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Corinth, Greece, 23 June 2025

**Agenda Item 3: Report by the Coordinator on Sustainable Development Activities for the Period
May 2024 – May 2025**

Agenda Item 4: Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD)

Progress Report for the Period May 2024- May 2025

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Progress Report and Specific Issues

Sustainable Development Activities for the Period May 2024 – May 2025

1. The present document provides information on the work done after the 25th Meeting of the Stetting Committee of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) held on 18-19 April 2024, in Athens, Greece, specifically in the period May 2024 – May 2025.
2. Negotiations are proceeding regarding the new global legally binding instrument on plastic pollution including in the marine environment, with the active participation of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols. The work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) in developing the instrument, which is to be based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastic, including its production, design and disposal, has started in 2022 and has continued through its 4th session (INC-4) from 23 to 29 April 2024 in Ottawa, Canada and the first part of the 5th session (INC-5) of 25 November to 1 December 2024 in Busan, Republic of Korea. The second part of the 5th session (INC-5) is scheduled to take place from 5 to 14 August 2025 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. Regional consultations will take place on 4 August 2025, in advance of INC-5.2.
3. The period May 2024– May 2025 was also marked by the implementation of the activities and meetings related to the update of the 2026-2035 MSSD and of the 2016 RCCAF whose update process is be coordinated with the MSSD update, mutually feeding each other on climate change priorities, and responding to the mandate of COP23 and to be submitted for endorsement at the 24th meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP24, Cairo, Egypt, 2-5 December 2025). The details on the main directions, process and timeline for the update of the MSSD, including MSSD update working groups and MSSD Final evaluation are included in Annex I of this Report.
4. During this reporting period, following the decisions of the 20th Meeting of the MCSD, the extended SC of the MCSD was established and with specific tasks linked to the support the MSSD revision process. In addition to the formal MCSD SC Members, the following members volunteered: representatives of Croatia, Israel, Italy, Malta, Montenegro, Spain, Türkiye as Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, as well as the Global Water Partnership (GWP), ECOUNION and the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI), respectively as representatives of Intergovernmental Organizations Group, Socio-Economic Stakeholders Group and formers MCSD Members. From October 2023 until December 2024 five meetings of the extended MCSD SC took place, both on-line and in person.
5. The 25th meeting of the MCSD SC took place in Athens on 18-19 April 2024 with the main objectives to review the progress of the activities related to sustainable development of the MSSD and its Flagship Initiatives since the 24th Meeting of the MCSD SC (Athens, 14-15 December 2022). The MCSD SC also reviewed and validated the proposal of the Secretariat on the approach, objectives and tasks of the MSSD final evaluation as well as the directions, process and timeline for the MSSD update, and agreed to set up three thematic Working Groups (WGs) to support the MSSD update, namely on Marine Spatial Planning, Circular Economy and Ocean Economy/Sustainable Finance, and under the coordination of relevant RACs: SCP/RAC-MedWaves for the WG on Circular Economy, PAP/RAC for the WG on Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and Plan Blue for the WG on Ocean Economy/Sustainable Finance.
6. On 12 July 2024 an online introductory meeting was organized by the Secretariat for all WGs' members. Nine MSSD update WGs meetings took place between October 2024 and March 2025. The main conclusion of the WGs meetings have been integrated in the updated MSSD version, presented to the 21st MCSD meeting as working document UNEP/MED WG.625/5, while the reports of the WGs meetings are reported in the Info document UNEP/MED WG.625/Inf.8.
7. In particular the MSP WG has a continuous role, also beyond the MSSD update and in the framework of the implementation of the Decision IG.26/10 on the Conceptual Framework for

Implementing Marine Spatial Planning in the Mediterranean, while the continuation of the WG Ocean Economy/Sustainable Finance is proposed in the PoW 2026/2027.

8. On 12-13 February 2025 the Thematic Ad Hoc MCSD meeting took place in Istanbul, Türkiye at the kind invitation of the OECE Regional Istanbul Office with the specific objective to discuss the first draft of the updated MSSD text, including the new flagship initiatives and the updated 2016 RCCAF. In mid-April an advance version of the MSSD has been circulated to the MCSD Members for consultation purposes and ahead of the 21st MCSD meeting.

9. Further information on the MSSD revision process, including the meetings of the extended SC MCSD is provided in Annex I.

10. Based on the recommendations of the 25th MCSD SC meeting that highlighted the usefulness of the information factsheets of the current MSSD flagship initiatives in terms of enhanced visibility and outreach of the MSSD, in the period June-November 2024 the Secretariat, in coordination with the Lead Institutions of the flagship initiatives, updated the existing factsheets.

11. In the period May-October 2024, the existing information factsheets of the current MSSD flagship initiatives have been updated, as submitted to the Thematic ad MCSD meeting of 12-13 February 2025 (UNEP/MED WG.624/Inf.9).

12. In early 2020, Plan Bleu/RAC launched its third foresight exercise, MED 2050. Since then, a number of steps have been taken and the report has been completed in 2025 following wide-ranging discussion involving all the shores of the Mediterranean. The report “The Mediterranean by 2050: A Foresight by Plan Bleu” (MED2050 Report)¹ presents the results of the first three phases of this collaborative foresight exercise (1. Foresight Base; 2. Visions; 3. Scenarios), which led to the production of six scenarios for the Mediterranean by 2050. The study therefore marks a milestone in understanding the sustainable development issues in the Mediterranean region and offers future perspectives for the next thirty years, aiming to support the Mediterranean countries to develop and implement effective transitional pathways to promote the best scenario for them and the region.

13. Supported also by the kind voluntary contribution of France, Plan Bleu/RAC has also finalised the Report on Environmentally Harmful Subsidies (EHS)² which provides an in-depth analysis and tailored recommendations relevant to the diverse contexts and legislative frameworks across the region, suggesting practical pathways for reform primarily in relation to energy and fisheries related subsidies, as well as to water and tourism related subsidies. This is the first report to address the issue of EHS for the Mediterranean, making it a pioneering effort in regional environmental policy. The report aligns with global efforts, such as those led by the OECD and UNEP work on reforming harmful subsidies, while it serves also as evidence for the revision of the MSSD. A second report is expected by the end of 2025, which will focus on Environmentally Virtuous Economic Tools and Finances.

14. In this reporting period the Secretariat participated in a number of regional events of regional/sub-regional programmes, initiatives and strategies, as detailed under the section on Outreach, Communication and Advocacy.

15. Particular attention is given by the Secretariat to strengthen collaboration with the EU and its services to maximize synergies on topics addressed by the MSSD and in order to upscale and accelerate the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Mediterranean in synergy with the relevant regional efforts. This also in the light of the 2024 renewed College of EU Commissioners, in particular of the new Commissioner for Mediterranean and the new Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans, as well as the reorganization of the former Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) into of the new Directorate-Generals for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf (DG MENA)³ and Directorate-General for Enlargement and the Eastern Neighborhood (DG ENEST)⁴.

¹ <https://planbleu.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/MED-2050-REPORT-EN.pdf>

² <https://planbleu.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/EHS-Report.pdf>

³ [Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf - European Commission](#)

⁴ [Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood - European Commission](#)

16. In addition, the Secretariat has been in contact with the Directorate General for Regional and Urban policies (DG REGIO) and with the Intermediterranean Commission of the Conference of the Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)⁵ in order to follow the developments for the potential establishment of the Mediterranean Macro Regional Strategy⁶ highlighting MSSD as a collaborative regional framework for sustainable development with its flagship initiatives. Accordingly, the Secretariat has provided substantial input to the draft action plan of the macro-regional strategy for the Mediterranean.

17. The total voluntary contribution of 2.4 million EUR of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France was instrumental to deliver activities of the UNEP/MAP PoW 2024-2025, including MSSD update and MCSD meetings and other related core work.

Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD)

I. MSSD Flagship Initiatives

18. The 25th MCSD SC Meeting (18-19 April 2024, Athens, Greece) welcomed the presentations of the activities undertaken by MCSD Members and Observers, partners and the Secretariat under the MSSD Flagship Initiatives, noting with appreciation the advanced status of implementation of all initiatives except for one, and acknowledged the efforts in support to the promotion of the MSSD Flagship Initiatives, encouraging to pursue such communication and capitalization actions.

19. In particular during the reporting period May 2024 -May 2025, 10 MSSD Flagship Initiatives have been advancing quite steadily:

- i. Support the Trust Fund for Mediterranean marine protected areas (Med Fund)
- ii. Promote the “Green list” (IUCN World Parks Congress) in riparian states to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of parks managing bodies
- iii. Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award (IEFCA)
- iv. Create a sustainable urban toolbox for the Mediterranean, with a view to planning cities that will work for everyone, in order to make them inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- v. Undertake regional assessments, as well as knowledge exchanges, of high- and low-tech solutions, that have been successfully implemented to achieve waste reduction
- vi. Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedEcc)
- vii. WeMed Green Business Award
- viii. Environmental Governance – Encourage the Accession to and Implementation of the Aarhus Convention on Public Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention)
- ix. Develop capacity building programmes on issues related to implementation and compliance with environmental obligations and agreements
- x. Establish a publicly accessible Mediterranean integrated information system through a triumvirate of national governments, international institutions and the private sector to collate and transparently display information on the state of the environment

20. The flagship initiative ‘Integrate sustainability principles into public procurement at national and local levels’ has not been launched yet.

21. The Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Action Plan towards 2030 has equally well advanced and is considered ‘*de facto*’ as MSSD flagship initiative.

⁵ [CPMR – Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions](#)

⁶ [Working towards a macro-regional strategy in the Mediterranean \(europa.eu\)](#)

It is included in the proposed updated MSSD under Objective 6 on Governance, under the Strategic Direction 6.4- Promote education and research for sustainable development.

22. The table below summarizes the status of implementation of the MSSD Flagship Initiatives:

- in dark green: finalized
- in light green: advanced implementation
- in orange: on-going/not fully deployed
- in red: not yet launched
- in blue: ‘*de facto*’ MSSD flagship initiative

23. The following table summarizes advancement of the MSSD Flagship Initiatives.

Current MSSD 2026-2025 Objective/Strategic Directions	MSSD Flagship Initiative	Leader/Partners and main developments
Objective 1 , Ensuring sustainable development in marine and coastal areas Strategic direction 1.1 , Strengthen implementation of and compliance with the Protocols of the Barcelo Action 1.1.10	Support the Trust Fund for Mediterranean marine protected areas The MedFund https://themedfund.org/	Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, the Oceanographic Institute (Monaco), SPA/RAC, the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, MedPAN, WWF Med, IUCN Med, Conservatoire du Littoral (France) and the Mediterranean Small Islands Initiative. To date, 2,7 million euros have been committed to support eight Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) covering over 3,000 km² in four Mediterranean countries: Karaburun Sazan MPA in Albania; Kuriat, Kneiss, Zembra and La Galite MPAs in Tunisia; Al Hoceima and Jbel Moussa MPAs in Morocco; and, Gokova Bay MPA in Türkiye. SPA/RAC will update the MedFund flagship initiative on toward the objective of achieving 30 by 30 MPAs/ OECMs Targets in the framework of the updated MSSD.
Objective 2 , Promoting resource management, food production and food security through sustainable forms of rural development Strategic direction 2.3 , Promote networks of ecologically protected areas at national and Mediterranean level and enhance stakeholder awareness on the value of ecosystem services and the implications of biodiversity loss Action 2.3.5 .	Promote the “Green list” (IUCN World Parks Congress) in riparian states to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of parks managing bodies The Green List https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/our-work/iucn-green-list-protected-and-conserved-areas	IUCN (the Green List) through its Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation. Significant efforts have been undertaken to reinvigorate the Green List programme in North Africa. the Act30 project has been approved to support the implementation of the 30x30 commitments. An important global initiative for Green List has been financed worldwide and is funding a new Green List Coordinator full-time position at the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation. A regional Mediterranean Marine Green List Expert Assessment Group has been developed and will be operational in May 2025 to support the assessment of Marine sites in the Mediterranean area.
Objective 3 , Planning and managing sustainable Mediterranean cities Strategic direction 3.1 , Apply holistic and integrated spatial planning processes and other related instruments, as well as improved compliance with respective rules and regulations, to increase economic,	Promote the “Environment Friendly City” Award approved by COP18 (Istanbul Declaration, December 2013) Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award	UNEP/MAP in cooperation with MedCities, through the voluntary contributions from Türkiye, as per Decision IG.22/19 adopted at COP 19: https://www.unenvironment.org/unepmap/istanbul-environment-friendly-city-award 4th Edition Implemented and Award celebrated at COP23

Current MSSD 2026-2025 Objective/Strategic Directions	MSSD Flagship Initiative	Leader/Partners and main developments
social and territorial cohesion and reduce pressures on the environment Action 3.1.9		5 th Edition under implementation iefca INFO-RAC and to be celebrated at COP24
Objective 3 , Planning and managing sustainable Mediterranean cities Strategic direction 3.2 , Encourage inclusive urbanization and strengthen capacities for participatory and integrated human settlement planning and management Action 3.2.5	Create a sustainable urban toolbox for the Mediterranean, with a view to planning cities that will work for everyone, in order to make them inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable MedUrbanTools www.medurbantools.com	Med Cities through MedUrbanTools: http://medurbantools.com/ The MedUrbanTools platform includes now more than 191 best practices, 132 videos of experts and 109 replicable tools on different topics concerning Mediterranean cities, including the experiences of 76 cities or metropolitan areas.
Objective 3 , Planning and managing sustainable Mediterranean cities Strategic direction 3.4 , Promote sustainable waste management within the context of a more circular economy Action 3.4.5	Undertake regional assessments , as well as knowledge exchanges, of high- and low-tech solutions, that have been successfully implemented to achieve waste reduction	Regional assessment and online repository launched in 2021 by MIO-ECSDE, COMPSUD and UfM through the EU funded WES Regional Project www.wes-med.eu A Guide for Decision-Makers in the Mediterranean has been produced by the Med4Waste ENI CBC Med project in English, French and Arabic. It has made a genuine effort to provide fit-for-purpose guidance for Mediterranean decision-makers, but also other stakeholders. Although the flagship initiative can be considered completed, it can be further enhanced and expanded.
Objective 4 , Addressing climate change as a priority issue for the Mediterranean Strategic direction 4.1 , Increase scientific knowledge, raise awareness, and develop technical capacities to deal with climate change and ensure informed decision-making at all levels, recognising and protecting the climate adaptation and mitigation services of natural ecosystems Action 4.1.9.	Establish a regional science-policy interface mechanism, including the social and behavioral sciences, endorsed by all the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, with a view to preparing consolidated regional scientific assessments and guidance on climate change trends, impacts and adaptation and mitigation options Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change, MedECC https://www.medecc.org/	MedECC, UNEP/MAP and Plan Bleu, UfMS, Gov. of the Principality of Monaco, French Ministry for Ecological Transition, Generalitat de Catalunya (Spain), ADEME (France), Aix-Marseille University (France) and its Labex OT-MED, French National Institute of Research for Sustainable Development (IRD), MISTRALS Research Programme, Aix- Marseille Provence Metropole (France) COP 23 approved the Special Report on Climate and Environmental Coastal Risks (SR1) and its Summary for Policymakers (SPM), approved during the COP 23 and the commitment to support MedECC activities through the 2024-2025 Programme of Work (PoW) and budget.

Current MSSD 2026-2025 Objective/Strategic Directions	MSSD Flagship Initiative	Leader/Partners and main developments
		In the last quarter of 2024, a call was issued for the renewal of MedECC Steering Committee and Co-Coordinator positions. Preparation for the Second Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR2) began in February 2025, with a planned publication scheduled for 2028. MedECC, in collaboration with Plan Bleu, is exploring financial options through the European Commission, specifically the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement (DG NEAR).
Objective 5, Transition towards a green and blue economy Strategic direction 5.4, Encourage environmentally-friendly and social innovation Action 5.4.5.	Create and promote a Mediterranean business award for environmental innovation WeMedAward	SCP/RAC through Decision IG.24/3 adopted at COP 21 with the support of the SwitchMed Programme. WeMed Mediterranean Sustainability Award: https://www.wemedaward.org/. The 2023 3rd edition of the WeMedAwards was assigned to young entrepreneurs from Lebanon, Tunisia, Spain and Italy. The 4th edition took place in June 2024 focusing on blue economy.
Objective 5, Transition towards a green and blue economy Strategic direction 5.4, Ensure a greener and more inclusive market that integrates the true environmental and social cost of products and services to reduce social and environmental externalities Action 5.6.5.	Integrate sustainability principles into public procurement at national and local levels	Not yet launched
Objective 6, Improving governance in support of sustainable development Strategic direction 6.2, Promote the engagement of civil society, scientists, local communities and other stakeholders in the governance process at all levels, in order to secure inclusive processes and integrity in decision-making Action 6.2.3.	Encourage the adoption and implementation of the Aarhus Convention on Public Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters	Activities launched in 2020 by MIO-ECSDE, COMPSUD and MEPIELAN through the EU LIFE Programme and further strengthened in 2021 through the EU-funded Water and Environment Support (WES) in the ENI Neighborhood South Region project: www.wes-med.eu Mediterranean Accession Agenda to the Aarhus Convention (MAAAC) finalized in November 2023. Foundation Discussion Document for the Mediterranean Accession Agenda to the Aarhus Convention published. A first ever regional training dedicated to the promotion of the Aarhus Convention in the whole of the Mediterranean was co-organized by the

Current MSSD 2026-2025 Objective/Strategic Directions	MSSD Flagship Initiative	Leader/Partners and main developments
		WES project and the UNECE Aarhus Convention Secretariat, in Athens, Greece, on 14-15 November 2023. The meeting of the Committee on Energy, Environment and Water of the Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM, at its session of 15 February 2024 in Rabat, agreed to include in the Committee's recommendations a point calling on all the countries in the Mediterranean region to ratify the Aarhus Convention. The 28th Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (2-4 July 2024) acknowledged the efforts of the flagship initiative
Objective 6, Improving governance in support of sustainable development Strategic direction 6.3, Promote implementation and compliance with environmental obligations and agreements including through policy coherence based on inter-ministerial coordination Action 6.3.5	Develop capacity building programmes on issues related to implementation and compliance with environmental obligations and agreements, including environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments.	MEPIELAN in the context of a specific agreement with the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention Secretariat. The online Training School entitled “Sustainable Maritime Governance in the Mediterranean - Environmental Governance and Sustainability” took place on May 5-10 2025, in cooperation with UNEP/MAP and MAP Partner European Public Law Organization (EPLO). https://med-ecogov.education A second module is planned in October/November 2025.
Objective 6, Improving governance in support of sustainable development Strategic direction 6.5, Enhance regional capabilities for information management Action 6.5.5.	Establish a publicly accessible Mediterranean integrated information system through a triumvirate of national governments, international institutions and the private sector to collate and transparently display information on the state of the environment	Plan Bleu through the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard and the Regional Observatory on the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean http://obs.planbleu.org/en/
Included under the Objective 6 on Governance of the proposed updated MSSD.	Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Action Plan towards 2030	5 national ESD policy frameworks prepared and based on the MSED; 12 national and regional physical and online training sessions; 1700 administrators and educators engaged in interactive trainings; 19 countries have been technically supported in their efforts of promoting ESD in national contexts; 1 Flagship Project of UNESCO/GAP dedicated to the Action Plan of the MSED; a Ministerial Statement in the framework of the 2022 High-Level Event of Education and Environment Ministers on the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and its Action Plan towards 2030

Support the Trust Fund for Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas (MedFund)

24. To date, 2,7 million euros have been committed to support eight Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) covering over 3,000 km² in four Mediterranean countries: Karaburun Sazan MPA in Albania; Kuriat, Kneiss, Zembra and La Galite MPAs in Tunisia; Al Hoceima and Jbel Moussa MPAs in Morocco; and, Gokova Bay MPA in Türkiye.

25. The MedFund successfully implemented its activities while the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework targets go beyond simply increasing coverage of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs) and Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) and require that protected area systems are also be effectively managed. There are a number of MCPAs in the Mediterranean that currently lack management plans, and many of those that have plans are not implementing them effectively, if at all. Management plans should be developed in participation with stakeholders and are a crucial tool in providing clear guidance to both MCPA managers and users alike. There is a clear need therefore to support the development of practical and cost-effective management plans for MCPAs in the region.

26. In the framework of the updated MSSD, SPA/RAC will update the MedFund flagship initiative on toward the objective of achieving 30 by 30 MPAs/ OECMs Targets.

Promote the “Green list” (IUCN World Parks Congress) in riparian states to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of parks managing bodies

27. The leading partner of the flagship initiative is the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), “the Green List”⁷, through its Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation. The IUCN Green List Programme is engaged in disseminating the Green List across the Euro Region, as well as in the Mediterranean Region, hence is in conversations with several European, North African and Asian countries which are considering the application of some protected areas to the Green List in the near future.

28. The IUCN Green List programme in the Euro Mediterranean area is making significant progress in promoting sustainability and conservation efforts in the region. In Italy, three sites have been listed in the Green List and a new national Green List Expert Assessment Group has been formed with the support of IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation and the Italian Ministry of Environment. Spain is continuing its process of assessing former candidate parks and the Expert Assessment Group for Spain is being partially renewed at this moment. France has been implementing the Green List since 2013 and currently has 24 listed sites and 12 ongoing applications. Albania has officially committed to implement the Green List in the country.

29. In the North African region, Libya has officially committed to implement the Green List in the Country. Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria have created a regional Expert Assessment Group that is fully operational and in the process of being partially renewed. In the West Asia region there is a fully operational regional Expert Assessment Group. In Egypt two sites have been listed, in Lebanon one site has been re-listed and in Saudi Arabia, 2 sites has been listed. The total number of listed sites in the region is 12, distributed as follows: (2) Egypt, (3) Jordan, (1) Lebanon, (4) Saudi Arabia, (2) United Arab Emirates.

30. A Memorandum of Understanding and Implementing Agreement has been signed between IUCN and WWF North Africa to facilitate the implementation of the Green List standard in the North Africa region.

31. Significant efforts have been undertaken to reinvigorate the Green List programme in North Africa. In collaboration with national authorities and key partners, refresher workshops on the Green List Standard have been organised in both Tunisia and Morocco. These sessions have enabled candidate sites to carry out self-assessments and identify critical gaps and priorities in site management. This renewed engagement is intended to align protected areas more closely with the

⁷ <https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/our-work/iucn-green-list-protected-and-conserved-areas>

Green List requirements and to support their progress in management improvement and eventually toward achieving Green List status.

32. Important efforts are ongoing to consolidate the programme through fundraising. As a result, an Interreg Euro-MED project on Green List for MPAs has started in January 2024 with the goal of adapting the Global Green List Standard to the particularities of the Marine Mediterranean basin, including partners of the Adriatic Sea and Greece which may allow to enlarge operations in these areas. Moreover, the Act30 project⁸ has been approved to support the implementation of the 30x30 commitments in Morocco during 2024.

33. Launched at COP28 in Dubai by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB) and technology company Esri, Act30 brings together a wide network of scientific experts and Indigenous peoples' representatives to help governments chart an effective and fair route to conserving their countries' biodiverse areas. The initiative is designed to support the 190 governments that have committed to the 30x30 target of conserving 30% of terrestrial, inland water, coastal and marine areas by 2030, under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, agreed in December 2022.

34. An important global initiative for Green List has been financed worldwide and is funding a new Green List Coordinator full-time position at the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation to support the Green List Mediterranean programme.

35. These latest developments will further allow expanding the impact and actions of this flagship initiative, aligned with the 2022 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

36. A regional Mediterranean Marine Green List Expert Assessment Group has been developed and will be operational in May 2025 to support the assessment of Marine sites in the Mediterranean area.

Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award (IEFCA)

37. The 5th edition (2024/2025) of the MSSD flagship initiative Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award has been launched by the Secretariat on 29 November 2024 in cooperation with MedCities and the kind voluntary contribution of the Republic of Türkiye. The application is supported by INFO/RAC via the specific platform⁹ where all information is available. In addition to two regional info day workshops that took place online on 19 March and on 13 May 2025¹⁰, a specific help desk has been activated in order to respond to applicants' questions.

38. Upon the indications of the 25th meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee (Athens, Greece, 18-19 April 2024), the Secretariat made efforts to further promote the initiative and facilitate broader participation from the Mediterranean municipalities and, thus, receive more applications. To this end the Secretariat worked on the simplification of the application by maintaining the four categories identified by the Decision IG.22/19 (Nature and Biodiversity Protection, Built Environment, Social, Economic and Cultural Sustainability, Policy and Governance), while selecting a limited number of indicative directions within the given categories. In particular, the proposed simplified application form considers the following: under the category Nature and Biodiversity Protection, the indicative directions of Climate Change mitigation and Ecosystems protection; under the category Built Environment, the indicative directions of Sustainable land use and green areas, Water and Air Pollution; under the category Social, economic and cultural sustainability, the indicative directions Green Economy and Eco-Innovation; under the category Planning and management the indicative directions Environmental governance, Planning, monitoring and evaluation and Communication and outreach.

39. The application period will close on 30 May 2025 with seven applications received so far. As per procedure the eligible applications will be assessed by the UNEP/MAP Task Force supported by

⁸ [act30-press-release.pdf \(iucn.org\)](https://act30-press-release.pdf(iucn.org))

⁹ <https://www.info-rac.org/iefca/>

¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJNiSezk7fU&t=8078s>

three independent consultants (Technical Committee), while the Jury will take the final decision on the winner city based on the assessment report prepared by the Task Force and the Technical Committee. The MCSD will be informed according and before the Award ceremony in the framework of the COP24.

40. Based on the experience of the past four editions of the IEFCA, and in the framework of the MSSD update and its flagship initiatives, the IEFCA will be also promoted within the new flagship initiative on ‘Mediterranean Zero Net Cities Network’ that actively promotes and supports exchanges of best practices among Mediterranean Cities, policy dialogue among Mayors on sustainable development challenges and institutional capacity building activities.

Create a sustainable urban toolbox for the Mediterranean, with a view to planning cities that will work for everyone, in order to make them inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

41. The MedUrbanTools¹¹ platform holds more than 191 best practices, 132 videos of experts and 109 replicable tools on different topics concerning Mediterranean cities, including the experiences of 76 cities or metropolitan areas. The platform is continuously updated: 128 new entries are available since the beginning of 2024¹², covering the most relevant topics for cities, such as climate change and how to address it with sustainable, nature-based options, or how to improve waste collection systems. Good practices related to water management and sustainable mobility are also available. In total, there are more than 432 practical and easily accessible cases, in French and English depending on the topic. The platform is being expanded by adding new sections, as the specific site for ProcuraMed project¹³ (funded Interreg Euro MED Programme) and for the GIZ Maghreb cases, to be developed in 2025.

42. In the period May 2024 – May 2025 efforts focused the visibility and outreach towards institutions and decision makers, national, regional and global, and linked to sustainability projects. To this aim MedCities developed a campaign of the 13 cases in the metropolitan area of Barcelona. The publications were made through X social media MedCities account and got a total impact of 1,182,034 cumulative impressions.

43. In 2025 a new paid campaign for new cases and tools is foreseen. In addition MedCities continues disseminating the other best practices among a wide public through MedCities monthly newsletter “MedUrbanTools” specific section and through Twitter, Bluesky, LinkedIn, and Facebook accounts. MedUrbanTools is further promoted and enhanced through MedCities projects and its presence in international fora, therefore generating and disseminating of new contents and cooperation opportunities.

44. The most important challenge ahead is to make the initiative grow and become a reference tool on sustainable urban development in the Mediterranean. This enhancement should be based on the regularly updated contents while improving the user experience in information search and related financial resources.

Undertake regional assessments, as well as knowledge exchanges, of high- and low-tech solutions, that have been successfully implemented to achieve waste reduction

45. This flagship initiative was implemented by MIO-ECSDE, COMPSUD and UfM through the EU funded WES Project and it consisted in a regional assessment and online repository¹⁴ launched in 2021 that aims to promote best practices on waste reduction and circular economy across the waste management chain in the Mediterranean region. The cases were selected out of many from different countries of the region via a stakeholders’ consultation to identify best practices. They are of varying

¹¹ <https://medurbantools.com>

¹² https://medurbantools.com/portfolio_page/

¹³ <https://medcities.org/fr/project/procuramed/>

¹⁴ <https://bestpractices-waste-med.net/>

scale and type from which a lot can be learned and that could inspire more actions to substantially reduce waste generation by 2030 through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.

46. Under the same project, Regional Trainings, Study Visits and Peer-to-Peers processes on Monitoring and Mitigating Single-Use Plastics (2024), the Decentralized Management of Organic Waste (2023), Innovative Circular Economy Business Models (2023), the Sustainable Management of Construction and Demolition Waste (2022) have been conducted in support of the Flagship.

47. A Policy Toolkit on Municipal Waste Management: A Guide for Decision-Makers in the Mediterranean has been produced by the Med4Waste ENI CBC Med project¹⁵ in English, French and Arabic. It has made a genuine effort to provide fit-for-purpose guidance for Mediterranean decision-makers, but also other stakeholders, on the way forward, through a specific set of recommendations addressing the local, national and Mediterranean levels.

48. Although the flagship initiative can be considered completed, it can be further enhanced and expanded.

Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC)

49. During COP 23, the Contracting Parties renewed their commitment to support MedECC activities through the 2024-2025 Programme of Work (PoW) and budget. The PoW foresees activities of the scientific network MedECC in order to promote developing science-based assessments and policy-relevant documents impacts of climate and environmental change, backing informed decision-making.

50. In the last quarter of 2024, a call was issued for the renewal of MedECC Steering Committee and Co-Coordinator positions. Two new Co-Coordiators, Piero Lionello (University of Salento, Italy) and Salpie Djoundourian (Lebanese American University, Lebanon), were appointed alongside Joel Guiot, who continues as the third coordinator.

51. Preparation for the Second Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR2) began in February 2025, with a planned publication scheduled for 2028. An open call for participation in the Scoping Meeting, self-nominations for authors, and a pre-scoping survey were conducted. The MAR2 Coordinators were appointed: Mohamed Abdrabo (Alexandria University, Egypt), Philippe Drobinski (Institut Pierre Simon Laplace (IPSL), Ecole Polytechnique, Energy4Climate Interdisciplinary Center, France) and Marta Guadalupe Rivera Ferre (INGENIO - Centre of the Spanish National Research Council and Polytechnic University of Valencia (CSIC-UPV), Spain). The online scoping meeting took place in April 2025.

52. MedECC, in collaboration with Plan Bleu, is exploring financial options through the European Commission, specifically the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement (DG NEAR).

WeMed Green Business Award

53. The 2024 fourth edition of the WeMed award focused on blue economy and was launched in April 2024. The 2024 award was conceived as a tool to give visibility to business models that promote SCP patterns in the blue sectors of the Mediterranean area. Moreover, the award aimed at inspiring other start-ups/entrepreneurs contributing to the Blue Economy in the Mediterranean Region into integrating environmental and social innovations within their business models.

54. For this last edition, the WeMed Award targeted early and growth stage scalable eco-innovative ventures in the blue economy sector in the Southern Mediterranean region, including Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia (SwitchMed eligible areas). The WeMed Award 2024 was then addressed to entrepreneurs or companies in the Blue Economy sector that had integrated environmental and social values into their business models, in addition to

¹⁵ <https://mio-ecsde.org/project/policy-toolkit-on-municipal-waste-management-a-guide-for-decision-makers-in-the-mediterranean/>

having developed an economically viable business model and that are constituted in a Southern Mediterranean country.

55. Three awardees were selected: 1) PairHouse S.A.R.L (Lebanon) is an enterprise transforming fish waste into renewable biogas and bio-fertilizers through anaerobic digestion; 2) Chitelix (Tunisia) is an enterprise that converts crab waste into valuable biopolymers and bio-ingredients; 3) EcoProd Solutions (Morocco) is an enterprise that turns fish waste skin into high-quality leather products. Further information on the 2024 edition of the award can be read at the following link: [WeMed 2024 \(wemedaward.org\)](https://wemedaward.org)

56. The prizes to the awardees included landing services, as well as marketing support and technical assistance services. Moreover, a Study-Tour & Workshop to Barcelona was organized for the awardees from 26 to 28 November (2024) to connect, learn and discover new potential markets. The Study Tour and Workshops were designed to support the winners of the WeMed Award 2024 and provided them with an enriching experience through intensive site visits, expert discussions, and practical workshops tailored to the needs of the entrepreneurs. Visits to organizations and innovative companies at the forefront of the Blue Economy in Catalonia were organized, what permitted participants to gain first-hand insights into practical applications and strategic approaches to sustainable business models. Moreover, a specialized workshop was organized on the second day of the Study Visits and focused on tools and techniques to enhance market access and business development. This session provided participants with hands-on strategies to improve their initiatives' market positioning and sustainability impact.

57. The Award was developed back-to-back with a Round Table on “The nexus between Green Entrepreneurship and Ecological Transition Change mitigation in the Mediterranean”, and it has been funded by the ENI CBC Med financed Project ‘REsults Enabling Transitions: mapping, synthesizing and mainstreaming sustainable, green and circular business support achievements in the MED region, for replication and policy-making’ (RESET project) , as well as by the SwitchMed Initiative.

58. The winners also attended the Euro Med Week for Waste Reduction (EMWWR)¹⁶ that took in Marseille in June 2024, therefore capitalizing best practices and further expanding stakeholders' network, cooperation and engagement, with the key steer of MedWaves, together with the Association of Cities and Regions for sustainable Resource management (ACR+)¹⁷.

59. The Euro Med Week for Waste Reduction contributes to catalyse concrete behaviors toward more sustainable consumption and production patterns, aligning to the key objectives, while reflecting the social, economic, and political specificity the Southern Mediterranean brings, therefore contributing to the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) as well as the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean. The initiative is entirely funded by the EU through the SwitchMed Programme.

Environmental Governance: Encourage the Accession to and Implementation of the Aarhus Convention on Public Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention)

60. On Environmental Governance and the Aarhus Convention, efforts to encourage Contracting Parties, which are not yet part of it, to join the Aarhus Convention continue being bolstered and have registered concrete steps forward in the period May 2024 – May 2025.

61. With the EU support of the EU-funded ‘Water and Environment support in the ENI Southern Mediterranean region’ (WES project)¹⁸ and via a multi-stakeholder effort, MIO-ECSDE, COMPSUD and MEPIELAN implemented a number of activities, further building on those already launched.

62. The first phase of the flagship initiative has been completed in close cooperation with UNEP/MAP and the Secretariat of the UNECE-Aarhus Convention, with the elaboration of a desk

¹⁶ [Euro-Med Weeks for Waste Reduction - EWWR](https://www.euromedweek.eu)

¹⁷ <https://acrplus.org/en/>

¹⁸ www.wes-med.eu

study for the development of a Foundation Discussion Document (FDD) for the “Mediterranean Accession Agenda” to the Aarhus Convention by the MEPIELAN Centre with the support of MIO-ECSDE and COMPSUD through the EU LIFE Programme.

63. In parallel, another important development should be flagged, related to the common efforts for the promotion of the Aarhus Convention in the whole of the Mediterranean. The meeting of the Committee on Energy, Environment and Water of the Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM, at its session of 15 February 2024 in Rabat, agreed to include in the Committee’s recommendations a point calling on all the countries in the Mediterranean region to ratify the Aarhus Convention, as follows: ‘Calls on parliaments and member states to be ambitious regarding environmental and climate legislation and policies, improving transparency practices and engaging with civil society, allowing participation in decision-making processes regarding projects, plans and programmes affecting and related to the environment. Calls on all countries of the Mediterranean region to ratify the Aarhus Convention.’”

64. The 28th Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (2-4 July 2024) acknowledged the efforts of the flagship initiative and called for all Parties to support efforts of the countries of the Mediterranean region to accede to the Aarhus Convention.

65. It is expected that for a wide accession of Mediterranean countries to the Aarhus Convention several years will be needed, however, there is a genuine willingness of many countries to advance in this direction and the momentum needs to be maintained. There is an enhanced understanding that being a Contracting Party to the Aarhus Convention significantly contributes to a country’s efforts to promote citizen-centred and environmentally sound policies, as well as facilitate and speed up the implementation of strategies and measures related to sustainable development. It provides greater political visibility at international level, building the image of the acceding country as a strong supporter of environmental democracy and it sends a strong positive signal to other countries, including trade and aid partners, as well as foreign investors and international institutions of the Government’s commitment to effective governance and democracy.

66. In terms of concrete follow-up actions to support the fulfilment of the Flagship’s initiatives, the MEPIELAN Aarhus Centre (MAC)¹⁹ has been established by the MEPIELAN Centre²⁰ (Mediterranean Programme for International Environmental Law and Negotiations), in collaboration with the OSCE, the UNECE Aarhus Convention Secretariat and the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention Secretariat. Aligned with the OSCE Guidelines for Aarhus Centres, the MAC will operate as a national entity with a regional scope (Mediterranean, Balkans), working with government agencies, relevant international organisations, academic institutions and civil society. Although not yet operational, its mission includes promoting the implementation of the Aarhus Convention at national and regional level, integrating its principles into international environmental agreements, and fostering participatory governance to advance green energy transitions

67. In addition, under the follow-up 3-year project of WES (2024-2027), the EU-funded “Water and Environment Support - Biodiversity and Climate Action in the Neighborhood South Region (WES-BCA)”, there is provisional planning for in-country support via e.g. the organization of national round tables together with the UNECE Aarhus Convention secretariat. In parallel, MIO-ECSDE and COMPSUD will mobilise civil society participation in the process, including national parliaments.

Develop capacity building programmes on issues related to implementation and compliance with environmental obligations and agreements

68. The online Training School entitled "Sustainable Maritime Governance in the Mediterranean - Environmental Governance and Sustainability"²¹ is planned for October 2025. It is organized by

¹⁹ <https://ebulletin.mepielan.gr/activities-forum/2024/mepielan-center-presents-its-proposal-and-action-for-the-establishment-of-an-aarhus-centre-in-greece-at-the-first-regional-training-for-the-promotion-of-the-aarhus-convention-across-the-mediterranean/>

²⁰ <https://mepielan.gr>

²¹ <https://med-ecogov.education>

MEPIELAN, in cooperation with UNEP/MAP and MAP Partner European Public Law Organization (EPLO).

69. The flexible structure of 17 lectures over 6 weeks will enhance accessibility for professionals, researchers, and postgraduate students by replacing the original one-week intensive format. The transition aims to broaden participation, particularly encouraging applications from qualified candidates across Mediterranean states, and to improve interactivity and learning outcomes. It also aligns with the educational strategies of the organizing institutions within the framework of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development and the Barcelona Convention System. This evolution represents a significant step toward the potential establishment of a specialized Master's program.

Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and its Action Plan Towards 2030

70. The MCESD, supported by MEDIES/MIO-ECSDE, participated in the “MED9 High-Level Forum on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Green Transition in the Mediterranean Region” in Limassol, Cyprus, on 27 June 2024. The MED9 Forum chaired by the Minister of Education of Cyprus, H.E. Ms Athena Michailidou, brought together more than 30 delegates, including Ministers of Education and high-level representatives from the nine EU Mediterranean countries, together with representatives of UNESCO, the UfM, UNEP/MAP and civil society. The Forum, was organised by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth of Cyprus, and took place in parallel with the UNECE Forum on ESD and Youth to review the progress on the status of integration of ESD in the countries, and exchange best practices and ways the MSED can contribute to addressing related challenges.

71. So far the main achievements of the Mediterranean Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development include 5 national ESD policy frameworks prepared and based on the MSED; 12 national and regional physical and online training sessions; 1700 administrators and educators engaged in interactive trainings; 19 countries have been technically supported in their efforts of promoting ESD in national contexts; 1 Flagship Project of UNESCO/GAP dedicated to the Action Plan of the MSED; a Ministerial Statement in the framework of the 2022 High-Level Event of Education and Environment Ministers on the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and its Action Plan towards 2030.

72. The MSED and its “Action Plan towards 2030” and their updates are systematically promoted through MEDIES/MIO-ECSDE to ESD related international fora, and namely: (a) the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD (last meeting held in 29-31 May 2024), (b) UNESCO's ESDNet for 2030, that is a global platform comprised of Strategic Partners: countries, IGOs, NGOs/CSOs, academia, youth, etc. with the goal to advance ESD policy, boost knowledge sharing and collaboration schemes, enhance advocacy, monitoring and evaluation on ESD, (c) the Greening Education Partnership (GEP) a global technical platform led by UNESCO, for stakeholders' co-working and exchanging on climate change education.

73. With reference to the next steps, given that the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and Action Plan towards 2030, is the first such strategy adopted at regional level, further funding is needed for its full-fledged implementation, while there is also a need for data to populate the relevant Indicator 28 of the MSSD.

II. Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard Indicators and Related Trends

74. Work on the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard indicators, was presented during the 25th MCSD SC Meeting by Plan Bleu/RAC. The dashboard is now available, online, in the frame of a dedicated category on MapX cartographic application²².

²² <https://wesr.unep.org/article/mediterranean-sea-unep-regional-sea>

75. Plan Bleu/RAC has reviewed the indicator factsheets linked to the Sustainable Development Goals as part of the periodic monitoring to follow the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD). Since 2023, a section is dedicated to the Mediterranean MSSD Dashboard on the World Environment Situation Room Data, Information and Knowledge on the Environment (WESR)²³. It compiles all information produced by Plan Bleu for the MSSD monitoring in an interactive way. The MSSD dashboard benefits from the functionalities offered by the MAPx application, allowing users to interact with the data (statistics and geospatial) and to use tools to see the evolution of the indicators over time. To date, more than 40 geospatial and statistical data are visualizable on the observatory, coming from various data sources.

76. As part of the evaluation of the current MSSD, in June 2024, Plan Bleu/RAC developed a quantitative assessment report on the situation of sustainable development in the Mediterranean region using the 28 MSSD dashboard populated indicators and which was equally used for the MSSD final evaluation. The work is based on the monitoring and assessment of the MSSD dashboard and its compendium of 28 indicators over the last 10 years period (2015-2024). The June 2024 quantitative assessment report on the 28 MSSD dashboard is presented as reference document.

77. According to the assessment, the 28 MSSD indicators 18 % are stable, 61% show an improvement and 21 % show a decrease in terms of sustainable development and with reference to 2015 as baseline year.

78. Specifically, some highlights can be flagged with regards to the state of sustainable development in the Mediterranean basin over the period 2015-2024 and based on MSSD indicators:

- For some of the MSSD objectives, such as sanitation and access to electricity, the situation is improving, while for others such as climate change, energy intensity, water and sustainable tourism (particularly the environmental objectives), the situation is worsening
- Climate change is now confirmed as a key driver of environmental change in the region
- Sharp income disparities still exist among countries, and in some cases growth figures conceal deterioration in regenerative natural capital
- The economic growth in the Southern and Eastern countries was accompanied by significant improvements in key social indicators as represented by the Human Development Index
- Even if there is a lack of data for indicator 18 (Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements, or inadequate housing), within the region, poverty continues to affect many.

79. Plan Bleu/RAC also prepared in June 2024 an in-depth analysis with regards to the main difficulties and issues dealing with temporal and geographical coverage, access to/download the datasets, values, titles, changes in units, definitions and calculation methods for each of the 28 indicators of the MSSD dashboard. They are crucial points because they made, or not, possible the comparison and the evolution of the indicators over time and space. Many changes occurred during the past 10 years.

80. In complement, during the 25th MCSD Steering Committee (SC) meeting of 18-19 April 2024 (Athens, Greece), Plan Bleu/RAC presented a proposal for 7 core indicators, selected among the existing 28 MSSD indicators as per Decision IG.23/4 of COP 20, 17-20 December 2017 (Tirana, Albania), and that show the region's progress and challenges over the past three decades.

81. The aim of the core indicators is to provide a more in-depth analysis on some key issues and with the objective to communicate key figures at regional level, such as the sea temperature increase and climate change adaptation as one of the main factors affecting sustainable development in the Mediterranean. The core indicators therefore can support MSSD outreach activities towards policy makers and broader stakeholders, by providing an easy path to grasp a picture of the main aspects, challenges and opportunities of sustainable development.

82. The MCSD SC took note of the proposal and asked Plan Bleu/RAC to further elaborate, as far as possible, a proposal on core indicators including also possible new MSSD indicators on health and air quality, on adaptation to climate change, on marine and coastal environment.

²³ <https://wesr.unep.org/article/dashboard>

83. The follow up proposal of Plan Bleu/RAC is related to 10 core indicators that complement the MSSD dashboard with more in-depth analysis. They have been shared with the online Extended SC of the MCSD of 12 November 2024 as well as information document of the Thematic Ad Hoc MCSD meeting of 12-13 February 2025 (Istanbul, Türkiye).

84. The following 7 indicators, which are already MSSD indicators, are to be proposed as MSSD core indicators with a deeper analysis:

- 1. Demography: a) number of inhabitants; b) share of youth and senior
- 2. Life expectancy at birth
- 3. Average years of schooling
- 4. Real GDP per capita
- 5. Territorial carbon dioxide emissions per capita
- 7. a) Water withdrawal per inhabitant; b. Renewable freshwater resources per capita
- 10. Evolution of protected marine areas (in number and area covered)

85. It is to be noted that the titles of the Indicator 5. Territorial carbon dioxide emissions per capita and of Indicator 10. Evolution of protected marine areas (in number and area covered), are to be proposed as slightly updated in order to be more precise in the analysis and better communicate the object of monitoring activities.

86. The following 3 indicators are to be proposed as new MSSD indicators and to be considered also as core indicators:

- 6. Surface temperature: a) Atmospheric; b) Sea surface temperature
- 8. Plastic leakages at sea
- 9. Air quality: a) concentration of PM2.5; b) carbon monoxide emission

87. In addition, the online Extended MCSD SC of 12 November 2024 suggested to work on the MSSD dashboard indicator 11, “Food security Index” at the Mediterranean scale and based on new variables and data that didn't exist in 2015. Details on the core indicators are presented in the information document UNEP/MED WG. 625/Inf.5.

88. There is an urgent need to strengthen capacities and resources in national administrations to address the SDGs adequately, particularly for monitoring programmes reporting on and following SDG indicators. Peer Learning, the Simplified Peer Review Mechanism (SIMPEER), Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard, and the Paper on Structures and Processes for Implementing the 2030 Agenda and SDGs in the Mediterranean Countries are among other initiatives the UNEP/MAP and Plan Bleu/RAC are taking to achieve this purpose.

89. There is a need to identify and analyse international best practices to nurture the process, boost policy learning, and acknowledge the importance of the Science–Policy–Society Interface developed by Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC), in cooperation with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), UNEP/MAP Secretariats and Plan Bleu/RAC. This approach calls for an inclusive process undertaken to consult the scientific community, government representatives, policymakers and stakeholders on the findings of the First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1)²⁴.

Outreach, Communication and Advocacy

90. On the MSSD streamlined cooperation with key relevant regional initiatives and programmes in the period May 2024 – May 2025 the Secretariat has participated to a number of international and regional events and meetings, with the overall aim to promote high-level and concrete outreach, synergies and visibility that would support upscaling the implementation of the MSSD and its flagship initiatives, and on subjects related to environment, Maritime Spatial Planning, sustainable blue

²⁴ [Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin - Current Situation and Risks for the Future. First Mediterranean Assessment Report - MedECC](#)

economy, sustainable finance, waste management in urban areas, climate change, circular economy, marine pollution/marine litter.

91. The follow up actions of the participation of the Secretariat to the Steering Committees of the WestMed²⁵ Initiative in its role of Observer, include the launching of the cooperation with the Community of Practice on Marine Spatial Planning²⁶ PAP/RAC is member of with the role of Observer, and the WestMed working group on sustainable tourism that has been set up before the Summer 2024. The Secretariat supported the definition of the Terms of Reference of the working group and with Plan Bleu/RAC it is a member of the Advisory Body.

92. On 16-17 April 2024 Greece hosted the 9th Our Ocean Conference in Athens. The Secretariat collaborated closely with the Government of Greece for the involvement and active role of UNEP/MAP, including participation of the Coordinator as panel member in the panel on the Mediterranean, submission of side event proposals, and organization of a communication stand. The Coordinator also participated in the “High-Level working luncheon for Heads of State Delegations on Sustainable Tourism on the Mediterranean” that was an opportunity to highlight the MSSD, the necessary transition towards a sustainable tourism, to be built on a reinforced multi-level governance and cooperation, both at national and regional level.

93. At the kind invitation of the Minister of Education of Cyprus, the Coordinator participated in the MED9 Ministerial Summit on Education for Sustainable Development and Green Transition in the Mediterranean Region and at the UNECE FORUM on ESD on Empowering Youth for Sustainable Futures - Entrepreneurship Education and Youth Engagement that took place on 27 - 28 June 2024, in Limassol, Cyprus.

94. Collaboration with other Regional Seas Conventions and Actions Plans (RSCAPs) is increasing and a workshop on strengthening synergies between common areas of work and priorities of G7 and the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans organized in the framework of the Italian presidency of G7 took place in Piraeus, Greece, on 9-10 October 2024 (the Regional Seas Workshop).

95. Consultations are ongoing and there is growing interest for collaboration with OECD Istanbul Centre, who is expanding its outreach to non-OECD members through its External Committee, which addresses the MENA region relevant to the Mediterranean. It is also increasingly integrating the issue of Oceans, as the item is spanning across several directorates of the organization (Environment directorate; Trade directorate; Agriculture, Fisheries; Science, Technology and Innovation directorate).

96. In parallel efforts are being made to strengthen the collaboration with local authorities. In this respect contacts and initial discussion with the Municipality of Barcelona and Barcelona Metropolitan Area took place in order to consider organizing joint events 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’.

97. In April 2024 the English version of the Parliamentarian’s Guide to protecting the Mediterranean Sea and coast, prepared by the Secretariat with substantive input by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) has been published by the UNEP Publications Committee. The Guide will also be published in Arabic, French, and Italian at the request of MASE Italy as the donor. It will be launched with support from UNEP Communication Division, which is also ensuring design services [Publication: Parliamentarian’s guide to protecting the Mediterranean Sea and coast | UNEPMAP](#)

98. The 2024 edition the [Coast Day campaign](#) focused on the role of women in achieving coastal sustainability. The campaign had two components, one on-the ground, [central celebration](#) in Annaba, Algeria organised by UNEP/MAP, PAP/RAC and the Ministry of Environment and Renewable Energies of Algeria and an on-line campaign that was implemented through the social media. Both parts of the campaign were a great success. Central event in Algeria was attended by 160 participants, which is among the highest number of participants at the official celebration in the 15 years of the

²⁵ [Home - WestMED \(europa.eu\)](https://home-westmed.europa.eu)

²⁶ <https://maritime-spatial-planning.ec.europa.eu/msp-resources/med-msp-cop>

Coast Day. On-line campaign through social media was a novelty for Coast Day. The campaign implemented under the slogan #WomensWave for coastal sustainability in the Mediterranean reached 12.2 million users with over 18 million visits to the system's social media accounts.

99. UNEP/MAP took part in the Mediterranean Pavilion located in the Blue Zone at UNFCCC COP 29 (Baku, Azerbaijan, 11-22 November 2024). The Mediterranean Pavilion follows the similar initiative that started at COP 27 (6-18 November 2022, Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt); it is an initiative led by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) together with UNEP/MAP and a coalition of institutions dealing with climate action in the region. A number of side events are under preparation for the MedPavilion by the MAP-Barcelona Convention system, while three UNEP/MAP Components, namely SCP/RAC-MedWaves, PAP/RAC and INFO/RAC, are in the process of being funding partners of this initiative.

100. The Secretariat has been working, together with INFO/RAC, on the preparation of UNEP/MAP participation at United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC 2025) that will take place in Nice, France in June 2025, and in particular for the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of UNEP/MAP and the 30th Anniversary of the Post Rio Barcelona Convention. The MAP@50 - A Mediterranean High-Level Event will take place on 10 June 2025. The overall aim is to highlight that the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention is being a precursor to global ocean protection efforts and remaining a key actor on ocean governance in the Mediterranean region, that it is the first regional action plan established under the UNEP Regional Seas Programme, showcasing the important role of all Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, and that the environmental multilateralism under UNEP/MAP successfully navigating regional geopolitics and delivering strong legally binding commitments, on different aspects of ocean governance, addressing in an integrated manner: pollution prevention and control ; biodiversity and ecosystems conservation; climate change; land sea interactions, using up-to-date management tools and approach.

101. Further to the preparations for the Mediterranean Day in UNOC 2025 presented in a previous section of this Report, the Secretariat and INFO/RAC have also launched the [Odyssey Reloaded: "Gone with the Wind"! | INFO-RAC](#), a pan-Mediterranean digital that will celebrate the 50th anniversary of MAP and the 30th anniversary of the amended Barcelona Convention through a constellation of events around the Mediterranean Sea. "A network of routes across the Mediterranean sailed by a virtual MAP ship" will disseminate the message for the health of the sea and its coasts. The digital campaign started in January 2025 with the launch of the initiative's website [Odyssey Reloaded initiative and 2023 MED QSR launch in the framework of MAP50 anniversary](#), an interactive map of the Mediterranean highlighting the cities and ports involved in the initiative campaign website will therefore represent the virtual journey that will be made across the Mediterranean Sea [ODYSSEY Reloaded](#).

102. A joint effort at the MAP system level continues regarding gender mainstreaming. Gender focal points were identified by the RACs and together with the Coordinating Unit, a MAP Gender Strategy is under finalisation, in order to support and coordinate efforts made at the MAP level to reach the objectives of SDG 5.

103. Finally Plan Bleu/RAC introduced a new communication format in 2023, the Rendez-vous du Plan Bleu, online events that focuses on specific subjects (Med SOx ECA, sustainable cruising, MCSD, Etc.) [Les Rendez-vous du Plan Bleu #5 : Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development: What challenges in 2023? - Plan-bleu : Environnement et développement en Méditerranée](#)

Annex I
Main Directions, Process and Timeline for the Update of the MSSD, including MSSD update
Working Groups and MSSD Final evaluation

Main Directions, Process and Timeline for the Update of the MSSD, including MSSD update Working Groups and MSSD Final evaluation

The following table summarizes the process and actions/timeline for the update of the MSSD.

Date	Meetings	Key Deliverables
2023		
30 October	1 st extended MCSD SC, Online	- contribution from the MCSD to the COP 23 - initial discussion on two new flagship initiatives “Sustainable Blue Tourism” and “Protection and restoration of Seagrass/Posidonia Meadows” - discussion on the main directions, process, and timeline for the revision of the MSSD
4 December	2 nd extended MCSD SC (Portoroz, Slovenia)	- draft proposal new flagship initiatives on youth involvement - further discussion on two new flagship initiatives “Sustainable Blue Tourism” and “Protection and restoration of Seagrass/Posidonia Meadows”
2024		
21 February	3 rd extended MCSD SC, online	- Detailed substantial discussion on the approach for the MSSD update
18-19 April	25 th MCSD SC meeting (Athens, Greece)	- MSSD update process/timeline - ToR Thematic working groups - Draft new MSSD Flagship initiatives
June/July	- Set up of MSSD updated thematic working groups - Joint meeting of the thematic working groups (online)	
End August Mid-September	Draft Final Evaluation Report and recommendations including a proposal with elements for an updated MSSD	
17-19 September	54 th ECP, (Split, Croatia)	- MSSD Draft Final Evaluation Report - MSSD main substantial updated elements
12 November	4 th extended MCSD SC, online	- MSSD Final Evaluation - MSSD updated Actions - New flagship initiatives - MSSD Targets - MSSD 10 core indicators
End November	MSSD Final Evaluation delivered	
20 December	5 th extended MCSD SC, online	- MSSD updated Actions - New flagship initiatives - MSSD Targets
2025		
January/early February	2 nd Meeting of the 3 thematic working groups	

Date	Meetings	Key Deliverables
12-13 February	Thematic ad hoc MCSD meeting (Istanbul, Türkiye)	- Updated MSSD presented and discussed
March	3 rd Meeting of the 3 thematic working groups	
27-28 March	56 th ECP (Barcelona, Spain)	- MSSD targets finalization
Mid-April	Consultation on the advance version of the updated MSSD	
23 June	26 th MCSD SC meeting	
24-26 June	21 st MCSD meeting	
16-19 September	MAP Focal Points meeting	
2-5 December	COP24	