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The 26th Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD)

Corinth, Greece, 23 June 2025

Report of the 26th Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee

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Introduction

1. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) and in consultation with the President of the MCSD Steering Committee (SC), the 26th Meeting of the MCSD SC was convened in Corinth, Greece, on 23 June 2025.
2. The primary objective of the Meeting was to review and guide the process for successfully concluding the discussion on the updated Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) and its flagship initiatives during the 21st MCSD meeting (24-26 June 2025, Corinth, Greece).
3. The list of participants is provided in Annex I to the present report.

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the Meeting

4. The meeting was opened at 10:00 local time in Greece (GMT+3), on Monday, 23 June 2025, by Ms. Anne-France Didier, President of the MCSD. In her opening remarks she thanked the MCSD SC Members for the concrete support and input to the MSSD update process, including during the five extended MCSD SC Meetings that took place from October 2023 to December 2025, emphasizing how the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) represents a key cooperation tool in the region. The President equally thanked the Secretariat for the work done in the past two years that will allow the 21st MCSD Meeting to hopefully approve the MSSD 2026-2035 and its flagship initiatives.
5. In her welcoming remarks, the MAP Coordinator, Ms. Tatjana Hema, highlighted that there is a good momentum and high engagement regarding the MSSD revision process which is a major opportunity to respond to global and regional challenges and commitments. The MSSD 2026-2035 represents a crucial mandate to be delivered by COP24. The MSSD 2026-2035 is well aligned with the high-level commitments in the region and the 2025 main regional and global policies and initiatives on sustainable development.
6. The Meeting congratulated France for the organization of a visionary Third United Nations Ocean Conference (9-13 June 2025, Nice, France) (UNOC-3), as well as the Secretariat for the successful celebration of the 50th Anniversary of UNEP/MAP, the 30th Anniversary of the Post-Rio Barcelona Convention and for the Declaration of the Ministers of the Mediterranean as key achievement of the UNOC-3.

Agenda Item 2: Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Organization of Work

7. The Coordinator introduced the Provisional Agenda prepared by the Secretariat, as per working document UNEP/MED WG.624/1 and annotated in working document UNEP/MED WG. 624/2.
8. The agenda was adopted by the participants, as provided in Annex II to the present report.

Agenda Item 3: Report by the Coordinator on Sustainable Development Activities for the period May 2024- May 2025

9. The Coordinator presented the progress on Sustainable Development Activities since the 25th Meeting of the MCSD SC (18-19 April, 2024, Athens, Greece), as contained in working document UNEP/MED WG.624/3 and information documents UNEP/MED WG.624/Inf.6, UNEP/MED WG.624/Inf.7, UNEP/MED WG.624/Inf.8 and UNEP/MED WG.624/Inf.9, including the extensive MSSD update process, the developments on the flagship initiatives as well as communication and outreach actions.
10. The Coordinator highlighted the importance of recent milestone events, such as the 9th Our Ocean Conference (Athens, Greece, 15-17 April 2024) and UNOC-3, that have built the momentum around the need to further boost sustainable development, ocean governance and climate resilience in the

region, and that has culminated in the Declaration of the Ministers of the Mediterranean. She added that the MSSD represents a key tool, very timely updated to support the implementation of these policy developments and commitments. She also recalled the EU Ocean Pact¹ launched at UNOC-3, the forthcoming New Pact for the Mediterranean of the EU, the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5.2), on a global treaty on plastic pollution (5-14 August 2025, Geneva, Switzerland), as well as the approaching assessment and revision of the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

11. One MCSD SC member informed that at UNOC-3, Word Bank and Global Environment Facility (GEF) confirmed the interest of supporting the source-to-sea approach in the Mediterranean, including through transboundary projects. He added that this is a very promising opportunity also for the MSSD to fund relevant actions across different objectives and at regional level. He suggested to use the Mediterranean Coast Day (25 September), which is a MSSD flagship initiative, to further promote the need and importance of regional cooperation among multi-sectoral stakeholders.

12. Another MCSD SC member informed the heavy impacts his country is facing due to climate change including water scarcity, adding that the country is investing a lot of efforts on water desalinization with a plan for 1.7 billion cubic metres of water by 2030. In addition, there is a plan to switch towards 50% of renewable energies, including hydrogen by 2030 and via a number of projects. In this context the MSSD will represent a key framework to provide guidance, with its strategic directions and actions.

13. One MCSD SC Member stressed that there have been many developments in the MSSD implementation and its flagship initiatives, however it is crucial to communicate to broader stakeholders about the MSSD, in particular to citizens and general public. It was also indicated that his organization developed a joint position paper on the role of coastal cities to protect coastal ecosystems that was presented at UNOC-3, and was also involved in Horizon Europe and Interreg-Euro MED projects, with the main objective to promote exchange of best practices. He added that they implement, in cooperation with Barcelona City Council, the Barcelona Academy for Mediterranean Municipalities with the aim to support the capacity of both political and technical staff, on sustainability role and actions of the Municipalities. It was highlighted that this initiative could be scaled up.

14. The Coordinator added that in March she has had an initial discussion with the Municipality of Barcelona and Barcelona Metropolitan Area in order to consider organizing a joint event related to the promotion of best practices in sustainable coastal cities management, and in the framework of the promotion of the MSSD flagship initiative ‘Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award’ and the new flagship initiative ‘Mediterranean Network of Zero Net Cities’. MedCities and the Secretariat will prepare the concept note accordingly.

15. The Coordinator noted that COP23 mandated the Secretariat to prepare also the update of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework (RCCAF) for the period 2026-2035. The main elements for the update of the RCCAF have been explained and briefly discussed during the Thematic Ad Hoc MCSD Meeting (12-14 February 2025, Istanbul, Türkiye), based on the work done by an independent consultant. Related comments provided were taken into due account, while in order to ensure a strong consultative process and thanks to the voluntary contribution of France, on 8-9 July a regional meeting will be held in Istanbul, Türkiye, to discuss and approve the draft RCCAF 2026-2035 before its submission to the MAP Focal Points Meeting (16-19 September 2025, Athens, Greece) and then to COP24 (2-5 December 2025, Cairo, Egypt). This work is linked also to the mandate of the newly established Climate Change RAC (CC/RAC), to be also submitted to COP24, to support the MAP-Barcelona Convention System and Contracting Parties to cope with climate change adaptation.

16. The Coordinator highlighted that the RCCAF is very much linked to the MSSD implementation, given that Climate Change becomes the first priority of MSSD 2026-2035, as it has been largely recognized as a cross-cutting pressing challenge that importantly affects the sustainable development and the marine and coastal ecosystems in the region.

¹ [The European Ocean Pact - European Commission](#)

17. Conclusions

- a) The 26th MCSD SC welcomed the good progress on Sustainable Development activities for the period May 2024- May 2025, including the advancement of the current flagship initiatives of the MSSD, and invited to promote synergies both among flagship initiatives and at national level.
- b) The MCSD SC appreciated the overview of the progress of the MSSD Dashboard and the further work developed on core indicators and on the potential new three indicators, stressing that the monitoring process of the MSSD is key to understand the actual progress of the Strategy.

Agenda Item 4: Implementation of the 2016-2025 Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development

a) *MSSD Flagship Initiatives*

18. The Secretariat and the MCSD SC Members leading a flagship initiative briefly presented the main achievements for the period May 2024- May 2025, as contained in the working document UNEP/MED WG.624/3.

19. One MCSD SC Member highlighted the importance of the flagship initiatives as they implement concrete actions and outcomes, therefore easing the identification of potential donors.

b) *Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard*

20. Plan Bleu/RAC presented the relevant section of working document UNEP/MED WG.624/3, providing an overview on the progress and main concerns based on the outcomes of monitoring dashboard indicators, as well as the perspectives for strengthening the Dashboard, including the three new indicators and proposed core indicators, as detailed in documents UNEP/MED WG.624/Inf.4 and UNEP/MED WG.624/Inf.5, and informed that the revision of the MSSD dashboard is planned for the biennium 2026-2027.

21. Plan Bleu/RAC also stressed the need for building national capacities for data sharing and peer learning about the Dashboard Indicators.

22. Conclusions

- a) The 26th MCSD SC welcomed the good progress on Sustainable Development activities for the period May 2024- May 2025, including the advancement of the current flagship initiatives of the MSSD, and invited to promote synergies both among flagship initiatives and at national level.
- b) The 26th MCSD SC appreciated the overview of the progress of the MSSD Dashboard and the further work developed on core indicators and on the potential new three indicators, stressing that the monitoring process of the MSSD is key to understand the actual progress of the Strategy.

Agenda Item 5: Specific issues

a) *MSSD 2026-2035 period and new flagship initiatives*

23. The Coordinator, based on the working document UNEP/MED WG.624/4 and information document UNEP/MED 624/Inf.3, explained the main changes proposed to the MSSD for the period 2026-2035. The Coordinator reminder that thanks to the French voluntary contribution, the MSSD consultation process was quite extensive and inclusive, while it has been sent twice to the MCSD

Members for consultation before the 21st MCSD Meeting, including for the Thematic Ad Hoc MCSD Meeting (12-14 February 2025, Istanbul, Türkiye). The Coordinator noted that in principle there is a good consensual ground for the final discussion on the update of the MSSD and its approval for submission to COP24, after an editorial check, if the 21st MCSD Meeting agrees so.

24. The Meeting welcomed the presentation of the main changes of the MSSD and discussed the timeline, noting that the 2026-2035 timeline of the MSSD does not fully align with the fact that in 2029/2030 the Targets of the SDGs will be updated/revised. The Coordinator stressed that it would be good to maintain a 10 years strategic framework to ensure continuation even if it goes beyond 2030, while taking into account the global framework of the updated SDGs. She added that in 2030 the MSSD shall undergo a mid-term evaluation, in the framework of which the targets can be updated based on the evolution of the Agenda 2030.

25. On the new flagship initiatives, one MCSD SC Member informed that they participate in a PRIMA Programme² Project called “WEFE for MED”³ which is a community of practice that can create concrete synergies with the new flagship initiative WEFE Nexus.

26. Another MCSD SC Member highlighted the pivotal outcomes of UNOC-3, including the Declaration of the Ministers of the Mediterranean that calls for interregional cooperation to enhance climate resilience and protection of riverine, marine and coastal ecosystems, taking into account the strong linkages between SDGs 14 and 6. He added that the World Bank and GEF showed interest in interregional cooperation, in particular on transboundary projects noting that it is an excellent opportunity in terms of concrete means to upgrade and boost the implementation of Sustainable Development and the delivery of the MSSD and its flagship initiatives. He concluded that it is important to address these aspects in the updated MSSD.

27. Conclusions

- a) **The MCSD SC welcomed the presentation of the main changes of the MSSD, reflecting an extensive consultation process, and appreciated the work done for the ten new flagship initiatives, highlighting the importance to identify funding options and mechanism to support their implementation.**
- b) **The MCSD SC acknowledged the inclusive approach and the consultation process put in place for the MSSD update, including the meetings of the extended MCSD SC, the Thematic Ad hoc MCSD Meeting, the set-up of dedicated thematic working groups on Marine Spatial Planning, Circular Economy and Ocean Economy, as well as the consultation with the MCSD Members of the draft versions of the updated MSSD.**
- c) **With reference to the timeframe of the updated MSSD, the MCSD SC concluded that even if the MSSD covers 10 years period (2026-2035), the MSSD targets should maintain the 2030 horizon, in order to be aligned with the Agenda 2030, with the possibility to review them in the framework of the MSSD Mid-term evaluation in 2029/2030.**
- d) **Considering the successful celebration of the 50th anniversary of UNEP/MAP and the 30th anniversary of the Post-Rio Barcelona Convention, as well as the Declaration of the Ministers of the Mediterranean as pivotal achievement of the recent UNOC-3, the MCSD SC recommended to consider that visibility about and reference to is made in the MSSD as appropriate.**
- e) **Accordingly, the MCSD SC also expressed satisfaction for the work undertaken to update the MSSD which reflects the spirit and the level of ambition of the Declaration. The MCSD SC concluded that it is crucial to transform the Declaration into concrete actions also through the implementation of the updated MSSD and its flagship initiatives.**

² [EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP](#)

³ [WEFE4MED | IWRM Action Hub](#)

b) Updated MCSD Membership

28. The Secretariat briefly introduced the needs for the partial renewal of the MCSD Membership and with reference to five out of six groups of stakeholders (Local Authorities, Socio-economic Stakeholders, Non-Governmental Organizations, Intergovernmental Organizations and Parliamentarians) as presented in the working documents UNEP/MED WG.624/4. She also indicated the need for the Addendum UNEP/MED WG.624/4/Add.1 as several Members of the MCSD felt that the original working document may have not captured the full picture and provided the necessary clarifications.

29. The Coordinator explained that based on the MCSD Constitutive Documents (COP19 Decision IG.22/17)⁴, in February 2025 the Secretariat has launched the procedure to replace eleven Non-Contracting Party MCSD Members whose mandate expires at the end of 2025, by promoting the expression of interest from MAP Partners and new stakeholders, also thanks to the support of MCSD Members.

30. After some discussion, the Meeting concluded to recommend the following candidates for the consideration of the 21st MCSD Meeting, and in line with the MCSD Constitutive Documents (COP19 Decision IG.22/17) and COP22 Decision IG.25/3 on Governance:

31. Conclusions

a) With reference to the Non-Contracting Party MCSD Members, the MCSD SC appreciated the detailed presentation of the received expressions of interest, and after some discussion, concluded to recommend the following candidates:

- **Local authorities Group**
 - **Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)**
 - **Sustainable development and the fight against poverty in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (FISPMED Network), if confirmed the interest in being considered under this category, the initial interest having been expressed for the category of NGOs**
- **Socio-economic Group**
 - **Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA)**
 - **UNIVERDE Foundation**
- **NGOs Group**
 - **Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE)**
 - **Worldwide Fund for Nature Mediterranean (WWF-MED)**
 - **Oceanographic Institute of Monaco**
- **IGOs Group**
 - **Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE)**
 - **Proposal of the Secretariat to explore the interest of UFM to join the MCSD Membership**

c) Sustainability Considerations in UNEP/MAP Programme of Work 2026-2027

32. The Coordinator briefly introduced the Sustainability Considerations in UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget (PoW) 2026-2027, as presented in the working document UNEP/MED WG.624/4, and highlighted that the PoW 2026-2027 further enhances the sustainability dimension in view of the preparation of the next UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2028-2033.

⁴ [16ig22_28_22_17_eng.pdf](#)

33. The Coordinator explained that in addition to the MCSD and its SC meetings, the PoW 2026-2027 proposes to support the ownership and capacity building of Contracting Parties in integrating MSSD objectives and actions within National Sustainable Development Strategies through a needs' analysis and online capacity building regional workshops, as well as to promote outreach and regional synergies, funding opportunities and enhanced partnerships to implement MSSD flagship initiatives.

d) Inputs of the 21st MCSD Meeting to COP24

34. The Secretariat informed the Meeting on COP 24 preparation, including for the Ministerial Declaration and the Ministerial Session of COP 24.

35. An MCSD Member stressed that it is important to put the accent also on the concrete implementation of the COP Ministerial Declarations and global/regional commitments. This is an aspect that needs to be reinforced as the MAP-Barcelona Convention system represents a uniqueness for cooperation in the region among Contracting Parties and stakeholders.

36. Conclusions

- a) The MCSD SC Meeting acknowledged the Sustainability Considerations in UNEP/MAP Programme of Work 2026-2027, and with reference to the elaboration of the ambitions and vision of the MCSD on Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean Region to be embedded in the Ministerial Declaration of the COP24, it agreed with the Secretariat to either propose to the MCSD to set up a dedicated working group, or to propose to the MCSD to delegate the task to the MCSD SC itself.**

Agenda Item 6: Any Other Matters

37. The Meeting did not raise any other matter for discussion.

38. The Meeting agreed that the 27th MCSD SC Meeting will be held approximately in November/December 2026, to be further defined if online or in presence, and will include as an objective the definition of the theme of the 22nd MCSD Meeting to be held in 2027.

Agenda Item 7: Conclusions and Recommendations and Closure of the Meeting

39. The Meeting agreed on its Conclusions and Recommendations, which are embedded in this report.

40. The Meeting was closed by the President of the MCSD SC at approximately 17:30 on Monday, 23 June 2025.

Annex I
List of Participants

26th Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) Corinth, Greece, 23 June 2025 List of Participants	
CONTRACTING PARTIES	
France President	Ms. Anne-France Didier Conseillère politiques territoriales Pilote ODD14-DGITM/DAM/Délégation à la Mer et au Littoral Ministère de la Transition Écologique et Solidaire
AFED: THE ARAB FORUM FOR ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (LE FORUM ARABE POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT ET LE DEVELOPPEMENT) Vice-President	Mr. Najib Saab Secretary General
MOROCCO / MAROC Vice-President	Mr. Mohammed Maktit Chef de la Division de la Prospective et de la Planification Stratégique Ministère de la Transition Energétique et du Développement Durable/ Département du Développement Durable
SLOVENIA / SLOVÉNIE Vice-President, ex officio, as representative of the Presidency of the Contracting Parties	Mr. Mitja Bricelj Secretary Ministry for Environment and Spatial Planning Environment Directorate Water Department
TUNISIA / TUNISIE Vice-President	Mr. Abderraja Salhi Sous-directeur à la direction générale du développement durable du ministère de l'environnement Ministry of Local Affairs and the Environment
MEDCITIES / MEDCITÉS Rapporteur	Mr. Josep Canals-Molina MedCities Secretary General

SECRETARIAT OF THE BARCELONA CONVENTION AND COMPONENTS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN	
UNEP/MAP SECRETARIAT	Ms. Tatjana Hema MAP Coordinator Mr. Ilias Mavroeidis Programme Management Officer - Governance Ms. Patrizia Busolini Socio-Economic and Sustainable Development Officer Mr. Ihab Tarek Abdelazim Ahmed Legal Officer
PLAN BLEU/RAC – CAR/PLAN BLEU : PLAN BLEU REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE / CENTRE D’ACTIVITES REGIONALES PLAN BLEU	Mr. Antoine Lafitte Deputy Director
PAP/RAC – CAR/PAP: PRIORITY ACTIONS PROGRAMME REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE / CENTRE D’ACTIVITÉS RÉGIONALES POUR LE PROGRAMME D’ACTIONS PRIORITAIRES	Mr. Marko Prem Deputy Director
SCP RAC- MEDWAVES: SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE / CENTRE D’ACTIVITÉS RÉGIONALES POUR LA CONSOMMATION ET LA PRODUCTION DURABLES	Mr. Jesús Maestro Director Mr. Matías Ibáñez Sales Coordinator of Operations
SPA-RAC – CAR/ASP: SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE / CENTRE D’ACTIVITÉS RÉGIONALES POUR LES AIRES SPÉCIALEMENT PROTÉGÉES	Mr. Mahmoud Elyes Hamza Director

Annex II

Agenda of the 26th Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD)

Agenda

- Agenda Item 1** Opening of the Meeting
- Agenda Item 2** Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Organization of Work
- Agenda Item 3** Sustainable Development Activities for the Period May 2024- May 2025
- Agenda Item 4** Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD)
- a) MSSD Flagship Initiatives
 - b) Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard
- Agenda Item 5** Specific issues
- a) Updated MSSD for 2026-2035 period and flagship initiatives
 - b) Updated MCSD Membership
 - c) Sustainability Considerations in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work 2026-2027
 - d) Inputs of the 21st MCSD Meeting to COP 24
- Agenda Item 6** Any Other Matters
- Agenda Item 7** Closure of the Meeting