



SUSTAINABLE SAILING GREECE

The role of the yachting industry in Posidonia protection solutions

Roundtable: Key Discussion Themes &
Stakeholder Feedback

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Roundtable was part of the Greek Seagrass Forum (30 April 2026), organised by the Greek Islands Seagrass Alliance (GISA), in collaboration with its partners.







Introduction

As Greece advances new marine protection frameworks and marine park planning, discussions around anchoring practices and Posidonia protection are becoming increasingly important for the future of sustainable sailing.

The first Greek Seagrass Forum, organised by the Greek Islands Seagrass Alliance (GISA), in collaboration with its partners, brought together leading environmental experts to share rich insights on the protection of posidonia meadows. Complementing this, Sustainable Sailing Greece brought together representatives from the sailing, charter, conservation and marine governance sectors to discuss the future implementation of eco-moorings in Greece.

The discussion focused not only on environmental protection, but also on the practical realities of implementation – including governance, affordability, maintenance, insurance, operational viability and user experience. The concrete recommendations that emerged show how vital it is to have the sailing sector share their operational experience, and they need to be engaged from the very start of designing plans for eco moorings.

Main Themes Raised During the Discussion

<p> Operational Practicality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability and booking concerns • Weather and extended stay flexibility • Safe holding capacity for larger vessels • Need for stress-free user experience 	<p> Pricing & Affordability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns around high pricing • Fairness across vessel categories • Potential seasonal/fleet packages • Importance of maintaining accessibility
<p> Maintenance, Liability & Trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for reliable maintenance • Questions around ownership and liability • Insurance considerations • Importance of trusted operators 	<p> Communication & Local Buy-In</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing misinformation and cynicism • Engaging local communities and businesses • Awareness and skipper education • Framing eco-moorings as added value rather than restriction

Cross-Cutting Insights

- Participants expressed broad support for protecting Posidonia meadows and reducing anchoring pressure in sensitive areas.
- Drawing on the extensive experiences of using eco moorings in other sailing destinations, many emphasized that successful implementation will depend on operational clarity, affordability and user trust.
- Stakeholders highlighted the importance of involving local communities and sailing professionals early in the process of designing eco mooring installations.
- Continued collaboration between authorities, scientists and industry was widely viewed as essential.
- Eco-mooring systems are already in use across many established sailing destinations internationally, and the sailing sector can help share operational experience and practical insight into what works best under different conditions.
- Awareness and communication campaigns will play a key role in public acceptance.

Key Takeaway

The discussion demonstrated strong willingness from the sailing sector to engage constructively in eco-mooring implementation, while emphasizing the need for practical, transparent and collaborative solutions. Participants also expressed interest in continuing to contribute operational insight and share real-world experience from eco-mooring systems already in use across other sailing destinations, helping inform what works best under different operational and environmental conditions.

Stakeholder Insights & Discussion Threads

Beyond broad support for protecting sensitive marine ecosystems, the discussion focused on how eco-moorings could realistically function within the operational, financial and governance realities of the Greek sailing landscape.

1. Governance, Responsibility & Long-Term Management

One of the strongest recurring discussion threads focused on governance and long-term management responsibility.

Participants raised questions around:

- ownership structures,
- maintenance obligations,
- inspection standards,
- liability in case of accidents,
- and insurance coverage.

Several contributors noted that user confidence would depend heavily on trust in the reliability and professional management of eco-mooring systems.

Some participants also raised the possibility that safer and more standardized eco-mooring systems could eventually contribute to reduced operational risk and potentially influence insurance considerations over time.

The discussion also explored whether eco-moorings should primarily remain under public-sector oversight, with many participants agreeing that public management could help ensure consistency, transparency and equitable access.

At the same time, participants discussed opportunities for private-sector involvement in areas such as operations, maintenance support and communication partnerships. One suggestion raised during the discussion included allowing limited sponsorship or advertising opportunities on eco-mooring buoys as a potential mechanism to offset operational costs.

2. Financial Models, Affordability & Operational Viability

Pricing and long-term financial viability emerged as another major area of discussion. Participants repeatedly emphasized that eco-moorings must remain affordable and operationally realistic in order to achieve broad adoption among sailors and charter operators.

Concerns were raised around:

- high pricing,
- fairness across vessel categories,
- the risk of negatively affecting local tourism economies if costs become excessive as has been seen in Croatia.
- and how eco-mooring models can be adapted to the size of fleets and weather conditions specific to each anchorage.

Discussion referenced examples from other Mediterranean destinations where increasing mooring costs have changed user behaviour and accessibility.

The upcoming WWF Greece business plan linked to the Gyaros eco-mooring pilot was highlighted as an important step toward exploring governance, operational and financial management models adapted to the Greek context.

Participants also discussed possible approaches including:

- seasonal packages for charter fleets,
- user-fee systems,
- and balancing public funding with operational sustainability.

3. User Experience, Communication & Public Acceptance

A recurring theme concerned how eco-moorings are communicated to users and local communities, with many agreeing they should be positioned as part of a safer and better-managed sailing experience rather than as restrictions on anchoring.

Key considerations included:

- transparent communication,
- accessible mapping and booking systems,
- skipper education,
- and early engagement with local communities and tourism stakeholders.

Several participants noted that skepticism around eco-moorings remains a significant challenge, particularly where users perceive changes as a loss of freedom or additional cost without visible benefits.

Participants also stressed the importance of ensuring that eco-moorings improve rather than complicate the guest and sailing experience.

4. International Examples

Examples from the Balearic Islands, the UK, the Caribbean and existing Greek initiatives helped frame different approaches to eco-mooring governance, funding and implementation.

The Balearic Islands example generated particular interest as an example of a large-scale eco-mooring system successfully managed by the local port authority, combining reservation systems, government-supported pricing structures and environmental protection measures while maintaining continued access to coastal destinations.

Other international examples highlighted:

- different maintenance and governance models,
- the role of digital tools and mapping systems,
- and approaches to integrating eco-moorings into broader destination-management strategies.

The discussion also reinforced that Greece's fragmented geography, seasonal pressures and varying local governance capacities require solutions adapted to the national context, particularly as the country advances new Marine Protected Area frameworks and marine park planning.

5. Continued Public–Private Dialogue Was Viewed as Essential

The discussion demonstrated strong willingness from sailing and charter sector stakeholders to remain engaged in future conversations around eco-mooring implementation.

Participants expressed interest in contributing operational insight, user perspectives and practical feedback to future pilot development and policy discussions.

Continued collaboration between authorities, scientists, businesses and local communities was widely viewed as essential for building effective and broadly supported solutions.

6. Next Steps

- Dissemination to authorities
- Continued engagement with sector bodies and networks
- Coordination with pilots to bring in sector perspectives

ANNEX

The Sustainable Sailing Greece Eco-Mooring Commitment Initiative

The Sustainable Sailing Greece Eco-Mooring Commitment initiative (<https://www.sustainablesailinggreece.com/eco-moorings-commitment>) was launched to encourage constructive dialogue and early stakeholder engagement around the future implementation of eco-moorings in Greece.

The initiative was developed in the context of Greece's evolving marine protection framework, including the proposed National Marine Parks of the Ionian Sea and the South Aegean (Southern Cyclades), currently under public consultation, as well as broader efforts to improve the management of coastal and anchoring zones in environmentally sensitive areas.

Recognising the operational realities of sailing and yachting activity, the initiative aims to help bridge the gap between environmental policy and maritime practice by ensuring that practical sector perspectives are included early in eco-mooring planning and implementation discussions.

Through the Commitment, signatories commit to:

- Contributing operational expertise to inform the design, placement and maintenance of eco-mooring systems.
- Providing real-world feedback to help refine and improve implementation over time.
- Advocating for balanced solutions that protect Posidonia while ensuring navigational safety and quality of experience.

Early Supporters

The initiative launched with early support from stakeholders across the sailing and charter sector, demonstrating willingness to engage constructively in the development of practical eco-mooring solutions for Greece.



Supporting Organisations

