **Blended finance and co-investment structures** are seen as essential, but more practical examples and case studies are needed.
- There is strong demand for **greater visibility of BlueInvest** at major global investor events to attract capital and partners.
- Participants called for **institutionalised deal facilitation**, clearer syndication mechanisms, and incentives to collaborate rather than compete.
- Future sessions should prioritise **case studies, peer exchange, and sector-specific discussions** to support concrete investment decisions.