



# BLUEINVEST DAY 2026 FLASH REPORT

OPPORTUNITIES  
START HERE



## DAY 2 | 03 March

### 230+

In-person attendees

### 163

Unique livestream viewers

### 57

Speakers

### 3

Pitch categories

## FEATURES

### Opening Session

Charlina Vitcheva, Director-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, opened BlueInvest Day by underlining that Europe's maritime economy is at a strategic turning point, with the ocean economy playing a central role in EU competitiveness, resilience and strategic autonomy. She stressed that sustainability is no longer optional, but the basis for Europe's future competitiveness.

In her speech, she emphasised that the real challenge lies in aligning growth with sustainability, ensuring that innovation, investment and environmental responsibility progress together - an area where BlueInvest plays a critical role. The sector continues to face major structural pressures, including climate change, marine pollution and declining productivity, requiring clear strategic direction, long-term vision and adequate financing.

Since its launch in 2019, BlueInvest has significantly improved access to finance in the blue economy, supporting over 400 companies and enabling 90 investment deals. She also highlighted key initiatives under the EU Ocean Pact, including an EU maritime industrial strategy, an EU port strategy and the Ocean Act, as well as OceanEye, a high-level framework to ensure predictable and climate-aligned EU ocean policy.

The keynote concluded with a call for greater ambition and financial mobilisation, underlining the catalytic role of the EIF and the importance of investor-company matchmaking, including a €5 billion venture capital fund for blue economy startups and scale-ups.



### Launch of the 2026 Investor Report



#### KEY FINDINGS

The presentation of the [2026 BlueInvest Investor Report](#) highlighted the growing momentum of private capital flowing into the European blue economy. The report identifies close to 160 private investment funds with a clear interest in the sector, representing a total of EUR 11 billion in assets under management. These include predominantly venture capital funds, alongside corporate venture capital and private equity actors. While just over a quarter of VC funds invest exclusively in the blue economy, across areas such as aquaculture, maritime transport and blue biotechnology, the majority maintain partial exposure through decarbonisation, climate and impact-driven strategies.

The investment landscape remains relatively young, with most funds launched after 2021, focusing primarily on seed and early-stage investments and targeting IRRs in the range of 20–30%. Investors nevertheless point to persistent challenges, notably macroeconomic uncertainty and long investment horizons, reinforcing the need for grants, public support and blended finance solutions to de-risk innovation and attract limited partners.

# PANEL DISCUSSION



**Christelle SAPATA**  
Senior Manager, PwC  
Luxembourg



**Boris TEILLANT**  
Project Developer,  
Atlantpole



**Lau ØFJORD BLAXEKJÆR**  
Director,  
ØFJORD ApS



**Helena VIEIRA**  
Blue Bioeconomy  
Coordinator and Researcher,  
UAveiro/CESAM

## INVESTOR REPORT 2026: THE NEXT WAVE OF BLUE GROWTH

The panel discussion that followed placed the Investor Report's findings in a broader strategic perspective, highlighting the ocean as Europe's largest strategic asset, spanning resources, energy, innovation, transport and security, while facing increasing pressure from climate change. Despite lingering perceptions of risk and niche positioning, speakers agreed that the blue economy is reaching a new level of maturity, reinforcing the role of platforms such as BlueInvest in connecting innovators, investors and policymakers across the value chain.

Panelists noted that recent geopolitical instability has slowed growth but also reshaped investor profiles. While some traditional investors have stepped back, new corporate and diversified investors are entering the sector. Energy remains a key investment area, supported by EU and national targets, while food-related technologies are gaining momentum. High-value, capital-intensive segments such as precision fermentation, controlled aquaculture and protein production are attracting interest due to strong research bases and clear industrial applications.



Geographically, Northern Europe continues to lead in energy and maritime expertise, while Southern Europe is emerging as a hub for blue biotechnology and platform technologies. Rather than competing on volume, Europe is focusing on value creation, food security and nature-positive solutions. Looking ahead, panelists agreed that innovation is no longer the main barrier; scaling solutions through coordinated investment, infrastructure and policy frameworks will be critical to unlocking the next wave of blue growth.

## BALANCING RETURN, RISK AND IMPACT

### Insights

The last panel built on key insights from the Investor Day and brought together a panel to discuss how to mobilise capital for sustainable ocean initiatives. Discussions focused on global investment perspectives, outcome-driven strategies and the growing role of private wealth in accelerating the blue economy.

Panelists agreed that the ocean is finally attracting sustained investor attention, driven by stronger scientific evidence and greater awareness of its importance for climate, the economy and societal well-being. Investing in the ocean was framed not only as necessary, but timely. Several dedicated financial tools and platforms were highlighted as instrumental in translating ambition into action, helping accelerate innovation and strengthen links between entrepreneurs and investors.

## Speakers



**Antje BIBER**  
Impact Financing  
Expert



**Romain CIARLET**  
Executive Director  
and General  
Secretary, Prince  
Albert Foundation



**Jonas SKATTUM  
SVEGAARDEN**  
CEO,  
Katapult Ocean

## BALANCING RETURN, RISK AND IMPACT

The blue economy was described as having evolved into a global movement, with investment and innovation reshaping sectors ranging from food and renewable energy to shipping, climate solutions and ecosystem restoration.

In terms of investor traction, panellists noted that interest increases significantly when strategies are clearly articulated by sector. Investors want to engage, understand pipelines and see new technologies. Storytelling, European competitiveness and clarity on deal flow were identified as critical, with Europe presented as a particularly strong region given the concentration of startups and innovation ecosystems.

Several challenges were discussed.

1. Structurally, blue economy companies often secure early-stage funding but struggle to access capital for scaling, the so-called “missing middle”.
2. The gap between available capital and the scale of solutions required remains significant.
3. Culturally, the ocean is still too often perceived as a philanthropic cause rather than a profitable investment sector.
4. A lack of trust, linked to an incomplete financing chain, limited private equity participation and insufficient involvement from industrial corporates, despite clear economic incentives, as illustrated in sectors such as maritime shipping.

The way forward was clear: improve communication, demonstrate financial performance, strengthen the financing continuum and reposition the blue economy as a credible, return-generating investment space.



### Takeaways

- **Collaboration and blended finance:** Greater collaboration across public and private actors is needed to break silos, enable co-investment and share successful investment stories beyond the traditional “ocean bubble.”
- **Regulation as a catalyst:** Regulation was widely seen as an enabler rather than a constraint, creating market demand for greener solutions and opening new business opportunities.
- **Data as a value driver:** Data plays a central role in company creation, operational efficiency and long-term value generation across the blue economy.
- **Science at the core:** Scientific rigor must underpin investment decisions to ensure technologies deliver measurable impact at scale.
- **Confidence in the sector:** The blue economy is stronger than often perceived, with solid fundamentals, emerging unicorns - particularly in aquaculture - and clear evidence that impact and financial returns reinforce each other.

## NETWORKING



# BLUEINVEST AWARDS 2026

15 innovative companies presented their products and solutions to the investor jury panel across 3 categories.

Ocean Tech	Ocean Bioresources	Ocean Resilience

## AWARDS WINNERS



Ocean Tech	Ocean Bioresources & People's Choice	Ocean Bioresources	Ocean Resilience



# NETWORKING & SHOWCASE OF TECHNOLOGIES

44

Pre-arranged Meetings

100+

Additional meetings reported

25

Showcased technologies



## Exhibitors

AETHIC 



AQUAHUB 

BlueCare  discovery



BUYCO 

CSTRIDER 



ELNAV 

Jeltom 

KELPEAT  OCEAN HEALTHY BITES

coralis  BY MARICULTURE SYSTEMS

MESPAC 

Minesto 

mocean energy 

ODYBOAT 

Oyster Heaven 

OceanFront  an eSEA Group Company

POLYCHAETA 

Poseidona 

SailLink 

SEACRAS 

SeaQ2 

TETIS 

ZEAL industries 

