



**Mediterranean
Action Plan**
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Agenda Item 5: MSSD 2026-2035 and its flagship initiatives

Flagship initiatives

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Note by the Secretariat

The 20th MCSD meeting (Marseille, France, June 2023) welcomed the proposals to launch new Flagship Initiatives on “Sustainable Blue Tourism”, on “the protection and restoration of Seagrass/Posidonia Meadows as crucial ecosystems” and on “the Water Energy Food Ecosystems nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea continuum”.

The reflection on potential new MSSD Flagship Initiatives has been continued by the Secretariat and the MAP Components, together with MCSD members and interested stakeholders, and under the guidance of the MCSD, the MCSD Steering Committee (SC) and of the extended MCSD SC.

This document presents the framework of flagship initiatives that will support the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035.

MSSD Flagship Initiatives

1. The proposed new MSSD Flagship Initiatives were submitted to the Thematic Ad Hoc MCSD meeting (Istanbul, Türkiye, 12-13 February 2025), which indicated to simplify their presentation by preparing a shorter document focusing on key objectives, key actions, partners and linkages with MSSD Objectives, targets and links to Barcelona Convention Protocols, when relevant.

2. The Meeting also indicated to add the presentation as Annex to the updated MSSD, while integrating current and new flagship initiatives with a coherent approach.

3. The 10 proposed new MSSD Flagship Initiatives are listed hereby and are presented as Annex I:

- i. Protection and restoration of Seagrass/Posidonia Meadows as crucial ecosystems
- ii. Towards a Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient Blue Tourism in the Mediterranean
- iii. Strategy for the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus (WEFE Nexus) in the Mediterranean Source to Sea continuum
- iv. Mediterranean Forest Initiative
- v. Youth involvement in the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development and the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development implementation
- vi. Mediterranean Network of Zero Net Cities
- vii. Women leadership for Environment and Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean
- viii. Med Coast Day: Inspiring action to safeguard our coasts
- ix. Mediterranean Green Week
- x. Delivering 1TW of renewable energy capacity in the Mediterranean by 2030 (TERAMED)

4. The current MSSD includes 11 flagship initiatives which are being successfully developed at a different pace or have been finalized, while the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development, even if not initially foreseen as one of the 2016-2025 MSSD flagship initiatives, has been progressively reported as such to the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) and to its Steering Committee (SC), given its relevance for the MSSD Strategic Direction 6.4-Promote education and research for sustainable development.

5. Only the flagship initiative 'Integrate sustainability principles into public procurement at national and local levels' has not been launched yet.

6. The state of development of the current flagship initiatives is summarized in the following table and is detailed the working document UNEP/MED WG.625/3 and in the information document UNEP/MED WG. 625/Inf.3:

- 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

Current MSSD 2026-2025 Objective/Strategic Directions	MSSD Flagship Initiative
Objective 1, Strategic direction 1.1, Action 1.1.10	The MedFund
Objective 2, Strategic direction 2.3, Action 2.3.5.	The Green List
Objective 3, Strategic direction 3.1, Action 3.1.9	Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award
Objective 3, Strategic direction 3.2, Action 3.2.5	MedUrbanTools
Objective 3, Strategic direction 3.4, Action 3.4.5	Undertake regional assessments to achieve waste reduction

Current MSSD 2026-2025 Objective/Strategic Directions	MSSD Flagship Initiative
Objective 4, Strategic direction 4.1, Action 4.1.9.	Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change, MedECC
Objective 5, Strategic direction 5.4, Action 5.4.5.	WeMedAward
Objective 5, Transition towards a green and blue economy, Strategic direction 5.4, Action 5.6.5.	Integrate sustainability principles into public procurement at national and local levels
Objective 6, Strategic direction 6.2, Action 6.2.3.	Encourage the adoption and implementation of the Aarhus Convention
Objective 6, Strategic direction 6.3, 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.
Objective 6, Strategic direction 6.5, 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
Objective 6, Strategic direction 6.4, Promote education and research for sustainable development	Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Action Plan towards 2030

7. In the framework of the updated MSSD the flagship initiatives should be better linked to the MSSD targets. The flagship initiatives that have been finalized should evolve, considering also merging opinions in order to provide a broader and consistent framework of objectives and actions that can more easily catalyze partners, stakeholders and potential funds. The current flagship initiative not yet launched might be discontinued.

8. To this end the following could be considered:

- The **‘MedFund’** is proposed to evolve towards the flagship initiative tackling the 30 by 30 MPAs/ OECMs Targets, as already proposed in the updated MSSD presented in the working document UNEP/MED WG.625/3.
- The flagship initiative **‘Undertake regional assessments to achieve waste reduction’** might be merged with the initiative **‘MedUrbanTools’** under the Objective 4 on sustainable and resilient Mediterranean cities, specifically under on Strategic Direction 4.2: Encourage inclusive urbanization and strengthen capacities for participatory and integrated human settlement planning and management. Respective objectives and actions are in fact complementary. This approach would allow the two leading institutions to join forces also in terms of opportunities to finance actions and identification of new regional/sub-regional projects.
- The flagship initiative **‘Integrate sustainability principles into public procurement at national and local levels’** is proposed to be discontinued until a MCS Member or/and a relevant stakeholder presents a sound proposal for its development.
- The flagship initiative **‘Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Action Plan towards 2030’** is included under objective 6 of the updated MSSD presented in the working document UNEP/MED WG.625/3.

9. Based on the discussion during the thematic ad hoc MCS meeting of 12-13 February 2025, the flagship initiative ‘Strategy for the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus (WEFE Nexus)’ the COP 24 endorsement, should include the mandate to prepare the related Action Plan.

10. The following table summarizes the proposed approach, integrating current and new flagship initiative of the updated MSSD

MSSD OBJ	Strategic Directions	Flagship Initiative	Leading partner	MSSD Dashboard Indicators	MSSD Targets	SDGs
OBJ 1 Climate Change	SD 1.1: Increase scientific knowledge, education, raise awareness	Regional science-policy interface mechanism to prepare consolidated regional scientific assessments on climate change trends, impacts and adaptation and mitigation options (MedEcc)	MedEcc Supported by UNEP/MAP, Plan Bleu/RAC, UfM	Indicator 21 , Green House Gas emissions per capita (related to GDP) Core indicator 5 , Carbon dioxide emissions per capita	Target 1: by 2030 All Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention should develop and submit their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to contribute to limiting global warming to 1.5°C, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 43% and achieving net-zero emissions by 2050	13
	SD 1.5: economy decarbonization energy transition and renewable energies	NEW: Delivering 1TW of renewable energy capacity in the Mediterranean by 2030 (TERAMED)	Presented by ECOUNION. Promoted by diverse stakeholders in the region	Indicator 22b , Renewable energy share in the total energy consumption	Target 2: By 2030, all Mediterranean countries will reach a minimum of 20% of renewable energy in their energy mix, by increasing the renewable energy share derived from renewable resources in total final consumption, thus encouraging shifting towards energy transition	7
OBJ 2 Health, productivity, restoration and resilience	SD 2.1: implementation, compliance and monitoring with regional requirements of regulatory and policy frameworks of BC for coastal and marine management	Achieving 30 by 30 MPAs/ OECMs Targets (Update of MEDFUND Flagship Initiative)	SPA/RAC	Indicator 7: Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine territorial waters Indicator 10: Official development assistance and public expenditure on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems Core indicator 10: Evolution of Mediterranean protected areas and their associated surfaces NEW indicator: % of MPAs with effective management plans	Target 6: By 2030, at least 30 per cent of the Mediterranean Sea is protected and conserved through well connected, ecologically representative and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, ensuring adequate geographical balance, and sustainably managed by applying ecosystem-based approaches including biodiversity and climate change-informed marine spatial planning, and by conducting environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments	14
		NEW: Mediterranean Coast Day	PAP/RAC			13, 14, 15, 16, 17
	SD 2.3: Promote well connected ecologically representative and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures nature-based solutions at national, transboundary and Mediterranean level and enhance stakeholder awareness on the value of ecosystem services and the implications of biodiversity loss	Promote the IUCN Green list to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of parks managing bodies	IUCN-Green List	Indicator 9a: Number of protected areas participating in the Green List initiative	Target 6: By 2030, at least 30 per cent of the Mediterranean Sea is protected and conserved through well connected, ecologically representative and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, ensuring adequate geographical balance, and sustainably managed by applying ecosystem-based approaches including biodiversity and climate change-informed marine spatial planning, and by conducting environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments	15
		NEW: Promote the protection and conservation of Seagrass/Posidonia Meadows as crucial ecosystem	SPA/RAC	Indicator 7: Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine territorial waters		14
OBJ 3 Sustainable resource management, food security, rural development, food systems	SD 3.1: circular/regenerative use, management and conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Natural Resources	NEW: Strategy for the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus (WEFE Nexus) in the Mediterranean Source to Sea continuum (WEFE NEXUS)	MEDProgramme; UfM; DG NEAR	Indicator 12 – Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources (SDG Indicator 6.4.2)	Target 6: By 2030, all the Mediterranean countries will have at least 50% of their population using safely managed drinking water services, secure access to surface and groundwater, in quantity (to guarantee food security and nutrition) and quality (public health issue via sanitation) in a multi-level context of water stress, competing demands and growing shortages, particularly for vulnerable populations and women	6
		NEW: Mediterranean Forest Initiative	UNEP	Indicator 10: Official development assistance and public expenditure on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems		15

MSSD OBJ	Strategic Directions	Flagship Initiative	Leading partner	MSSD Dashboard Indicators	MSSD Targets	SDGs
OBJ 4 Sustainable and resilient Mediterranean cities	SD 4.1: Apply holistic and integrated spatial planning processes and other related instruments, as well as improved compliance with respective rules and regulations, to increase economic, social and territorial cohesion and reduce pressures on the environment	Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award	UNEP/MAP MedCities	Indicator 20 Waste generated and treated by type of waste and treatment type	Target 9: By 2030, Mediterranean countries have achieved at least a 50% reduction in municipal waste generation per capita, and have ensured that at least 60% of municipal solid waste is sustainably recycled, composted or managed, including separate collection and material recovery	11, 12
		NEW: Mediterranean Network of Zero Net Cities	UNEP/MAP MedCities			
	SD 4.2: Encourage inclusive urbanization and strengthen capacities for participatory and integrated human settlement planning and management	Sustainable urban toolbox for the Mediterranean Flagship initiative 'Undertake regional assessments, knowledge exchanges, of high- and low-tech solutions, to achieve waste reduction' to be merged	MedCities (MIO-ECSDE)			
OBJ 5 Sustainable, green, blue and circular economy, sustainable finance	SD 5.3: Encourage innovation and sustainable business solutions to advance towards the objectives of a just low-carbon, circular, green and blue economy	WeMedBusiness Award	SCP/RAC	NEW Indicator Option 1: Number of companies publishing sustainability reports NEW Indicator Option 2: Number of Mediterranean countries that have implemented the SCP Action Plan	Target 11: By 2030, 50% of Mediterranean Countries have in place effective regulatory and policy frameworks, including economic incentives, aimed at facilitating the development of sustainable business models that integrate circularity and eco-innovation principles in the green and blue economies, while contributing to the development of non-pollutant and socially inclusive economies, in line with the Sustainable Consumption and Production Regional Action Plan for the Mediterranean	12
		NEW: Sustainable blue tourism	ECO-UNION IDDRI			
		Integrate sustainability principles into public procurement at national and local levels	Not launched yet			
OBJ 6 Improve governance at all levels, cooperation and partnerships in support of resilience and sustainable development	SD 6.3: Promote the engagement of civil society, scientists, youth and women, financial institutions, private sector, local communities and other stakeholders in the governance process at all levels, in order to secure inclusive whole of society processes and integrity in decision-making	Encourage the adoption and implementation of the Aarhus Convention	MIO-ECSDE COMPSUD MEPIELAN	Indicator 27: Public participation and public access to environmental information	Target 15: By 2030, most of the Mediterranean countries have acceded to the Aarhus Convention	16
		NEW: Women leadership for SDGs	UNEP/MAP with women representatives of MCSD members		Target 13: By 2030, 70% of Mediterranean Countries have mechanisms in place to ensure subsidiarity and synergies between policies at different levels of decision- making across sectors in the long-term and across border thus enhancing policy coherence on sustainable development (PCSD), including involvement of stakeholders	4, 5, 17
		NEW: Youth involvement in MSSD decision process and implementation	Mediterranean Youth Group			
		NEW: MED Green Week	UNEP/MAP UFM			
	SD 6.4: Promote the implementation, and monitoring of the SD Strategies at all levels of government, considering synergies and tradeoffs between different policies and sectors, including intersectional management (WEFE NEXUS) through policy coherence for sustainable development based on whole of government approach, inter-ministerial coordination and multi-level government	Develop capacity building programmes on issues related to implementation and compliance with environmental obligation	MEPIELAN		Target 14:By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development	4
	6.5: Promote education and research for sustainable development	Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development	MIO-ECSDE	Indicator 28: Education for Sustainable Development Core indicator 3, Average years of schooling		
	6.6: Strengthen regional capabilities for information management and enhance the promotion of evidence-informed policymaking and foresight	Establish a publicly-accessible Mediterranean integrated information system through a triumvirate of national governments, international institutions and private sector to collate and transparently display information on the state (MSSD Dashboard and Mediterranean Observatory on Environment and Sustainable Development)	Plan Bleu	MSSD Dashboard Indicators and core indicators		

ANNEX I

Concept Notes of the new MSSD Flagship Initiatives

Mediterranean Coast Day: Inspiring action to safeguard our coasts

Concept note

Policy message:

Rising sea levels and the escalating risk of coastal flooding worldwide, combined with their significant geopolitical implications, demand urgent and unified action. With 150 million people living directly at sea level, Mediterranean coastal communities - together with policymakers and decision-makers - must accelerate the implementation of mitigation and adaptation to ensure a sustainable future for as many people as possible. This requires building and sharing knowledge more effectively and efficiently, across the widest possible networks, to identify what can be done to preserve our coasts and livelihoods and how best to do it.

The involvement of leading parties and bodies in the annual celebration of Coast Day will provide a vital platform for sharing insights, fostering collaboration, and accelerating actions to address these pressing challenges.

MSSD Objective	SDGs	Barcelona Convention Protocols
Objective 2 Improve the health, productivity, restoration and resilience of the marine and coastal ecosystems	SDG 14 - Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development SDG 13 - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact SDG 15 - Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss SDG 16 - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels SDG 17 - Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development	Integrated Coastal Zone Management Protocol Land-Based Sources Protocol

1. Background

This flagship initiative aims to advocate for sustainable coastal management practices and engage stakeholders across all levels of society - from local communities to regional and national institutions, and international organizations. A key component of this initiative is the transformation of Mediterranean Coast Day into a UN International Observance Day to amplify its impact.

Celebrated annually on September 25, Mediterranean [Coast Day](#) highlights the value of Mediterranean coastal areas and promotes their active preservation. Established to mark Slovenia's ratification of the ICZM Protocol, the event is led by PAP/RAC in collaboration with UNEP/MAP and its regional offices, serving two primary objectives:

- Raise awareness of the importance of coasts and inspire commitment to their protection.

- Promote sustainable coastal management, emphasizing the principles of the Mediterranean Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).

Each year, the main celebration is hosted by a different Contracting Party to the Barcelona Convention, with additional activities organized by governments, NGOs, MAP partners, and civil society organizations across the Mediterranean. Previous themes, such as coastal resilience, urbanization trends, coastal aquifers and sustainable tourism, have sparked meaningful discussions and driven regional action.

To ensure visibility and advocacy, prominent figures are appointed as Ambassadors for the Coast. These ambassadors - writers, actors, athletes, innovators, and policymakers - use their influence to raise awareness, advocate for policy support, and participate in key events.

2. Overall aim and Objectives

The overall aim of this initiative is to elevate Mediterranean Coast Day into a prominent regional observance that unite leaders and communities across the Mediterranean in taking collective responsibility to safeguard coastal areas for future generations.

Specific Objectives:

- **Raise awareness and inspire action for Mediterranean coastal resilience**
Foster a deeper understanding of coastal challenges and opportunities among policymakers, educators, local communities, and the general public
- **Foster and strengthen institutional commitment to Mediterranean coastal and marine protection**
Encourage tangible commitments and collaborative efforts toward sustainable coastal management and climate adaptation
- **Inspire new generations for long-term coastal protection**
Empower new generations with tools and knowledge to lead sustainable coastal initiatives and foster climate resilience

3. Key actions and deliverables

To effectively drive awareness and action for coastal sustainability in the Mediterranean, a series of coordinated, high-impact initiatives will be carried out, empowering communities to take concrete steps in preserving the Mediterranean's invaluable coastal ecosystems. Activities will focus the following the following key actions:

Raise awareness and inspire action for coastal resilience

Launch annual targeted public awareness campaigns across the Mediterranean region, focusing on coastal resilience, and sustainable practices. These campaigns will use accessible communication channels, including social media, educational materials, and community outreach, with a focus on clear, actionable messages. **Deliverables include** Success story mapping, Awareness materials and Public campaigns.

Foster and strengthen institutional commitment to coastal and marine protection

Engage key institutional stakeholders (government agencies, regional organizations, and policy leaders) to advocate for the adoption and implementation of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Protocol. Utilize the main regional celebration to build a coalition of supporters for coastal protection policies and focus on practical actions. **Deliverables include** Regional event, Policy dialogues and Commitment statements.

Inspire new generations for long-term coastal protection

Collaborate with partners to engage youth and local communities in coastal sustainability projects, such as art and education activities, clean-ups, restoration projects, and community-based monitoring of marine ecosystems, aiming to strengthen the recognition of Coast Day beyond the Mediterranean region. If possible, collaborate with an influencer who supports environmental causes to amplify the reach and impact of these initiatives at no cost. **Deliverables include** Youth engagement programs and

Volunteer networks

4. Potential Leadership and Partners

Leadership

PAP/RAC

Partnership

- Secretariat of UNEP/MAP and Regional Activity Centres under the Barcelona Convention System
- Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention
- UNEP Regional Seas Programme & Regional Seas
- UNESCO
- UNEP/MAP– Barcelona Convention system Partners (IGOs and NGOs)
- Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)
- Ocean & Climate Platform
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- WWF-Mediterranean
- Mediterranean Information Office for the Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MiO-ESCEDE)
- MedWet Initiative
- MED SEA Foundation
- ARTPORT_making waves

Delivering 1TW of renewable energy capacity in the Mediterranean by 2030

(TERAMED)

Concept note

Policy message: TeraMed is a multi-stakeholders initiative aimed at achieving 1 terawatt (TW) of renewable energy capacity installed in the Mediterranean region by 2030. This bold target seeks to address the urgent need for clean and just energy transition, fostering regional energy security, socio economic development, and climate resilience. By integrating the region's vast renewable energy potential, TeraMed will contribute to global sustainability goals through the decarbonization of Mediterranean countries in the framework of the MSSD, the Barcelona Convention and the Paris Agreement.

MSSD Objective	MSSD Targets	MSSD Indicators	SDGs
Objective 1: Address climate change with emphasis to adaptation to its impacts and promote Energy Transition as a priority	Target 2: By 2030, all Mediterranean countries will reach a minimum of 20% of renewable energy in their energy mix, by increasing the renewable energy share derived from renewable resources in total final consumption, thus encouraging shifting towards energy transition	Indicator 22b Renewable energy share in the total energy consumption	SDG7, Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

1. Background

At the crossroads of three continents, Europe, Africa, and Asia, the Mediterranean region is both a space of unity and division. As starkly emerged in the past few years, the region maintains significant strategic importance for global security, geopolitics and economy. In addition to the current geopolitical instability, recent extreme weather events, such as the floods in Libya, Italy and more recently in Spain, have also demonstrated the tragic effects of global warming on people and communities. According to the IPCC, the region is a climate change hotspot where climate is changing faster than the global average. Increasing mean temperatures, changes in precipitation patterns, rise in the intensity and frequency of heatwaves, droughts and extreme events have direct impacts on the ecosystem and cascading effects on security, economic activity and human mobility. Climate change has been widely recognized as a threat multiplier: cascading climate impacts affect the wellbeing of communities and the social stability of countries, both exacerbating already existing social and geopolitical tensions, such as competition over natural resources, and creating new challenges. In the Mediterranean region, cascading climate impacts are bound to complicate the already fragile and complex security landscape in the long term.

The region is still today not perceived as a region in itself, but as a space of division between three continents. Failing to grasp the continuity of the Mediterranean as one broad region, especially in the climate diplomacy space, translates into a lack of coordinated actions necessary to respond to interdependent challenges, among which climate change figures prominently. Lack of coordinated effects are hindering the development of long-term regional Energy and Climate policy frameworks that can ensure an effective response to existential challenges, with uneven levels of vulnerability specifically across the North-South shore divide.

The Mediterranean region, historically dependent on fossil fuels, faces those critical challenges due to climate change, geopolitical instability, and socioeconomic inequalities. Despite its vast solar and wind potential, renewable energy deployment remains uneven between the northern and southern shores. TeraMed seeks to address these disparities by fostering collaboration and integrating renewable energy systems across the region, transforming it into a global hub for clean energy innovation.

2. Overall aim and objectives

TeraMed's overarching goal is to achieve 1 TW of renewable energy capacity in the Mediterranean by 2030. Key objectives include:

- Establishing ambitious renewable energy targets to be reflected in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
- Enhancing regional cooperation on energy and climate.
- Unlocking financing mechanisms for renewable energy deployment, modernization of grid infrastructures, cross-border interconnection, storage solutions.
- Promoting green industrialization and socioeconomic development.
- Empowering local stakeholders and ensuring inclusivity in the energy transition process.

3. Key actions and deliverables

Action 1: Renewable Energy Targets and Policy Frameworks

Description: Support Mediterranean governments in committing to a collective, regional target of 1 TW for the Mediterranean region at COP30 of UNFCCC in Belém, Brazil, and establishing and integrating ambitious renewable energy targets into their NDCs, aligning with the global target of 11 TW by 2030.

Deliverables:

- National renewable energy targets aligned with 1 TW goal by 2030
- Policies and regulations for streamlined renewable energy deployment.

Action 2: Regional Energy Infrastructure Development

Description: Expand and modernize grid infrastructure, including cross-border interconnections and decentralized systems.

Deliverables:

- Increased interconnection capacity.
- Enhanced grid reliability and integration of diverse energy sources.

Action 3: Financing and Investment Mobilization

Description: Unlock public and private investments through a clear and cohesive financial strategy for the region, involving National and Regional Development Banks, Multilateral Development Banks, Export Credit Agencies, combining innovative financial mechanisms, public-private partnerships, green bonds, concession loans, equity, guarantees mechanisms, reduction of investments risks, lower costs of capital.

Deliverables:

- \$700 billion investment mobilized.
- Financial frameworks supporting renewable energy deployment.

Action 4: Capacity Building and Stakeholder Engagement

Description: Empower local communities, businesses, and governments to take active part in climate initiatives, through training programs, public awareness campaigns, and stakeholder consultations.

Deliverables:

- Regional capacity-building programs.
- Increased participation of civil society and private sector in renewable energy projects.

4. Leadership and Partners

- **Promoters:** The initiative is promoted by a diverse array of stakeholders in the region: ECCO (Italy/EU-Med), eco-union (Spain/EU-Med), Ember (EU), European Climate Foundation (EU-Med), E3G (EU), Global Solar Council, Greening the Islands Foundation, Global Wind Energy Council, Imal Initiative for Climate and Development (Morocco/Med), MEDSEC - Mediterranean Dialogue on Sustainable Energy and Climate, Natura Resource Governance Institute, Pooled fund on International Energy, Power Shift Africa, RAED - Arab Network for Environment and Development (Egypt/Med), RCREEE - Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, ReNew2030, Sefia, Zero (Portugal/Med).
- **Partners:** Regional governments, international organizations, private sector stakeholders, and civil society groups
- **Official supporters:** IRENA, Global Renewable Alliance, Union for the Mediterranean

5. Budget/Funds

- **Estimated Budget:** \$700 billion.
- **Funds Secured:** Initial backing from international development banks, private sector investments, and regional governments.

More information: <https://teramedinitiative.com/>

**Mediterranean Network of Zero Net Cities
(MED Zero Net Cities)**

Concept note

Policy message

By 2050 the urban population in the Mediterranean coastal regions is expected to nearly double. This is a challenge, but it also is an opportunity for the cities to substantially contribute towards UNFCCC Paris Agreement and the EU Green Deal target of climate neutrality by 2050, confirming their key role in the process.

2050 is not that far and Mediterranean cities must swiftly and jointly reply to the call to act.

MSSD Objective	MSSD Target	MSSD Indicators	SDGs
Objective 4 Plan and manage sustainable and resilient Mediterranean cities	Target 9: By 2030, Mediterranean countries have achieved at least a 50% reduction in municipal waste generation per capita, and have ensured that at least 60% of municipal solid waste is sustainably recycled, composted or managed, including separate collection and material recovery	Indicator 20 Waste generated and treated by type of waste and treatment type	SDG 11 , Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable SDG 12 , Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

1. Background

As the Mediterranean is affected by the highest raise of the temperature globally, the region is a hot spot for the climate change: a priority challenge that requires multi-level stakeholders engagement and mobilization, policy, programmatic and financial investments as well as long term vision and commitment.

Climate change adaptation and mitigation is **heavily dependent on urban action** and Mediterranean cities have a key role to play as 'local sentinels' to support decarbonization efforts therefore contributing to the development and implementation of climate change measures, also by broadly engaging with the stakeholders and civil society and promoting climate change resilience at local level. To this end, local authorities (local councils, metropolitan authorities and networks/unions of municipalities) are the actors that - whatever their competences may be - are always keen to implement with a deep knowledge of their human and territorial realities. In fact, around 60% of the Sustainable Development Goals rely on the action of said authorities. Besides, cities and towns are responsible for more than 50% of Green House effect gas emissions.

The MSSD Flagship initiative Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award (IEFCA) was established in 2016 by COP 19 Decision IG.22/19 and funded by the kind voluntary contribution of the Government of Türkiye, with the aim of recognizing and supporting the efforts of local authorities in promoting sustainable development in the Mediterranean coastal cities.

Based on the experience of the past four editions of the IEFCA and in the framework of the update of the 2016-2025 MSSD, the Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development of 18-19 April 2024, concluded that the initiative should be **strengthened and upscaled as broader flagship initiative** by increasing its visibility and encouraging more interest in applications, so that this initiative further promotes and supports local authorities and exchange of best practices

among Mediterranean Cities, policy dialogue among Mayors on sustainable development challenges and institutional capacity building activities, while promoting networking with similar projects and initiatives.

2. Overall aim and Objectives

The overall aim of the flagship initiative is to **upscale and capitalise the best practices identified by the five editions of the IEFCA** (thus including the one to be implemented in the biennium 2024/2025), by promoting the set up and development of a **Mediterranean cities zero net network**, building on and developing streamlined synergies the EU Mission for 100 climate-neutral and smart cities and some of the Mediterranean cities that are part of the mission.

The initiative will further promote the participation of **South Mediterranean and Western Balkan cities** and will **focus on specific issues, common challenges and assets of Mediterranean cities and capacitate its local authorities** to support them to contribute reducing the greenhouse gas emissions by 45% by 2030 and reach climate neutral by 2050, in line with the UNFCCC Paris Agreement and the SDG 13 – Climate Action.

Accordingly, the **objectives** of the flagship initiative are:

- Support municipalities integrating climate change mitigation and adaptation measures into local policies, strategies and planning, and in line with national plans therefore reinforcing multi-level governance
- Support capacity building and trainings at local and regional level
- Promote public/private investments to support zero net decarbonization paths
- IEFCA implementation and exchange of related best practices at local and regional level
- Support cities in accelerating their digital transformation as key asset towards decarbonization
- Education towards cities zero net
- Promote Citizen and stakeholders' engagement
- Ensure sound synergies with the *EU Mission for 100 climate-neutral and smart cities*, promoting a potential co-partnership between UNEP/MAP, MedCities (as co-leader of the initiative), EU

3. Key actions and deliverables

The flagship initiative foresees the following **main activities**:

- **Activity 1: Building the Mediterranean Network of Zero Net Cities:**
 - Develop a collaborative vision of the Network in alignment with the EU Mission Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities
 - Identify and seek for engagement in the network of cities including those winners of IEFCA award and those Mediterranean members (specially MedCities members if required) of the 112 NetZero cities as front runners and identifying potential takers from South Mediterranean and Western Balkans; identification and engagement of other key actors
 - Identify the good practices to share by frontrunners and assess the needs and challenges of the takers to match potential collaborative learning opportunities
 - Launch the network at a related event
 - Sustain the network and its growth in the long term
- **Activity 2: Capacity building and peer to peer learning**
 - Based on Activity 1, preliminary assessment of practices and needs, develop a collaborative learning programme, including webinars, study visits, and mentoring process between selected frontrunners and takers. This programme will facilitate the exchange of best practices and knowledge, and assist local authorities in the integration of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures into local policies, strategies and planning. The programme will assure linkages with the MSDD and its goals and dashboard.
 - Provide specific trainings on overall issues such as access to finance, citizen engagement and others

- Produce and distribute factsheets and transfer and replicate reports with successful cases, providing analysis of the process and the success factors
 - Explore twinning processes from the peer to peer experiences to establish long term collaborations.
- **Activity 3:** Communicating the network, raising awareness, engaging citizens
 - Communication activities at different levels and audiences
 - Recognition to network members, especially engaged front runners with e.g. a **UNEP/MAP IEFCA Label**
 - Citizen engagement programme supporting network members with guidelines and materials for citizen engagement activities
- **Activity 4: Coordination and synergies**
 - Coordination of network members and partners and coordination with other related initiatives and programmes, especially the EU Mission Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities and the NetZeroCities project. Organisation of one yearly regional event.

4. Leadership and Partners

- **Leadership**
 - UNEP/MAP and MedCities
- **Partnership**
 - Countries/states: Contracting parties of the Barcelona Convention, starting for example from those that their cities won the previous 4 IEFCA, Greece, Cyprus and Albania
 - Winner cities of previous 4 IEFCA: Izmir, Genoa, Malaga, Ashdod
 - Interested Mediterranean Cities from the 112 NetZeroCities, starting by MedCities members, such as Barcelona, València, Marseille, Rome, Limassol and Izmir
 - Other interested cities: Athens, Tirana, as e.g. Signatories of the Covenant of Mayors
 - PAP/RAC, Plan Bleu/RAC and SCP/RAC
 - INTERREG EURO-MED, INTERREG NEXT-MED, INTERREG ADRION

5. Finance

To be determined (1,5 to 2 million €)

Mediterranean Forest Initiative (MFI)

Concept note

Policy message

The Mediterranean Basin is a hotspot for highly interconnected climate risks, due to its combination of multiple strong climate hazards and high vulnerability.

The value of regional approaches to climate action and ecosystems protection has been recognized by political leaders and scientists across the Mediterranean Basin.

The Mediterranean Forest Initiative sets out a clear, common direction for different actors and sectors relevant to forests, biodiversity, climate action, environment, and disaster risk reduction, towards a future in which protected and restored Mediterranean forests deliver ecosystems services, host biodiversity, and enhance Mediterranean societies' resilience to climate change. In the new era of risk, multi-level stakeholders engagement, intersectoral dialogue, coordinated action and policy support must be enhanced and strengthened including via reinforcing linkages between environmental science, forestry and civil protection sectors; deeply integrating considerations linked to climate change, biodiversity loss, and desertification; and leveraging public and private sector partnerships to scale up investment in forests.

MSSD Objective	SDGs	Barcelona Protocols
Objective 3: Promote sustainable resource management, and food security through sustainable forms of rural development and food systems	– SDG15, Life on land	– Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity Protocol – Integrated Coastal Zone Management Protocol

1. Background

In the [Declaration for the role of forest and ecosystem restoration for future Mediterranean Generations](#) (March 2022), participants in the High-Level Segment of Mediterranean Forest Week noted the “importance of forest and ecosystem restoration for the **achievement of global commitments made by Mediterranean countries within the framework of the Rio Conventions**, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Forum on Forests” and called for “management of Mediterranean forests and landscapes **towards a vision where social, environmental, economic and cultural benefits are equally integrated.**”

In their [Antalya Ministerial Declaration](#) (2021), Mediterranean Ministers of Environment pledged to promote “regional responses to our shared environmental challenges in order to amplify their impact across and beyond the basin, and contributing to **coordinated action across sectors and levels of government through the implementation of integrated approaches**”. This approach was reinforced in the COP23 [Portorož Ministerial Declaration](#) calling for urgent action “to **bolster resilience to the unfolding impacts of climate change**”.

The proposed Mediterranean Forest Initiative (MFI) is expected to support Mediterranean states to meet their commitments under the UN Climate, Biodiversity, Desertification Conventions and Barcelona Convention.

Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols have committed to apply an ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment. Healthy and well-managed forests are crucial to achieving this ecological vision. In September 2023, at the meeting of UNEP/MAP Focal Points in Istanbul, UNEP informed Mediterranean states about the proposed **Mediterranean Forest Initiative**. The Barcelona Convention COP in December 2023 then integrated the MFI into its PoW covering sectors of biodiversity, climate change, ICZM and the MSSD. The MFI was presented at a side event at the Barcelona Convention COP23 in Slovenia, December 2023. SilvaMed, as a statutory body of FAO, has been a foundational partner from the very beginning of this initiative and is expected to play a key role in taking it forward, together with UNEP/MAP and UNDRR regional networks. In 2024, UNEP, FAO and UNDRR shared a draft Road Map for the Mediterranean Forest Initiative with Mediterranean countries

and other partners for comments and in 2025 the work is expected to progress. The MFI Road Map has been launched at the **Silva Med Mediterranean Forest Week** and at the **Europe and Central Asia Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction** in Montenegro (both in November 2024).

2. Overall aim and Objectives

To reverse the current cycle of forest loss and die-back in the Mediterranean, we need to scale up integrated, science-informed and dynamic approaches to forest protection and management.

The Mediterranean Forest Initiative builds on longstanding environmental and scientific institutions and networks in Mediterranean, particularly the Barcelona Convention UNEP [Mediterranean Action Plan](#) including the MSSD; and FAO and its Statutory Body, [Silva Mediterranea](#). The initiative will draw on UNEP and partners’ experience of ecosystems restoration, climate adaptation and biodiversity conservation in the region – including work on [Integrated Coastal Zone Management](#) in the Mediterranean and UNEP’s portfolio in the [Western Balkans](#). UNEP’s partnership with the EU on [climate, environment, peace and security](#) (which is now in its second phase) provides a solid basis for advancing **environmental peacebuilding** in the region.

The **Mediterranean Forest Initiative** has been further designed considering the following objectives:

- **Ensure the protection of forest ecosystems provides numerous economic, social and environmental benefits.** Forests provide critical [ecosystems services](#), including groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment control, carbon capture and reduce the pressures that harm economies and drive migration.
- **Promote and reinforce the critical role of forest ecosystems in climate mitigation and adaptation**, as recognized in the Paris Agreement and in the [Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forests and Land Use](#);
- **Tackle the threats posed to Mediterranean forests by climate change and land use change**, as described in UNEP’s [Spreading Like Wildfire](#) report and other analyses of [climate-related fire risks](#);
- **Identify opportunities to protect the environment and deliver sustainable development objectives** in the Mediterranean through [transboundary adaptation](#) collaboration and sharing of regional best practices, including traditional knowledge and advanced technologies. (ref. to importance of a regional approach in [Climate change and weather extremes in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East](#));
- **Identify opportunities for trust-building in the Mediterranean region** strengthening regional cooperation towards the protection of shared resources, sharing knowledge, and managing climate-related stresses that would otherwise drive displacement and increase conflict risks.

The MFI’s comprises four phases with an overall timeline which is foreseen until 2035. After a first phase of co-generation, the second phase of ‘co-design’ is being finalized.

The third phase will then concentrate on the scale up of potential on the ground interventions and the fourth phase the implementation.

3. Key actions and deliverables

The following **main activities** are envisaged for the next 2 years as part of the 2nd phase of co-design:

Actions	Deliverables
Forests and forest-related ecosystem services assessment	1.1 Mapping and consultations: Building on the updated report <i>State of Mediterranean Forests</i> , forthcoming 2024, UNEP, FAO and UNDRR work with stakeholders to:
	1.1.1 Map ongoing activities and identify gaps in support of forest protection, -management and related issues (e.g. conservation, restoration, biodiversity, planning, tourism, fires, etc.).
	1.1.2 Consult member states and other key stakeholders on options to promote a more ambitious, intersectoral approach to protecting and restoring Mediterranean forests – potentially including one extraordinary meeting of the MCSD focused on the MFI to be held in 2025

		1.2 Additional research: UNEP and partners will commission additional research where knowledge gaps exist, including: 1.2.1. Socio-economic analysis of the values of forest ecosystems services 1.2.2. Identification of priorities, best case examples, resource mobilization roadmap <i>Budget for 2025-26: USD 600,000</i>
Identification and co-design of Forest solutions		2.1 Support transformational cross-sectoral national policy design for Mediterranean forests, including working with regional scientific and technical partners to support local, national and (where relevant) international implementing entities to design and tailor impactful and climate-informed cross-cutting (linking to climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity protection, delivery of ecosystems services, rural livelihoods and development, civil protection and disaster risk reduction); forest solutions. 2.1.1 Science-policy dialogues on forests hosted in 4 Mediterranean countries; 2.1.2 Support to Inter-ministerial Committees in 2-3 Mediterranean countries affected by disasters or conflicts. <i>Budget for 2025-26: USD 600,000</i>
Implementation of Forest solutions		3.1 Building on the Restoring Mediterranean Forests Restoration flagship which recognised work by Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Türkiye in restoring fire-affected Mediterranean forests, as part of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration: 3.1.1 Enhance the scientific basis of work via incorporating monitoring processes drawing on the work of the European Topic Centre on Spatial Analysis and Synthesis, and further modelling of grey/green adaptation options to maximise the protection of forest ecosystems and water resources; 3.1.2 Scale up ongoing work in specific locations, e.g to enhance restoration work already underway under the Restoring Mediterranean Forests Restoration flagship. 3.2 Joint mobilization of international funding streams. <i>Budget for 2025-26: USD 1,000,000</i>
Enhancement of Forest solutions		4.1 Identify lessons learnt through systematic analysis of innovative and traditional practices, the MFI will <i>enhance the quality and quantity of integrated forest interventions</i> in the Mediterranean Basin. MFI lessons-learned and communicated will provide a basis for strong, evidence-based and ambitious programme design. The confidence of potential public and private-sector investors is expected to grow. <i>Budget for 2025-26: USD 150,000</i>
Sharing Forest solutions		MFI will work collaboratively on capturing, convening, curating, connecting, managing, and disseminating knowledge on how to protect and restore Mediterranean forest ecosystems. Knowledge management and communication in Mediterranean languages of emerging and longstanding good practices by the MFI will support evidence-based decision-making by governments and practitioners, providing a basis for evidence-based advocacy, prescriptive/predictive analysis thus enhancing prospects for greater results-based forest finance. 5.1 Capacity on how to protect and restore Mediterranean forests is strengthened and transferred, including through strengthening of existing partnerships to enhance inter-sectoral dialogue, including youth partnerships 5.2 Knowledge on how to protect and restore Mediterranean forests is captured, managed and disseminated to accelerate climate and biodiversity action: development of new knowledge products for dissemination to non-technical audiences, including in rural areas, peri-urban areas and cities. <i>Budget for 2025-26: 300,000</i>

4. Leadership and Partners

The proposed MFI will be developed collaboratively with Mediterranean states and communities, aiming to build on existing initiatives and knowledge networks while leveraging new opportunities for joint action and financing.

Leadership:

UNEP, FAO and UNDRR

Partnership:

UfM, EFIMed, Partner countries of the Mediterranean, Barcelona Convention, UNEP/MAP RACs, Mio-ECSDE, IUCN, CEDARE, Observatory of the Sahara and the Sahel (OSS)

5. Budget

Indicative 2.65 M USD for the period 2025/2026

**Protection and restoration of Seagrass/Posidonia Meadows as crucial ecosystems
(MED Posidonia Meadows)**

Policy message

Preserving and maintaining healthy marine and coastal ecosystems are central to the activities and commitments of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. These ecosystems are not only vital for the sustainable development of the region, but more importantly, for the well-being of humanity.

Posidonia meadows are one such habitat, playing a key role in supporting a vast number of marine species. They also provide essential ecosystem services, such as protecting coastlines from erosion and sequestering carbon. These benefits are vital for maritime economic activities like tourism and fishing, as well as for life on Earth.

Protecting, sustaining, and restoring the Mediterranean's unique biodiversity, including 100% of its threatened Posidonia meadows, is not just necessary—it's imperative!

Concept note

MSSD Objective	MSSD Targets	MSSD Indicators	SDGs	Barcelona Convention Protocols
Objective 2: Improve the health, productivity, restoration and resilience of the marine and coastal ecosystems	Target 6: By 2030, at least 30 per cent of the Mediterranean Sea is protected and conserved through well connected, ecologically representative and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, ensuring adequate geographical balance, and sustainably managed by applying ecosystem-based approaches including biodiversity and climate change-informed marine spatial planning, and by conducting environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments	Indicator 7: Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine territorial waters	SDG 14, Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development	- Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean - Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) in the Mediterranean

1. Background

The Posidonia new flagship initiative was initially discussed during the 20th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) that took place in Marseille (14-16 June 2023), which suggested to present the initiative as new Flagship Initiative of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD).

An initial draft concept note was submitted to the Stetting Committee of the MCSD of 18-19 April 2024 which in principle expressed a positive opinion on the new flagship initiative and indicated the need to

prepare a developed version of the concept note for next meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee and for the 20th MCSD meeting.

The Posidonia flagship initiative would support the implementation of major international commitments such as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Protocol Specially Protected Areas and biological diversity in the Mediterranean, the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post2020 SAPBIO), and the "Action Plan for the Conservation of marine vegetation in the Mediterranean" adopted within the framework of the Protocol Specially Protected Areas and biological diversity in the Mediterranean.

2. Overall aim and Objectives

This flagship initiative aims to support the implementation of several critical Mediterranean frameworks and targets designed to protect and sustain the Mediterranean's unique biodiversity and natural resources.

1. Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post2020 SAPBIO)
2. The Action Plan for the preservation of marine vegetation in the Mediterranean adopted within the framework of the Protocol Specially Protected Areas and biological diversity in the Mediterranean.
3. The Mediterranean Posidonia Network (MPN) roadmap as tool to implement the provision of the Mediterranean regional Action Plan.

This would be achieved by capitalizing the best practices already implemented by different countries and fostering cooperation among a wide variety of stakeholders in this flagship initiative—a critical role that will address the pressing challenges within the region. These integrated efforts shall lay the foundation for maintaining the ecological integrity of the Mediterranean, protecting its high biodiversity, and ensuring sustainable use of natural resources for future generations.

3. Key actions and deliverables

The achievement of the above objectives is to be ensured through the following activities:

- **Improve knowledge on Posidonia** focusing on its distribution, status, and the various pressures it faces. This will involve (1) Mapping the areas where Posidonia is present, especially in Mediterranean countries where data is still lacking or outdated and (ii) analyzing the specific pressures impacting Posidonia in each region, such as anchoring, illegal fishing, habitat artificialization, pollution, and invasive species. This analysis will also identify potential solutions to mitigate these pressures, assessing their feasibility in terms of costs, resources, governance, opportunities, and challenges.

Deliverables

- Continuous update of national and regional mapping of the distribution of Posidonia meadows and their status

- **Implementation of Innovative initiatives** by (a) establishing a Posidonia Fund, as a new financial mechanism that shall focus on financing conservation actions at priority sites independently of carbon compensation and (b) Developing active and passive restoration projects to reduce the pressure on key sites.

Deliverables

- Establishment of Posidonia Fund
- Number of active and passive restoration projects to reduce the pressure on key sites

- **Reinforcement of regulations** by (1) promulgation of legislation for the protection of Posidonia meadows and prohibition of anchoring in Posidonia meadows for ships over 20 meters and (2)

by establishing marine protected areas to protect the most representative seagrass meadows and those that could be considered natural monument of importance for the marine environment by applying the protection and management measures recommended by articles 6 and 7 of the SPA/BD Protocol.

Deliverables

- Guidelines to design legislation and regulations relative to the conservation of Posidonia meadows
 - Number of MPAs including Posidonia Meadows
 - Surface/Percentage of *Posidonia oceanica* habitats within Marine Protected Areas
- **Enhance the management of priority sites/**
 - **Capacity enhancement** through the development of practical toolkits for managers of marine protected areas and initiatives aimed at raising awareness among Maritime Spatial Planners in the region to facilitate the incorporation of seagrass and blue carbon ecosystem protection into their planning processes.

Deliverables

- Practical toolkits (Taxonomy, conservation biology, Monitoring Techniques)
 - Guidelines to consider Seagrasses and Blue carbon ecosystem in MSP
- **Raise awareness and engagement** by establishing local and national partnerships aimed at promoting behavioral changes and encouraging positive actions among stakeholders. Additionally, organize regional cultural events in collaboration with cultural and natural heritage institutions, NGOs, local governments, and community members. An example of this could be an annual celebration dedicated to Posidonia on the occasion of the World Seagrass Day celebrated each first of March.

Deliverables

- Local and national partnerships established
 - Annual celebration dedicated to Posidonia on World Seagrass Day (1 March each year)
- #### **4. Leadership and Partners**
- **Leadership**
 - SPA/RAC
 - **Partnership**
 - Partners: The French Biodiversity Agency (OFB), IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, WWF Mediterranean, The Mediterranean Posidonia Network¹
 - Countries: France, Tunisia, Spain, Malta, Cyprus, Algeria, Türkiye, Italy, Greece

¹ <https://medposidonianetwork.com/>

Towards a Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient Blue Tourism in the Mediterranean (MED Blue Tourism)

Concept note

Policy message:

Healthy Mediterranean Sea and coasts are the key assets for coastal and marine (blue) tourism, one of the most crucial blue economy sectors of the Mediterranean in terms of economic value, local employment and social development. As the attractiveness of the coastal and maritime tourism sector (blue tourism) is closely interlinked and dependent on a healthy environment, urgent actions are needed to mitigate severe impacts on natural ecosystems and adapt it to the increasing extreme climate events. Such actions are crucial to improve the resilience of the sector and transform it towards a more environmentally sustainable and socially responsible economic activity. It is, therefore, necessary to develop a long-term vision through regional and multi-scale cooperation among key stakeholders, by promoting a shared governance, integrated management frameworks, adequate policies and regulations, technical and political knowledge sharing, innovative pilot actions, and regenerative business models.

MSSD Objective	MSSD Targets	SDGs	Barcelona Convention Protocols
Objective 5 Transition towards sustainable, green, blue and circular economy and sustainable finance	Target 11: By 2030, 50% of Mediterranean Countries have in place effective regulatory and policy frameworks, including economic incentives, aimed at facilitating the development of sustainable business models that integrate circularity and eco-innovation principles in the green and blue economies, while contributing to the development of non-pollutant and socially inclusive economies, in line with the Sustainable Consumption and Production Regional Action Plan for the Mediterranean	SDG 12, Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	- Integrated Coastal Zone Management Protocol - Land-Based Sources Protocol

1. Background

This new Flagship initiative, presented during the 20th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) in Marseille (14-16 June 2023), builds on two existing initiatives: the **Blue Tourism Initiative** (BTI)² and the Interreg Euro-MED **Community4Tourism** (C4T)³ (2023-2029). I) The Blue Tourism Initiative is a global initiative led by IDDRI and eco-union, with a Mediterranean component coordinated in collaboration with the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation and co-financed by the French Government (through the French Facility for Global Environment - FFEM), UNEP (One Planet Program), GIZ (Our Blue Future) and the World Bank (PROBLUE). Launched in 2022, the initiative aims to improve the governance of coastal and marine tourism, reduce its environmental pressures and increase its social benefits. II) The Interreg Euro-MED Community4Tourism (C4T) (2023-2029), a multi-partner project led by DIBA – Barcelona Provincial Council (Spain), with Plan Bleu/RAC serving as a key partner. This project seeks to enhance international cooperation in tourism policy governance to foster a greener, more innovative, and resilient tourism sector across the Mediterranean. The proposed Flagship Initiative is transversally linked to all six Strategic Objectives of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, while contributing to a number of 2030 Agenda SDGs and it is technically anchored to recent reports on sustainable blue tourism development: Towards

² Blue Tourism Initiative: <https://bluetourisminitiative.org/n>.

³ Community4Tourism: <https://planbleu.org/projets/community-4-tourism/>.

Sustainable Blue Tourism: Trends, Challenges, and Policy Pathways (IDDRI & eco-union, 2023⁴), Catalogue of Best Practices on Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean (Plan Bleu, 2022)⁵ and State of Play of Tourism in the Mediterranean (Plan Bleu & eco-union, 2022)⁶ which outlines key challenges and opportunities faced by marine regions and the Mediterranean in adopting sustainable blue tourism models.

2. Overall aim and objectives

The proposed Flagship initiative promotes sustainable blue tourism policies and practices in the Mediterranean through a bottom-up approach, engaging diverse stakeholders, with special attention to local stakeholders as youth, women and local communities. It aims to enhance multi-scale and multi-sectorial cooperation, share best practices, and develop new tools and indicators for sustainable tourism governance and management in coastal areas. The main overall objective aims at advancing towards sustainable blue tourism in the Mediterranean, thus supporting the decarbonization of the sector and reducing its negative impacts on natural ecosystems and biodiversity and improving its environmental, social and economic resilience to extreme climate related events.

3. Key actions and deliverables

The proposed Flagship Initiative would be implemented through three main Actions:

Action 1 - Knowledge building and monitoring mechanisms

Regularly assess the impacts of blue tourism, conduct sectorial sustainability and policy effectiveness assessments, and enrich the body of knowledge available to blue tourism stakeholders. Action 1 will guide the activities of the flagship initiative, ensuring that blue tourism pilot actions in Action 2 are well-aligned with regional, national and local contexts.

Action and Deliverables include:

- Development of blue tourism monitoring mechanisms, indicators and toolkits to support, promote and benchmark sustainable blue tourism at destination / national / regional level.
- Continuously assessing policy effectiveness and its impact on regional blue tourism.
- Addressing socio-economic and geographical disparities in the Mediterranean
- Evaluating the effects of crises on the blue tourism sector and proposing timely mitigation strategies.
- Highlighting standout practices, challenges, and innovation opportunities within the sustainable blue tourism sector
- Outline opportunities for expanding blue tourism networks

Action 2 - Implementation of innovative blue tourism field activities to bridge the gap between destination-level action and relevant policy and governance mechanisms.

Action 2 supports field actions at pilot sites in Mediterranean countries and monitors their evolution to ensure sustainable development of blue tourism through inclusive and participatory approaches. For the time being, the identified pilot sites are: Djerba Island, (Tunisia), Al Hoceima National Park (Morocco) and Tyre Coast Nature Reserve, Palm Islands Nature Reserve and Anfeh Salt Pans (Lebanon).

Action and Deliverables include:

- Assessment of the state of play of blue tourism and tourism externalities per each pilot site.
- Development of sustainable blue tourism initiatives and support local governance mechanisms for sustainable blue tourism at each pilot sites.
- Capacity-building activities to enhance the stakeholders' capacity to support the development of new ecotourism products.
- Organisation of workshops at each pilot site to facilitate the sharing of lessons learned and promote the replication and scaling up of successful blue tourism practices.

⁴ Blue Tourism Initiative: <https://bluetourisminitiative.org/publications/>.

⁵ Catalogue of Best Practices on Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean (Plan Bleu, 2022): <https://planbleu.org/publications/catalogue-meilleures-pratiques-tourisme-durable/>.

⁶ State of Play of Tourism in the Mediterranean (Plan Bleu & eco-union, 2022): <https://planbleu.org/en/publications/state-of-play-of-tourism-in-the-mediterranean>.

Action 3: Regional cooperation for sustainable blue tourism

The aim of Action 3 is to foster regional cooperation in sustainable blue tourism and provide opportunities for inter-regional exchanges and synergies. It will ensure that sustainable BT models developed in Action 2 are leveraged through the sharing of lessons learned and their integration into governance and policy processes at the Mediterranean levels. A specific attention will be paid to raise the profile of blue tourism related issues on the environmental, social and economic policy agenda, including at UNOC 2025 and other relevant institutional frameworks.

Action and Deliverables include:

- Launch of the Flagship Initiative during the 3rd UN Ocean Conference (side event, parallel conference).
- Organisation of regular Inter-regional cooperation exchanges between target countries in the Mediterranean and with other marine regions
- Development of sectoral and thematic Roadmaps and Action Plans, programmatic documents that identify areas for strengthening cooperation on tourism issues within and across regions, including on water consumption and waste generation
- Establish a formal, multi-sectoral working group within the Mediterranean region to boost innovative policy dialogue within the sector, build on the strategic directions outlined in the roadmaps, and capitalise on the results of different regional initiatives.
- Organisation of an annual Mediterranean high-level Conference by the blue tourism working group, which will have a sub-sectoral focus on connecting sustainable blue tourism solutions with governance and policy. It will serve as a platform for blue tourism awards
- Develop sustainable blue tourism indicators to add to the MSSD dashboard, under the coordination of Plan Bleu and UNEP/MAP

4. Leadership and Partners

- Leaders

- ECO-UNION (Spain) and IDDRI (France)

- Partners

- CSOs: Plan Bleu/RAC, IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation.
- Supportive Countries: France, Spain
- Implementing countries: Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Montenegro.

**Youth involvement in the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development and the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development implementation
(Med Youth Group - MYG)**

Concept note

Policy message

Youth involvement must be at the heart of local, national and regional policies and institutional frameworks. Young people bring fresh perspectives and energy, which are essential for achieving sustainable development across the Mediterranean. By creating opportunities for their active participation in environmental and discussions, we can foster a future where their ideas contribute to the long-term well-being of Mediterranean coasts and seas. Empowering youth should start now and today to ensure a more efficient and innovative path toward sustainability in the Mediterranean region.

MSSD Objective	MSSD Targets	SDGs
Objective 6 Improve governance at all levels, cooperation and partnerships in support of resilience and sustainable development	Target 13: By 2030, 70% of Mediterranean Countries have mechanisms in place to ensure subsidiarity and synergies between policies at different levels of decision- making across sectors in the long-term and across border thus enhancing policy coherence on sustainable development (PCSD), including involvement of stakeholders	SDG 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

1. Background

The 20th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) of June 2023, acknowledged the importance of youth and gender perspective as important aspects of sustainable development for consideration in the work of the MCSD and for inclusion in the new updated Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD).

In December 2023 in Portoroz (Slovenia), COP23 gave a clear signal that UNEP/MAP is ready to act effectively and timely to support the region in transitioning towards nature-positive economic models which need to embed also just and inclusive processes, where dual whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach is needed. To this end, COP23 put under the spotlight also the meaningful engagement with youth and women, as key agents of change, and in line with the conclusions of the 20th Meeting of the MCSD and following up the discussion on youth involvement initiated at COP21 held in Naples in December 2019.

The COP23 Ministerial Declaration specifically invests in future generations as it is crucial to involve youth in environmental issues and decision-making processes, notably through modernizing education programs and promoting education for sustainable development, raising the level of inter-generational collaboration, involving young people in the activities of local, national, and regional institutions and environmental programs, as well as in planning and implementing measures for adaptation to climate change, biodiversity conservation, prevention and reduction of marine pollution, in particular marine litter.

2. Overall aim and Objectives

The Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) is a key framework for the future of Mediterranean Youth, therefore it is important the Youth can actively contribute to the work and processes of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) as well to the implementation of the MSSD. The objective is to define the participation of the representative of the Mediterranean Youth Group (MYG) as an important aspect of sustainable development for

consideration in the work of the MCSD as well as in the revision and implementation of the updated MSSD.

3. Key actions and deliverables

The above-elaborated objectives will be achieved through several activities.

Activity 1: Consolidation of the Mediterranean Youth Group (MYG)

Consolidation of the Mediterranean Youth Group (MYG), with a representative role in the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (MCSD) and the meetings of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (COP), possibly through inclusion as MCSD member and MAP Partner. In particular, the following activities will be implemented:

- Development of the Governance Structure
- Resource Mobilization and Sustainability
- Proposed roadmap and timeline with the activities of the MYG
- Reports informing the MCSD on the progress of the group, group activities and related outcomes, and youth perspectives on themes related to the MCSD work
- List and report of members, youth networks and organizations who are part of the MYG.
- Group charter defining MYG's mission, governance structure, and operating procedures.
- Establishment of 3 thematic sub-groups within MYG for key environmental and sustainability challenges focused on marine life, climate change, and green transition/decarbonization of economic sectors

Activity 2: Providing Inputs for the MSSD Implementation

MYG will actively contribute to the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) through the following actions:

- Organization of webinars, in-person meetings, capacity-building, and awareness sessions for young stakeholders, focusing on the socio-economic and environmental challenges the MSSD tackles
- Liaising and cooperating with the coordinators of MSSD flagship initiatives to identify opportunities for MYG to meaningfully support
- Development and dissemination of surveys targeting a representative number of young people across the Mediterranean, gathering insights on their vision, priorities, and proposals for action.
- Regular reports to the MCSD summarizing MYG's contributions and youth perspectives and their ambitions in alignment with the MCSD work, based on survey results and consultations
- Establishment of dedicated MYG sub-groups, focusing on Education and Capacity-Building and Gender
- Capacity Building & Awareness

Activity 3: Supporting MSSD Outreach and Representation

MYG will actively contribute to the outreach efforts of the MSSD by representing youth voices in both regional and international environmental events, conferences, and youth assemblies:

- Ambassadors Role, including Representation and Contributions
- Reports submitted to the MCSD and its Steering Committee on the outcomes and insights gathered from participation in these events.
- Activity reports summarizing MYG's outreach efforts, participation in international projects, and contributions to the implementation of the MSSD.

4. Leadership and Partners

• Leadership

For the initial phase, the Mediterranean Youth Group (MYG) will be led by the founding members who conceived the idea to ensure the initiative is firmly established and progresses smoothly. Once the foundational structure is solidified, two focal points (preferably one young man and one young woman to ensure gender equality) will represent the group.

- **Potential Partnership**

- IECD – J-Med
- NGOs involved in the implementation of SDGs, Med sustainable development in the Med Sea (Mediterranean SOS Network (MedSOS) – Greece; Amici della Terra Italia (Friends of the Earth Italy) – Italy; L'Association de Sauvegarde de la Nature et de l'Environnement (ASNE) – Tunisia; RAED (Arab Network for Environment and Development) – Egypt; DOTO (Diaries of the ocean) - Lebanon
- Med Countries
- INFO/RAC
- Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)
- MIO-ECSDE
- Anna Lindh Foundation
- Académie des Talents Méditerranéens

**Strategy for the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus
in the Mediterranean Source to Sea continuum
(WEFE Nexus)**

Concept Note

Policy message

System-thinking using the combined Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus and Source to Sea (S2S) management approach can enable sectoral and spatial integration for policy development and implementation, and management of natural resources and socio-economic activities, away from the “silo” sectoral approach, in an innovative and effective way. A regional Strategy, adopted at Ministerial level, and further equipped with action planning, financing and monitoring arrangements, would assist Mediterranean countries to improve the integration of policy and management frameworks and instruments across WEFE sectors and spatial components to minimise risks and maximise benefits related to human livelihoods and socio-economic development in the Mediterranean S2S continuum.

MSSD Objective	MSSD Targets	MSSD Indicators	SDGs	Barcelona Convention Protocols
Objective 3: Promote sustainable resource management, and food security through sustainable forms of rural development and food systems	Target 8: By 2030, all the Mediterranean countries will have at least 50% of their population using safely managed drinking water services, secure access to surface and groundwater, in quantity (to guarantee food security and nutrition) and quality (public health issue via sanitation) in a multi-level context of water stress, competing demands and growing shortages, particularly for vulnerable populations and women	Indicator 14: Proportion of population (in %) using safely managed drinking water service	SDG 6, Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	Land-Based Sources Protocol

1. Background

The WEFE Nexus approach builds up on the decades of experience on the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)⁷ while the Source to Sea approach builds on efforts for spatial integration in the source to sea continuum such as the Integrative Methodological Framework (IMF)⁸. Both approaches help leverage IWRM, integrated coastal management planning and marine spatial planning by enabling the engagement of multiple sectors, assessing cross-sectoral trade-offs and synergies, optimizing overall security of resources and aiming to find solutions that take integrate considerations of -if not all- more than one sector or at least avoid harming the other three sectors when developing activities in each one of them (“no harm principle”).

⁷ <https://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/iwrm.shtml>

⁸ <https://iczmplatform.org/storage/documents/b1wUPA4UtQvagztjcArnXKnDBVN0YqUkg3EWpxi.pdf>

Given the geomorphological features in the Mediterranean region, water, sediment, biota etc. flows connect land, watersheds, aquifers, wetlands, coast and the activities based therein with the sea, providing a spatial land-sea or Source to Sea (S2S) continuum. Combined pressures of all sectors' demands are exerted on ecosystems, including coastal wetlands and marine protected areas, and the critical services they provide also affecting the economy.

There is a growing recognition that system-thinking using the combined WEFE Nexus and S2S management approach, enabling sectoral and spatial integration for policy development and implementation, and management of natural resources and socio-economic activities, assists in moving away from the "silo" sectoral approach in an innovative and effective way. This has the potential to provide multiple benefits to society, by supporting: (a) adoption of sustainable socio-economic practices, contributing in reducing environmental footprint and reversing biodiversity loss; (b) increase of resilience and enhance adaptation to climate change; (c) achievement of global policy goals, such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and goals related to green energy transition, circular economy, and healthy living; (d) regional cooperation, social cohesion, conflict prevention and peace building; and (e) economic development, by supporting job creation, enabling investments opportunities and investment risk management, while fostering regional economic integration, among others by promoting Circular and Blue Economy.

2. Overall aim

The MCSD flagship initiative on WEFE Nexus in the Mediterranean S2S continuum **aims to assist the elaboration, implementation and monitoring** of the 'Strategy for the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea continuum' towards enabling the mainstreaming of system-thinking and the application of the WEFE Nexus approach in the region's S2S continuum within improved governance structures at different levels.

3. Goals, objectives and actions

The MCSD flagship initiative on WEFE Nexus in the Mediterranean S2S continuum, will:

Phase A. Assist the drafting and approval at appropriate political level of the 'Strategy for the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea continuum'

A regional consultation process on the draft Strategy is on-going, launched in June 2023, in Rabat. The Strategy is proposed to be considered for approval at Ministerial level by the end of 2025. This may be done by the suggested 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Water as well as by the 24th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP24).

At its current draft, the Strategy includes three Goals, supported by a set of eight Objectives.

- Goal 1: Appropriate institutional arrangements, policies, and cooperation frameworks are established at country and regional levels.
 - o Objective 1.1: Develop and/or accordingly adapt appropriate governance structures at all levels to implement the Nexus approach in the S2S continuum.
 - o Objective 1.2: Mainstreaming WEFE Nexus approach in the S2S continuum into policies and strategies
- Goal 2: Efficient and effective planning, financing and implementation of management and technical solutions.
 - o Objective 2.1: (Shifting) Upscaling demonstration Nexus applications to mainstreamed implementation, through appropriate investments and market mechanisms.
 - o Objective 2.2: Increasing financing for planning and implementation of Nexus interventions.
- Goal 3: Informed decision making based on enhanced science-based knowledge, engagement of capacitated stakeholders, and increased public awareness.
 - o Objective 3.1: Promoting Science and Education on WEFE Nexus and S2S aspects.
 - o Objective 3.2: Ensuring data availability, harmonisation and sharing across sectors and borders

- Objective 3.3: Developing capacities of stakeholders and related tools to implement WEFE Nexus at the S2S continuum.
- Objective 3.4: Raising awareness and improving understanding concerning the WEFE Nexus at the S2S continuum, stimulating stakeholder's engagement and empowering them for their implementation.

Phase B. Upon approval, assist the implementation and monitoring the 'Strategy for the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea continuum'.

Upon eventual approval, the Strategy is expected to inspire and further enable various existing and eventually new schemes, programmes and projects, good practices' sharing, development of flagship initiatives, multi-stakeholder engagement, partners' alignment, donors' mobilization, as well as assistance to countries in setting up appropriate integration mechanisms and advancing implementation of WEFE practices. Enabling the Strategy's implementation, these could be described in an Action Plan that will link possible lines of work with partnerships and related financial resources, serving as a living technical document. The MCSD flagship initiative would engage on the side of the Barcelona Convention in the Action Plan preparation.

Furthermore, the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (2016-2025) led by the MCSD as well as the UfM Water Policy Framework for Actions 2030 and its Financing Strategy, provide engaging processes of state and non-state actors to facilitate institutionalizing and implementing the Nexus approach. In that content, and based on the Action Plan, the MCSD flagship initiative would assist promoting investment mobilisation, demonstrating the Nexus business case through demos, building capacities and disseminate knowledge, etc.

Furthermore, the MCSD flagship initiative will assist the Barcelona Convention, jointly with the UfM through its WEFE Working Group, to provide a light monitoring framework of the WEFE Nexus implementation process, aiming to assess progress and strategically orient to-wards further action for achieving the set goals.

4. Leadership and Partners

Reflecting the mechanism established for the Strategy elaboration process, the following partnership will mobilise the MCSD Flagship Initiative on WEFE Nexus in the S2S continuum:

- Policy process leadership
 - UNEP/MAP, Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention
 - Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)
 - EC DG NEAR
- Technical process leadership
 - Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med)
 - Water and Environment Support mechanism (WES) Project
 - PRIMA Partnership for Research & Innovation in the Mediterranean area
- Flagship action partnership
 - MCSD Members
- Beneficiary Countries
 - All Mediterranean Countries

5. Finance

Various financial sources, in cash and in kind, would be mobilised. Phase A would be supported by: the GEF UNEP/MAP MedProgramme Child Project 2.2 on WEFE Nexus; EU WES BCA Project; PRIMA WEFE4Med Project; on-going MCSD arrangements (e.g. regular and ad hoc meetings and technical services); contributions by the MCSD members (e.g. for commenting on drafts); etc. Phase B support will be considered based on developments.

Women leadership for Environment and Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean (Med Women leadership 4 SDGs)

Concept Note

Policy message

Gender equality must be a priority of national policies, budgets, and institutions.
Women that lead the way on Environment and Sustainable Development can jointly make the difference for a more inclusive sustainable development of the Mediterranean coasts and sea.

MSSD Objective	MSSD Targets	SDGs
Objective 6 Improve governance at all levels, cooperation and partnerships in support of resilience and sustainable development	Target 13: By 2030, 70% of Mediterranean Countries have mechanisms in place to ensure subsidiarity and synergies between policies at different levels of decision-making across sectors in the long-term and across border thus enhancing policy coherence on sustainable development (PCSD), including involvement of stakeholders	SDG 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

1. Background

The COP 23 gave a clear signal that UNEP/MAP is ready to act effectively and timely to support the region in transitioning towards nature-positive economic models which need to embed also just and inclusive processes, where dual whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach is needed. To this end, COP23 and its Ministerial Declaration put under the spotlight also the meaningful **engagement with youth and women, as key agents of change**, and in line with conclusions of the 20th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development, of June 2023.

During COP 23 H.E. Maša Kociper, Slovenian State Secretary, hosted a gathering of women Heads of Delegations and representatives of international organizations, building on the relevant successful initiative launched by the First Lady of the Republic of Türkiye, gathering women leaders of the participating countries that took place during the COP22 Antalya (Turkey), 7-10 December 2021. The gathering highlighted the importance of achieving women's full, equal and meaningful participation as an enabler of the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was highlighted.

Most recently, the Mediterranean Coast Day on 25 September 2024 spotlighted the pivotal role of women in sustainable coastal management.

At global level specific initiatives, such as the respective gender action plan of each one of the three Rio Conventions (UNFCCC, CBD & UNCCD) as well as the Generation Equality Forum represent key reference frameworks.

2. Overall aim and Objectives

The **overall aim** of the flagship initiative is to engage with women leaders in the Barcelona Convention Contracting Parties and representing different socio-professional sectors, public authorities as well as policy leaders, private sector, financial - public and private - institutions and banks/donors, academia, civil society, NGOs, etc., to spotlight and keep high in the political agendas the pivotal role of women as active actors in facing the triple planetary crises of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss and in supporting the implementation of the SDGs in the Mediterranean.

Accordingly, the **objectives** of the flagship initiative are:

- Promote and streamline opportunities of women leaders to share their experience in the framework of high-level events/meetings across the Mediterranean and at international level
- Showcase actions, achievements, challenges and insights of women leaders

- Share best practices and key regional projects, inspiring new perspectives and replication
- Foster joint collaborative efforts among policymakers, international organisations, civil society organizations, academics, local communities and concerned networks and promote shared policy advocacy and initiatives, strengthening the multi-level and multi stakeholders' commitment to progress towards '*switching the Mediterranean to green*'
- Support multi-level awareness raising on the role played by women in main economic sectors the Mediterranean coasts and seas rely on
- Further promote women's leadership role in planning and decision-making roles related to environment and sustainable development issues
- Inspire and promote concrete opportunities for young women to become the future leaders
- Streamline contribution on women role to other MSSD flagship initiatives, i.e. on youth and research and education, sustainable blue tourism, etc.

3. Key actions and deliverables

The following **main activities** are envisaged:

- **Activity 1:** Support a **partnership among key high-level events/initiatives in the Mediterranean** tackling the leadership role of women for environment and sustainable development in order to ensure information sharing and capitalisation.

This activity will support the cooperation and linkages/continuation among the outcomes of the **UNEP/MAP COPs initiatives dedicated to women leaders**, the sessions of the **PAM Women Parliamentary Forum** and its Expanded Advisory Board and the **High-Level Conference on Women for the Mediterranean and the Regional Dialogue Platform on Women Empowerment of the Union for the Mediterranean**.

Deliverables:

- o Joint policy papers
 - o Streamlined contribution to respective processes on women leadership for environment and sustainable development
 - o Expansion of the partnership
 - o Set up of a working group of *Med Women leadership 4 SDGs*
- **Activity 2:** Promote **the opportunities for women leaders to share their experience and** promote mutual learning, showcase actions, achievements, challenges, insights, best practices and key regional projects across the Mediterranean, with multi-level and multi-sector stakeholders, inspiring new perspectives and replication opportunities, involving also local authorities, academia, private sector, civil society, academia, NGOs, etc.

Deliverables:

- o Regularity include a specific session dedicated to *Med Women leadership 4 SDGs* in key annual/biannual events such as: UNEP/MAP COPs side events, Mediterranean Coast Day, MEDPROGRAMME events, events organised by MSSD flagship initiatives, etc
 - o Regularity liaise with WestMED, EUSAIR Macro regional strategy, INTERREG Euro-Med, INTERREG Next South and INTERREG Adrion, PRIMA Programme, in order to capitalize on regional and sub-regional projects outputs gender related
 - o Capitalise at policy level the main deliverables and good practices of relevant projects led by women at regional level

- **Activity 3:** Ensure **reinforced policy advocacy and outreach**, also based on the deliverables of Activity 1 and 2, at international level, and with the support of a dedicated task force appointed to review and promote gender mainstreaming across all the MSSD strategic framework

Deliverables:

- o Participation, contribution and policy papers for the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and other high-level relevant forums
 - o Participation, contribution and policy papers for the EU policy instances, as the European Committee of the Regions, the Commission for Economic Policy (ECON) and

- Commission for the Environment, Climate Change and Energy (ENVE)
- Cooperation and advocacy with The Women/Gender Caucus under the three Rio Conventions: UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD; Generation Equality Forum

- **Activity 4:** Promotion of **young women** as future leaders for SDGs in the Mediterranean.

Deliverables:

- Leadership programmes in schools and universities focused on sustainable development, and ensure they are accessible to girls and young women, and in liaison with the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development
 - Centralized online database of capacity building and training actions and opportunities for young women to develop leadership skills on sustainable development
 - Online training in conjunction with MEDECC and MIO-ECSDE
 - UNEP/MAP contest and Award *Med young Women leadership 4 SDGs* in the framework of the COP biannual meetings
- **Activity 5:** Mapping of existing data and potentially integrate the analysis on the **gender gap** regarding the participation and access of Mediterranean women to leadership roles related to environment and sustainable development, both in public institutions and private sector, in particular of young women, and **monitor the progress**.

Deliverables:

- Analysis on the gender gap and related reasons regarding the participation and access of women to leadership roles related to environment and sustainable development
- Specific indicators on the progress of women in leadership position on environment and sustainable development.

4. Potential Leadership and Partners

- **Leadership**

- Two female representatives of the MCSD members; Secretariat of UNEP/MAP

- **Partnership**

- PAM Women Parliamentary Forum
- Countries: France, Slovenia (Current Bureau Chair), Egypt (Next Bureau Chair), Algeria (hosting of 2024 Mediterranean Coast Day), etc
- UFM
- Plan Bleu/RAC, PAP/RAC and INFO/RAC
- Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED)
- ASCAME
- EPLO
- CPMR-InterMediterranean Commission
- OECD – Istanbul Centre

5. Finance

40,000 USD voluntary contribution for the Activity 5 on Mapping of existing data and potentially integrate the analysis on the gender gap regarding the participation and access of Mediterranean women to leadership role.