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Agenda item 3: Work of the MCSD and MSSD Implementation. Review of Progress for the Period July 2021 – April 2022

Agenda item 4: Specific Issues

Agenda item 5: The Global and Regional Agenda on Sustainable Development in 2022-2023: Opportunities and Perspectives for the MCSD

Progress Report and Specific Issues

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Progress Report and Specific Issues

1. The present document provides information on the work done for the period July 2021 – April 2022, as a follow-up of the 19th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD), chaired by Slovenia through videoconference from 7-9 June 2021. It also includes specific issues for consideration by the 23rd Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee.

2. Conclusions of the 19th Meeting of the MCSD were reflected in the Antalya Ministerial Declaration and relevant decisions of the 22nd Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols (COP 22) (Antalya, Turkey, 7-10 December 2021).

3. Mr. Mitja Bricelj (Slovenia), President of the MCSD, presented the outcome of the 19th Meeting of the MCSD during the Meeting of MAP Focal Points in September 2021 and COP 22.

4. On 9 December 2021, H.E. Mrs. Emine Erdoğan, First Lady of the Republic of Turkey, took part in the COP 22 Ministerial Session and presented the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award to the city of Málaga, Spain. Ms. Joyce Msuya, who also attended the Ministerial Session as UNEP Deputy Executive Director, commended the commitment of the Contracting Parties.

5. Adopted on 9 December, the Antalya Ministerial Declaration[1] calls for leaving a pollution-free legacy, protecting biodiversity and sustaining climate sustainability, as a strong expression of political support to the collective endeavor within the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention framework to achieve a healthy Mediterranean Sea and coast in the context of sustainable development.

6. The Report of COP 22 (Reference Document UNEP/MED IG.25/27) is available online[2] and includes *inter alia* the following decisions, which are of particular interest for the work of the MCSD:

- Decision IG.25/1: UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2027

7. The MTS 2022-2027 is aligned with the Rio+20 Outcome Document and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Underpinning the UNEP/MAP's role as an integrator of global processes at regional level, the Strategy encompasses contributions to the implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the Paris Agreement on climate change, the UN Decade of Action for the SDGs, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and the UN Decade on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

8. Among other objectives, the Strategy aims to strengthen solidarity and peoples' prosperity, and to contribute to the Building Back Better approach of the UN framework for the response to the COVID-19 crisis towards a green recovery in the Mediterranean, supporting sustainable business models, and enabling a transition to nature-based solutions and a circular economy.

9. The implementation of the MTS 2022-2027 is envisaged to be a collective process, under which the Strategy is used as a common platform for joint actions by the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat, as well as international and regional organizations and stakeholders in the Mediterranean region, including MAP Partners, MCSD Members, and civil society organizations at large.

- Decision IG.25/3: Governance, including Annex II "Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) between UNEP/MAP and parliamentarians' regional bodies, namely the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) and the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development (COMPSUD)", which are Members of the MCSD, and Annex V "Composition of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development for 2022-2023 – Non-Contracting Party Members", as reproduced in Annex I of the present document.
- Decision IG.25/4: Assessment Studies, including endorsement of the Summary for Policy-Makers (SPM) of the First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR 1) published by the network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC).

[1] https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/37122/21ig25_27_AntalyaDeclaration_eng.pdf
[2] https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/37121;jsessionid=4680C85A2386ED64DB2504070A987CC8

- Decision IG.25/18: Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products (see relevant publication in Document UNEP/MED WG.523/Inf.1). These regional measures are expected to foster the formulation of national policies to support the development of green businesses in the Mediterranean countries. They aim at promoting policy coherence among the Contracting Parties and synergies among national stakeholders towards support to the creation and development of green businesses through capacity building and technology transfer, strengthening the demand for more sustainable products, and supporting the shift from linear economy to innovative green and circular business models.
- Decision IG.25/19: UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2022-2023, providing substantive resources to implement the MTS 2022-2027.

10. COP 22 adopted other decisions which can provide a valid contribution to the MSSD implementation, including *inter alia*: Regional Plans in the framework of Article 15 of the LBS Protocol on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management (Decision IG.25/8); Amendments to the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean in the Framework of Article 15 of the LBS Protocol (Decision IG.25/9); Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) (Decision IG.25/11); Protecting and conserving the Mediterranean through well connected and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, including Specially Protected Areas and Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (Decision IG.25/12)[3]; Designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides (Med SOX ECA) pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI (Decision IG.25/14); Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) (Decision IG.25/16); and, Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027) (Decision IG.25/17).

11. In addition, the resumed session of the 5th UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2) concluded on 2 March 2022 in Nairobi, Kenya, with the adoption of 14 resolutions to strengthen actions for nature to achieve the SDGs, including *inter alia*: Resolution to end plastic pollution: towards an international legally binding instrument; Resolution on an enhancing circular economy as a contribution to achieving sustainable consumption and production; Resolution on nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development; Resolution on the environmental dimension of a sustainable, resilient and inclusive post COVID-19 recovery; Resolution on biodiversity and health; Resolution on animal welfare – environment – sustainable development nexus; Resolution on sustainable and resilient infrastructure; Resolution for a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution.

A. Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard

12. Following the integration of SCP indicators in the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard, and their calculation with the most recent available data, Plan Bleu published indicator analytical factsheets and updated the dashboard, which is hosted by the website of the regional observatory on the environment and development[4].

13. In 2021, Plan Bleu and UNEP/GRID-Geneva have collaborated on enabling the access to geospatial datasets relevant for UNEP/MAP and for monitoring the MSSD implementation. The Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard, composed of 28 MSSD indicators plus 30 SCP indicators, as well as thematic planches illustrating specific relations between pressures resulting from human

[3] Decision IG.25/12 includes three key strategic documents: (i) Post-2020 Regional Strategy for marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean; (ii) Concepts to set up the Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance Day and the Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance Certificate; and (iii) Criteria for inclusion of Specially Protected Areas in the Directory of Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas

[4] https://www.obs.planbleu.org/en/

activities and the state of the environment were published into the World Environment Situation Room (WESR: https://wesr.unep.org), which is the UNEP data, information and knowledge platform.

14. That collaboration made use of MapX, an open source online cartographic platform developed by UNEP/GRID-Geneva, under the umbrella of the WESR. MapX was selected because this UNEP product is already integrated into the WESR, including a set of advanced GIS functions and data of high quality, and has the capacity to integrate with other platforms and web products.

15. That collaboration successfully demonstrated the feasibility for Plan Bleu to present spatially, in an online platform, explicit information on the interactions between environment and development in the Mediterranean, through customized maps and story maps. Building on this first achievement, Plan Bleu is now structuring the Mediterranean observatory on the environment and development on the WESR. This makes the Mediterranean a frontrunner as the first Regional Sea Convention within the WESR. As by April 2022, the outputs include more than 200 layers/views, which are combinable with query-able data and can be consulted on the WESR.

16. WESR Med was among the ten pilot projects selected to illustrate the potential of the WESR platform, which was officially launched during UNEA-5.2 in February 2022.

17. Plan Bleu expressed the need to implement tailored functions in 2022, and to benefit from technical support from UNEP/GRID-Geneva to update, directly online, the MSSD indicators and to develop a specific module to present the MedECC Atlas in an interactive way.

18. Finally, from April to November 2021, Plan Bleu led an activity with the *Centre International de Droit Comparé de l'Environnement* (CIDCE) towards the development of legal indicators to monitor the effectivity of the application of the Barcelona Convention. A series of indicators have been tested in three pilot countries, i.e., France, Tunisia, Turkey, and a technical report has been published: see relevant publication in Document UNEP/MED WG.523/Inf.1.

Issues for consideration:

19. Following-up on the conclusions and recommendations of the 19th Meeting of the MCSD, and taking into account the living nature of the list of indicators of the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard and the need to keep it under review under the guidance of the MCSD Steering Committee, with the technical support of Plan Bleu and SCP/RAC, as international work on SDG indicators progresses, the Members of the MCSD Steering Committee may provide advice to the Secretariat about the integration of the dashboard into the global WESR, considering this opportunity for an efficient monitoring of progress towards sustainable development in the Mediterranean. That process would allow the optimal alignment and consistency of the dashboard with ongoing global processes on SDGs indicators and the global UNEP data strategy, ensuring that indicators are regularly measured and adequately communicated within the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system and beyond.

20. More generally, of the SDGs' 93 environment-related targets, 26 SDG indicators are monitored by UNEP, which is the custodian agency having the mandate to collect and report data for these indicators to the UN Statistical Division for the Secretary General Progress Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Most of those indicators are of interest for UNEP/MAP, but only a few have been included in the Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS). In addition, UNEP has prepared a draft Regional Seas Core Indicator Set, as recommended by the UNEP Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2022-2025[5]. Data for those 22 indicators will be based on country submissions to the UNEP Regional Seas Programme through relevant secretariats of UNEP-administrated Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. To this end, UNEP is developing a data reporting system, building on the Indicator Reporting Information System (IRIS), which is part of the WESR.

21. Taking into account the above-mentioned processes, and in the perspective of finalizing important assessments (e.g., 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report, MED 2050 Foresight Study), it may be worth and timely to engage a dialogue with the Members of the MCSD Steering Committee about the following challenges: (i) Streamlining the MAP monitoring system with relevant global and

[5] https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/36810/RSSD.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

regional processes, (ii) Integrating relevant SDG and regional sea indicators into the BCRS, including the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard; (iii) Fine-tuning reporting mechanisms. Opportunities for capacity building and specific training could be part of that reflection to strengthen and align the BCRS with relevant global reporting and monitoring systems. Discussions could be also engaged to study the feasibility of integrating legal indicators into the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard.

B. MSSD Flagship Initiatives

22. At its 19th Meeting, the MCSD noted with appreciation the advanced status of implementation of the MSSD Flagship Initiatives[6], acknowledging the efforts provided by MCSD Members and Observers, partners and the Secretariat, and encouraging them to pursue communication actions.

23. The paragraphs below provide an overview of the progress made for the MSSD Flagship Initiatives in which the Secretariat is directly involved.

Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award

24. In the period July-November 2021, the technical committee – formed by representatives of the Secretariat, including MAP Components / Regional Activity Centres, and three independent experts – evaluated the applications based on the selection criteria, and subsequently shortlisted three cities. The city of Málaga was recommended to the Jury (i.e., Members of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties and the President of the MCSD) as the winner.

25. In parallel, on 26-27 October 2021, the Secretariat co-organized with Med Cities and the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) a regional workshop on city-to-city cooperation and on lessons learned from and perspectives for the award. This workshop offered a regional forum for experience sharing to Mediterranean applicant cities, capitalizing on their experiences in view of improving the process of the award in the future[7].

26. The award giving ceremony was part of the COP 22 Ministerial Session. On 9 December 2021, H.E. Mrs. Emine Erdoğan, First Lady of Turkey, presented the award to Ms. Gemma Del Corral Parra, Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Málaga, Spain. During the ceremony, Ms. Tatjana Hema, UNEP/MAP Coordinator, applauded the commitment of local authorities to sustainability and environmental protection, encouraging the participation of citizens, as well as the incorporation of technology and innovation in local solutions to live in harmony with nature. She highlighted the solutions implemented on the field by the Municipality of Málaga to reconcile socio-economic development with environmental protection, and to build back better in the post-Covid era. Following-up on the award's ceremony, there was an exchange of letters, through the Secretariat, between the First Lady of Turkey and the Mayor of Málaga, as well as with the UNEP/MAP Coordinator, to reciprocally acknowledge mutual efforts in supporting the sustainable urban development agenda.

27. Looking forward to receiving the voluntary contribution from Turkey in view of launching the fourth edition of the Award, the Secretariat has prepared a roadmap for the 2022-2023 edition, as included in Annex III of the present document, for consideration by the MCSD Steering Committee.

WeMed Green Business Award

28. Following the adoption of Decision IG.24/3 at COP 21, the Secretariat (SCP/RAC) inaugurated the WeMed Award for environmental innovation and green entrepreneurship. Supported by the EU SwitchMed programme, this award recognizes business achievements, and efforts of public authorities in creating an enabling environment for green entrepreneurship, promoting a green business ecosystem conducive to the implementation of SDG 12 "Responsible production and consumption".

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[6] See Annex II of the present document and the MSSD Reporting Table (Document UNEP/MED WG.493/Inf.6: https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/36015/21wg493_inf6_engonly.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y), as well as the webpages dedicated to MSSD Flagship Initiatives in the UNEP/MAP website: https://www.unep.org/unepmap/what-we-do/mediterranean-strategy-sustainable-development-mssd

[7] More information: https://medcities.org/medcities-unep-map-arlem-and-the-ufm-secretariat-join-forces-organising-a-regional-workshop-on-sustainable-mediterranean-cities-cooperation/

29. For the first edition of the WeMed Award, three categories were opened for (i) sustainable business model in an early stage; (ii) sustainable business model in a growth stage, and (iii) public authorities having developed initiatives and instruments supporting sustainable businesses.

30. SCP/RAC received 117 candidatures that were reviewed with the support of a well experienced jury formed by seven members. The award's ceremony took place on 20 October 2021 during the online edition of SwitchMed Connect. The winners were: Green Fashion, Egypt; FabricAid, Lebanon; the Jordan Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Fund. More information is available online[8].

31. The second edition of the Award will be launched in November 2022. It is expected to focus on and increase outreach about green and circular economy businesses within the textile value chain.

Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC)

32. As an open and independent international scientific expert network founded in 2015, MedECC aims at providing information to decision-makers and the general public on the basis of available scientific knowledge. Since 2018, Plan Bleu hosts the Scientific Secretariat of MedECC, composed from 2018 until December 2020 of a scientific expert from AIR Climat in the frame of a partnership with the UfM Secretariat. To ensure continuity of functioning, Plan Bleu modified its statutes to acknowledge hosting of the MedECC Secretariat and subsequently hired this expert as a programme officer in January 2021. In addition, the UfM Secretariat renewed the MedECC technical assistance contract with the association AIR Climat for 2021-2023, which enabled incorporating a second scientific expert into the MedECC Secretariat since June 2021.

33. In 2021, Dr. Fatima Driouech (University Mohammed VI Polytechnic, Morocco, Vice-Chair of the IPCC Working Group I) joined MedECC as third coordinator. The two other MedECC coordinators remain Dr Joël Guiot (CNRS, France) and Prof. Wolfgang Cramer (CNRS, France).

34. The Summary for Policy-Makers (SPM) of the First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1), published by MedECC in November 2020, was formally endorsed by COP 22 through Decision IG.25/4 "Assessment Studies" and is reflected in the Antalya Ministerial Declaration. In addition, the SPM was recognized as an important contribution of the scientific community to future climate and environmental actions in the Mediterranean region, in the Ministerial Declaration of the Second UfM Conference on Environment and Climate Action (Cairo, Egypt, October 2021).

35. MAR1 shows that the Mediterranean region is particularly vulnerable because it cumulates environmental risks, including strong warming and drying (up to 6°C by 2100), accelerating sea-level rise (presently 4 mm per year), rapid urbanization, increasing pollution of air and water, and the impacts of mass tourism. Ecosystems suffer from land degradation, including the loss of half of the wetlands, overfishing (20% of fish species at risk of extinction by 2050), non-sustainable agriculture, wildfires (burnt area may double by 2100) and non-indigenous species. These factors strongly impact water resources, biodiversity on land and at sea, human health and security, with the most severe consequences for the South and the East of the basin.

36. The 2020 North-South Prize of the Council of Europe was awarded to MedECC for "its efforts to address climate change and biodiversity conservation in the Mediterranean and in particular by drafting the first-ever scientific assessment on climate and environmental changes impacts in the Mediterranean Basin". The jury stated that MedECC constitutes a concrete example of the vision of the Mediterranean Sea as a shared space of peace, development, and human rights. The ceremony took place on 9 December 2021 in Lisbon, Portugal; the Prize was conferred by the Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa on Prof. Wolfgang Cramer and Dr Joël Guiot, MedECC Coordinators. The President of the Assembly of the Portuguese Republic, the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and the President of the Executive Committee of the North-South Centre participated in the event. The prize was also awarded to the International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP).

[8] WeMed Award website: https://www.wemedaward.org/

37. The SPM has been translated to several languages: Arabic, Catalan, French, Greek, Spanish, and Turkish. The main results of MedECC have been presented at various events[9] since July 2021, among them the IUCN World Conservation Congress and the *Forum des mondes méditerranéens* held in Marseille, France, in September 2021 and February 2022 respectively. Since July 2021, more than 15 international press articles about MedECC and MAR1 have been published. Other communication actions include a press conference (IUCN Congress), a press release (North-South Prize), newsletters, five infographics presenting the results of MAR1, videos and podcasts on MedECC.

38. MedECC experts contributed to the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), published in February 2022, with a cross chapter paper dedicated to the Mediterranean basin[10]. This paper was prepared under the co-leadership of Prof. Wolfgang Cramer.

39. MedECC's current work focuses on three thematic reports related to specific challenges identified in MAR1: Coastal risks (Report 1), Climate-water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus (Report 2) and Environmental change, conflict and human migration (Report 3). A call for authors' self-nominations was launched in 2021. Scoping meetings were organized for each report and the reports' coordinators were appointed. The coming months will be dedicated to developing the draft of these reports, in view of their publication in 2023. In the meantime, the MCSD Members and Plan Bleu Focal Points will be consulted by the MedECC Secretariat on the draft outlines and draft reports.

40. MedECC envisages to participate in the UNFCCC COP 27 that will take place in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, in November 2022. The Secretariat is also working towards a MAP side event and is exploring the opportunity to co-organize a Mediterranean pavilion with the UfM Secretariat.

Regional Assessments and Knowledge Exchanges of High- and Low-Tech Solutions successfully Implemented to Achieve Waste Reduction

41. Through the EU-funded Water and Environment Support (WES) regional project in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood region, MIO-ECSDE, UNEP/MAP, the UfM Secretariat and COMPSUD mobilized collective efforts to set into motion this MSSD Flagship Initiative.

42. As a key achievement, an online repository of Mediterranean best practices in achieving waste reduction was launched in January 2022, with 20 case studies available in English and French[11]. By making available in a user-friendly way the description, key challenges and results of selected Mediterranean case studies, this online repository aims at transferring knowledge and techniques to stakeholders of the region and enable them to replicate or adapt these viable approaches. This first set of 20 cases covers various aspects of waste management, including prevention, reduction, reuse, and recycling, as well as a variety of waste fractions and instruments: awareness raising, legal instruments, economic incentives, etc. The publicly available website is a living platform since it gives the opportunity to interested stakeholders to propose additional best practices to be considered.

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

43. Following the concept note prepared by COMPSUD and MIO-ECSDE, with the contribution of MEPIELAN, those partners agreed to cooperate with UNEP/MAP and the Secretariat of the UNECE-Aarhus Convention on the organization of a capacity building activity in support of this MSSD Flagship Initiative focusing on environmental governance and the accession to the Aarhus Convention, to strengthen the capacity of public authorities and to promote the engagement of relevant NGOs.

44. In the context of this partnership, and with the support of the EU LIFE Programme (Operating Grant for MIO-ECSDE) a desk study was conducted by MEPIELAN in 2021, resulting in a

[9] Details available at: https://www.medecc.org/news_2/
[10] https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_CrossChapterPaper4.pdf
[11] https://bestpractices-waste-med.net/

"Foundation Discussion Document (FDD) for the Mediterranean Accession Agenda to the Aarhus Convention" and a Summary for Decision Makers (see Document UNEP/MED WG.523/Inf.6).

45. The immediate next step will be the organization of a meeting of peers/experts, under the EU-funded WES regional project, to discuss the FDD and to identify the priorities and implications of the implementation of the Aarhus Convention in the Mediterranean region and countries.

Environmental Governance: *Develop capacity building programmes on issues related to implementation and compliance with environmental obligations and agreements, including environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments*

46. MEPIELAN has submitted to the Secretariat a project proposal entitled "Mainstreaming the Public Trust Approach (PTA) in the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention System", which is structured in three steps: (i) Analysis of the PTA and its applicability to the MAP system; (ii) Identification of priorities for the PTA application to the MAP policies through a regional workshop; (iii) Promoting an "Agenda for Applicability of the PTA to the Sustainability Governance of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention System", including a report to the MCSD and a publication. During the period under reporting, MEPIELAN prepared a policy paper on the PTA and its applicability to the MAP system, but challenges were faced for the full implementation of this project.

C. Promoting the MSSD in the Context of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs: Peer Learning

47. Taking into account that the 19th Meeting of the MCSD appreciated the exchanges of experiences on the transposition, implementation and monitoring of the SDGs at national level, and reaffirmed the value of the Simplified Peer Review Mechanism (SIMPEER) as an innovative and cost-effective incentive for promoting dialogue among Mediterranean countries, and taking into account that SIMPEER is included in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2022-2023, with external resources to be secured, there may be an opportunity to be considered by the MCSD Steering Committee in view of narrowing the scope of this activity to the SDG 14 "Life below water", through the involvement of volunteer MSCD Members representing Contracting Parties. This opportunity may be relevant in the context of the 2022 High-level Political Forum (HLPF), with SDG 14 under review.

D. MED 2050 Foresight Study

48. MED 2050 being a participatory exercise, Plan Bleu has pursued the coordination and collaboration with experts and Contracting Party representatives as below:

- Meeting once a year, the Advisory Committee was convened on 29 November 2021 through videoconference. In addition to the membership of experts from the Scientific Committee, Contracting Parties were invited to take part in this committee, which works on the basis of MED 2050 preliminary results. Counting 27 members, the Advisory Committee also includes representatives of funding agencies and international organizations.
- The Foresight Group has been further consolidated to bring together 39 experts. Supported by 21 additional external experts during several workshops, the Foresight Group concentrated its work on the production of 35 thematic factsheets.
- MED 2050 Network (+300 subscriptions): MCSD Members remain invited to identify interested experts to contribute to the MED 2050 network, by getting involved via the MED 2050 platform, and through participation in surveys or workshops.

49. During the period under reporting, MED 2050 focused on the implementation of "Module 1: Building up the foresight baseline – past and future trends, weak signals and disruptions" and "Module 2: Contrasting visions", as presented below:

- Under Module 1, most of the work concentrated on the drafting of 35 thematic factsheets; the themes have been identified for their relevance for the future of the Mediterranean region. The factsheets include a retrospective, the identification of main issues and hypotheses for future development, and they will be instrumental for the further work of the Foresight Group on

scenarios and transition paths. The report on the outcomes of Module 1 is enclosed in Document UNEP/MED WG.523/Inf.3.

- Under Module 2, several activities aim at building contrasting visions of the future of the Mediterranean, serving as complementary inputs to the work undertaken by the Foresight Group. A series of interviews of a panel of Mediterranean personalities has started, aiming to identify diverse visions of both a desirable and a non-acceptable future of the Mediterranean by 2050. In addition, a workshop with young persons aged 18-27 from Mediterranean countries took place online on 2 March 2022, and CIHEAM Montpellier organized with Plan Bleu a workshop with students on 7-8 March 2022, exploring their visions of the Mediterranean by 2050. Finally, a survey has been launched within the MED 2050 network to learn more about the network's visions of the Mediterranean future. The outcomes of module 2 are being posted progressively on the MED 2050 platform: www.med2050.org.

50. The next steps include completion of "Module 2: Contrasting Visions" (Quarter II 2022) and implementation of "Module 3 Reconciling trends, disruptions and weak signals, and contrasting visions to identify scenarios" (Quarters II to IV 2022), and Module 4 "Co-creating transition pathways and strategies in the short, medium and long terms" (Quarter IV 2022 – Quarter I 2023).

51. "Focus projects" are developed on specific issues and/or geographical scales to nurture MED 2050 with additional resources made available by partners wishing to benefit from MED 2050 for their priority areas of intervention. A workshop on the nexus Demography – International Migration – Sustainable Development, co-organized with the University of Bari, Italy, and other institutions, took place in December 2021. In addition, a local project on anticipating the adaptation of the coast to climate change through participatory foresight has started in the South of France and will continue until 2024, with the support from the *Fondation de France*. Finally, a local project, supported by the French Development Agency (AFD), explores the future of the Moulouya river basin in Morocco, taking into account climate and environmental change, through a workshop (12-13 January 2022).

Issues for consideration by the MCSD Steering Committee:

52. As part of module 3 on scenarios, Plan Bleu will organize workshops where the (draft) scenarios will be discussed by different stakeholders. Plan Bleu would appreciate guidance from the MCSD Steering Committee concerning the identification of opportunities to present and discuss the (draft) MED 2050 scenarios, starting in Quarter IV 2022. Options currently considered include a workshop during the *Forum de la Mer* (Tangier, Morocco, 23-24 September 2022); and a workshop that Plan Bleu would like to organize with Mediterranean youth, possibly in Egypt in December 2022, and for which Plan Bleu would appreciate support from MCSD Members located in Egypt.

53. As soon as preliminary results of module 4 on transition pathways are available in Quarter I 2023, Plan Bleu would appreciate an exchange with the MCSD Steering Committee and MCSD Members on how MED 2050 results can best feed into the MSSD Review process.

E. Draft Rationale for the MSSD Review Process

Background: MSSD implementation and mid-term evaluation

54. Adopted at COP 19 in February 2016 by Decision IG.22/2, the MSSD provides an integrative policy framework for all stakeholders and partners to translate the global 2030 Agenda and SDGs at the regional, sub-regional, national and local levels in the Mediterranean. Being supported by UNEP/MAP through the guidance of the MCSD, the implementation of the MSSD is a collective process: the efforts of all stakeholders play a decisive role in its delivery.

55. Following-up on Decision IG.24/03 adopted at COP 21 in December 2019, based on an inclusive consultation process with MCSD Members and MAP Partners, the Secretariat carried out the MSSD mid-term evaluation in 2020-2021, with the aim of making the Strategy implementation, at its second phase, more efficient, focusing on gaps, shortcomings and opportunities, and of further aligning its objectives, strategic directions and actions with the SDGs in the post-COVID era.

56. The mid-term evaluation highlighted the following achievements for the period 2016-2021:

- The MSSD is the unique regional sustainability strategy, providing an integrative roadmap to improve the state of the region by 2025 – five years ahead of the 2030 Agenda deadline.
- Recognized by stakeholders and partners as a driver to reach the SDGs in the Mediterranean, the MSSD contributes to the regional sustainability agenda, influencing practices on the field.
- The MCSD plays an essential role to support and promote the implementation and monitoring of the MSSD. The Commission contributes to knowledge sharing and dissemination of good practices among Contracting Parties, MCSD Members and MAP Partners.
- The development of MSSD Flagship Initiatives not only involves partners and stakeholders on concrete actions and achievements, but it also increases the visibility of the MSSD and supports the concrete advancement of the SDGs in the Mediterranean. A wide number of innovative programmes, projects and initiatives contribute also to the MSSD implementation.

57. Other important achievements linked with the work of the MCSD are the following:

- Publication of two regional assessment reports: the 2020 report on the State of the Environment and Development (SoED) and the MedECC MAR1 on climate and environmental change.
- The Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard provides an indicator-based picture of the state of sustainability in the Mediterranean countries and region. The perspectives introduced with the integration of the dashboard into the WESR should result in an even more dynamic platform.
- Two editions of SIMPEER supported Contracting Parties in streamlining their work for implementing in synergy sustainable development policies and environmental obligations.

58. The mid-term evaluation identified the following main gaps in the MSSD implementation:

- The pace of implementation of the MSSD is too slow to match with the 2025 deadline.
- The MSSD suffers from a lack of visibility, awareness, and engagement from non-UNEP/MAP stakeholders. The MSSD does not clearly identify the implementing partners of strategic directions and actions, which may lead to a lack of ownership and commitment.
- The level of financial investment into the MSSD activities is insufficient to ensure its effective implementation and reach its objectives. The MSSD would benefit from a strategy to attract relevant financial actors and increase available funds.
- The MSSD monitoring mechanisms should be strengthened in view of providing a timely and comprehensive picture of the state of sustainability in the Mediterranean region.

Draft rationale for the MSSD Review Process

59. Under its Strategic Direction 7.2, the MSSD plans that “the Strategy will be reviewed after ten years, taking into consideration global developments, and a new Strategy will then need to be defined by 2025”. This corresponds to Action 7.2.5: “Review the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (2023-2025), issuing a new Strategy for the period 2026-2035”.

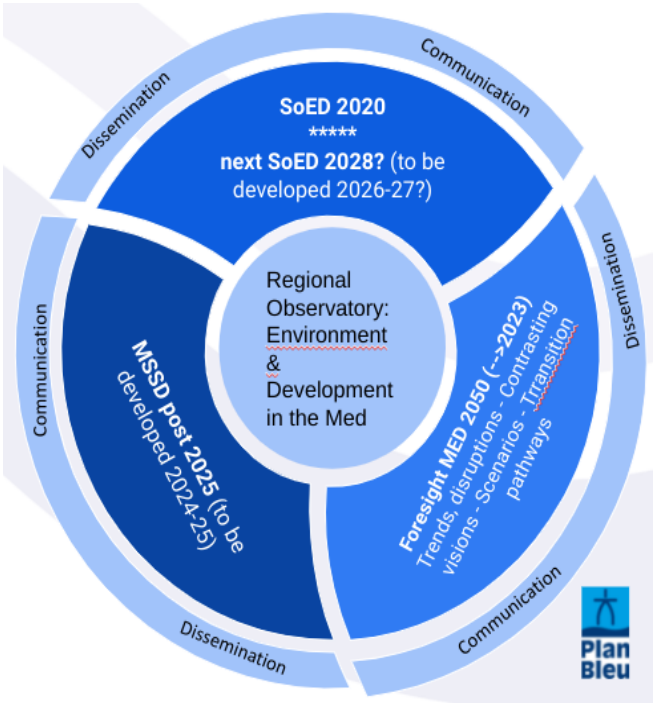
60. The initial MSSD was adopted in 2005 for a period of ten years: its deadline matched with the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015). The MSSD 2016-2025 has also a ten year-timeline: it starts the same year as the SDGs (2016) and it is expected to come to its end in 2025, namely at the end of the next biennium (2024-2025) and five years prior to the deadline of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. The preparation of the MSSD in 2014-2015 benefited from the preparation of the 2030 Agenda at the global level; both processes were conducted in parallel.

61. Taking into account the above, the MCSD Steering Committee may engage a reflection on the MSSD Review process, considering the regional (2025) and global (2030) milestones, in view of possibly aligning the regional process with the global one.

62. In addition, the end of the MED 2050 foresight exercise, planned to be finalized in 2023, is just in time to inform the work that could take place in 2024-2025 to define the post-2025 MSSD.

MED 2050 outcomes will be relevant for any strategic long-term reflection on the sustainability of the Mediterranean, as it will identify contrasting scenarios of the future of the region, including a desirable scenario, and the possible transition pathways and milestones needed to reach this desired scenario.

63. The Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard, supported by the regional observatory on the environment and development, is one of the relevant tools feeding strategic and assessment studies. It helps conduct assessment studies such as the SoED, which, in turn, form a basis to conduct strategic foresight work (e.g., MED 2050), which, in turn, can usefully feed into the elaboration of strategic work, such as a post-2025 MSSD, which, in turn, requires monitoring and follow-up on its effects. The figure below illustrates this virtuous cycle of interconnected processes:



64. The Secretariat invites the MCSD Steering Committee to consider the proposed options below:

- Option 1 – Towards a MSSD 2026-2040: MSSD final evaluation and MSSD Review process to be undertaken in parallel in 2024-2025 (i.e., next biennium), with the outcome of MED 2050 feeding the new MSSD. The MSSD 2026-2040 would have a 15-year timeline, with a MSSD mid-term evaluation in 2032-2033, allowing consideration of the links with the post-2030 global sustainable development agenda – which will presumably be adopted before 2032. A possible, business-as-usual alternative option would be to stick with the MSSD ten-year timeline towards a MSSD 2026-2035, with the 2030 horizon at mid-term.

- Option 2 – Short extension of the MSSD's timeline: MSSD final evaluation to be undertaken in 2026-2027, right after the end of its 10-year implementation, in parallel of both (a) the independent indicator-based evaluation of the MTS 2026-2027 (2027) and (b) the preparation of the next SoED (2027). The new/next MSSD would be then drafted on the basis of a wider stakeholder consultation in 2028-2029, in the context of the MTS 2028-2033, allowing the SoED 2027 outcomes to be taken into account in the new/revised MSSD 2030-2039 (10 years) or 2030-2044 (15 years). This option 2 may present the following shortcoming: the MSSD starting the last year of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. An alternative option could consist of advancing the process of one biennium, namely undertaking the MSSD final evaluation in 2024-2025 and the MSSD Review process in 2026-2027, in view of a MSSD 2028-2037 (10 years) or MSSD 2028-2042 (15 years), but that alternative would not solve the issue of having a new MSSD before the end of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs and will probably miss the opportunity to take full advantage of the SoED 2027.

65. Whatever the scenario for the MSSD Review process would be envisaged, it remains relevant to explore the following opportunities raised by the MSSD mid-term evaluation, depending on funding, and not limited to:

- Political commitment and leadership: Mirroring the global HLPF under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Commission, as well as Regional Forums on Sustainable Development organized on a yearly basis by the UN Regional Economic Commissions, and taking into account the linkages between SIMPEER and the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) presented at the HLPF, there may be an opportunity to organize Mediterranean Forums on Sustainable Development, increasing political visibility and stakeholder empowerment.
- Governance and coordination mechanisms: Empowering the MCSD Members representing the Contracting Parties to interact with relevant ministries, in view of a cross-ministerial political dialogue and engagement to improve the coordination mechanisms on sustainability affairs at the national scale, could be supported by revisiting peer review mechanisms (e.g., SIMPEER). At the regional level and through the MCSD, encouraging synergies and strengthening inter-connections with other international and regional commitments and platforms for sustainable development would also give a new impetus to the MCSD.
- Further involvement of the private sector: Engaging the UNEP/MAP system, and *in primis* the MCSD, with the private sector would allow regional business actors to become more aware of the MSSD and involved in its implementation. Communication campaigns could target the private sector, showing opportunities and benefits of the MSSD for socio-economic actors. Implementation of Decision IG.25/18 "Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products" could serve this purpose and the transition towards a circular economy.
- Finance mechanisms: Defining a roadmap for financing the MSSD implementation, including public and private financial mechanisms and potential investments sources, is another avenue to be explored for making the MSSD better funded.
- Communication mechanisms: Designing a specific MSSD label, with a logo, could reward the most relevant sustainability initiatives and promote the efforts of regional and national implementers (issue of recognition). Through this ad-hoc labelling process, the successful MSSD Flagship Initiatives could be promoted as best practices, scaled-up through adequate funding, and replicated. In addition, a dedicated on-line platform, with updated information, would contribute to share valuable learnings at regional and national level.
- Monitoring mechanisms: Reporting all initiatives that contribute to the MSSD implementation, at all levels, through a dedicated on-line platform, would allow a continuous and open monitoring process, engaging with relevant stakeholders.

F. The Global and Regional Agenda on Sustainable Development in 2022-2023: Opportunities and Perspectives for the MCSD

66. SDG 14 "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development" (or *Life below water*) is at the heart of global events in 2022, including *inter alia*: the One Ocean Summit (Brest, France, 9-11 February), organized during the French presidency of the Council of the European Union, with the *Forum des mondes méditerranéens* which served as a preamble (Marseille, France, 7-8 February); the Fourth Session of the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (New York, 7-18 March); the 2022 UN Ocean Conference (Lisbon, Portugal, 27 June – 1 July); the High-Level Political Forum (New York, 5-7 and 11-15 July), with SDG 14 under review.

67. Beyond the opportunities opened by that series of events to further promote the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system, including the work of the MCSD, and amplify its visibility, the MCSD Steering Committee could pre-identify suitable specific themes which echo both those high-level conferences and the on-going activities of the MAP Components, MAP Partners and MCSD Members.

Among those possible themes, the narrative related to the Med SOx ECA may be an opportunity to deepen socio-economic issues related to environmental matters such as greening port infrastructures, and/or decarbonizing the blue economy, including tourism through cruise and recreational boating. Recent publications on these themes are available as information and reference documents: see Document UNEP/MED WG.523/Inf.1. Those efforts and products could be also mobilized to articulate the two themes, i.e., (i) sustainable infrastructure and (ii) circularity in tourism, of the UNECE Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" to be held in Cyprus in October 2022.

G. Cooperation and Partners

Cooperation among Regional Seas in the context of the UN Decade for Ecosystems Restoration

68. In the context of the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), which is led by UNEP and FAO, the UNEP Regional Office of Europe has initiated, in collaboration with GRID-Arendal, the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), and secretariats of regional seas conventions and action plans, the preparation of a project gathering the five pan-European Regional Seas: Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, Caspian Sea, Baltic Sea, and North-East Atlantic basin. This project has the potential to be selected among UNEP Flagship Projects for the UN Decade.

69. The objective of the project is to protect, preserve and restore the ecological integrity and biological diversity of the pan-European regional seas through the improved management of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSA), Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and effective Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) within EBSAs. The effective establishment of MPAs within the EBSAs will be achieved through focused effort to create political momentum for marine and coastal ecosystem restorations in the five sea basins. The project will build institutional and technical capacities enabling the riparian countries to manage their EBSAs marine and coastal environments in an integrated, ecosystem-based way leading to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources. The achievement of this objective will be founded on extensive engagement with stakeholders at different governance scales. Subsequent mainstreaming of these capacities will support marine management strategies, planning tools, and policy advice at all levels.

70. The Mediterranean/MAP contribution to that project is under preparation. Plan Bleu proposed activities related to socio-economic assessment and analysis of the benefits from restoration actions, knowledge management and capacity building, including through participatory approaches in governance fora at the regional level but also at the level of pilot cases. The complementary activities proposed by SPA/RAC aim at replicating restoration activities in priority areas (e.g., existing or forthcoming MPAs) through three phases, namely (i) a comprehensive desktop review of past projects towards an inventory of restoration techniques, scientists' and managers' networks, and lessons learned from past experiences; (ii) in-depth capacity building and training at the site level (on-the-job training), including monitoring and evaluation, and local workshops; (iii) restoration activities in five pilot sites, including awareness raising and a strong communication component along the way. PAP/RAC also joined the consortium, which will be also expanded to key partners, in view of incorporating Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) approaches and tools in support to the ecosystem-based approach.

71. The Secretariat will inform the MAP Focal Points in due course, when the project's logical framework will be enough mature, in view of identifying relevant pilot sites and of obtaining support from interested Contracting Parties and donors.

UNECE Ninth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe"

72. Launched in 1991, the Environment for Europe (EfE) process provides a high-level platform for governments and stakeholders to support efforts from Member States of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) to advance environmental governance. UNECE serves as secretariat of the EfE Ministerial Conferences, and its Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) acts as the convening body for the preparation of the EfE conferences. Fourteen UNECE Member States are also Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, and it is the first time that the EfE Ministerial Conference is organized in a Mediterranean country.

73. Planned to be held from 5-7 October 2022 in Nicosia, Cyprus, and expected to host ~700 participants, the EfE Ministerial Conference is an important regional event. About up to 40 side-events and thematic exhibitions are expected to be organized during the Conference.

74. Based on the Batumi Initiative on Greening the Economy (BIG-E), which was a major outcome of the 8th EfE Ministerial Conference held in Georgia in 2016, the two themes of the 9th EfE Ministerial Conference are the following: 1. Greening the economy in the pan-European region: working towards sustainable infrastructure; 2. Applying principles of circular economy to sustainable tourism. In addition, the Third High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries will be organized back-to-back with the 9th EfE Ministerial Conference.

75. The Secretariat provided comments on the draft thematic background document "Applying principles of circular economy to sustainable tourism", highlighting key policy messages in line with the MAP's mandate and policies, to value initiatives and projects in which MAP components are involved, and to point out relevant project outcomes and publications; Plan Bleu has suggested 'possible actions for sustainable tourism'. In addition, the Secretariat provided comments on the draft Nicosia Ministerial Declaration.

76. The work of UNEP/MAP on Tourism and Sustainability in the Mediterranean, in particular relevant projects in which Regional Activity Centres are involved, should be duly mobilized, valued and recognized during the 9th EfE Ministerial Conference. MAP Focal Points should be also encouraged to take part in the EfE process through their delegations participating in the meeting.

Joint Work Plan (JWP) between UNEP/MAP and the European Environment Agency (EEA)

77. The UNEP/MAP – EEA Joint Work Plan (JWP) 2022-2030, concluded at the end of 2021, is aligned with the strategic outlook of both institutions, as outlined in the MTS 2022-2027 and the EEA-Eionet Strategy 2021-2030. These strategies have injected into the JWP important elements pertaining to the 2030 Agenda, the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the Paris Agreement, the Basel Rotterdam Stockholm Conventions, and the EU Green Deal. The JWP is expected to be operationalized through the establishment of yearly work plans around its four strategic priorities: (i) building strengthened knowledge base; (ii) responding to political priorities; (iii) supporting digital transformation; (iv) ensuring coordinated networking, communication, and stakeholder interaction.

78. An important part of the JWP is related to the generation of data and information, including indicators development/calculation, capacity building activities, as well as the development of tools, methods and approaches to measure sustainability achievements and effectiveness of responses and to prepare a sustainability gap report, addressing achievement of SDGs and targets, as well as UNEP/MAP, Barcelona Convention and Protocols objectives. This component aims at complementing the work on monitoring and assessment of the status of marine and coastal environment towards holistic assessments.

Other activities under cooperation and partners

79. With the view to continuing and strengthening the successful cooperation with the Italian Ministry of Ecological Transition (MiTE) established through the 2016 Bilateral Cooperation Agreement, a new agreement was signed in November 2021, to support the implementation of activities included in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work (PoW) and Budget 2022-2023, with a significant financial contribution of 2.8 million Euros. This support was fully integrated into COP 22 Decision IG.25/19 approving the PoW and Budget. The agreement funds provide essential support for *inter alia* the ecosystem approach (EcAp) and implementation of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP), as well as for strengthening the implementation of the updated Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter in the Mediterranean.

80. UNEP/MAP continues to participate in the implementation of the action plan entitled "The Mediterranean: a model sea by 2030 – PAMEx", initiated by France. As provided for in the governance structure of the action plan, France will second a technical expert in the UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit to support the coordination of the action plan implementation, ensuring synergies

with MAP activities and other regional initiatives. The administrative processes are ongoing, and the expert is expected to be on board in the second quarter of 2022. The implementation of PAMEx is expected to support the implementation of the MTS 2022-2027 and other regulatory and strategic MAP instruments, e.g., the 2021 Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management, the post-2020 SAP BIO, the Regional Strategy on pollution from ships, etc.

81. In line with the MoU between FAO-GFCM and UNEP/MAP, SPA/RAC continues to support effective actions for sustainable fisheries in the framework of the MedBycatch project, funded by the MAVA Foundation, and implemented through a partnership between ACCOBAMS, FAO-GFCM, UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC, IUCN-Med, BirdLife Europe and Central Asia, MEDASSET and WWF, in collaboration with local partners. The project addressed the knowledge gaps regarding the incidental catches (bycatch) of vulnerable species during fishing operations in the Mediterranean, conduct trials of mitigation measures, and support the development of policies and the formulation of national/regional strategies to reduce bycatch and increase the sustainability of fisheries. Project implementation involves field observation programmes covering different fishing gears, together with trainings and awareness raising. Although activities are implemented in five Mediterranean countries (Croatia, Italy, Morocco, Tunisia, and Turkey), the project aims at developing tools and building knowledge applicable to the entire Mediterranean and Black Sea basins.

82. In view of enhancing synergies with the IPPC, the UNEP/MAP Coordinator has met in October 2021 with Mr. Abdellah Mokssit and Ms. Ermira Fida, respectively IPPC Executive Secretary and Deputy Executive Secretary. As a follow-up, IPPC contributed with a virtual keynote intervention to the COP 22 high-level ministerial discussion, presenting the main findings of the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) – Climate Change 2021 "The Physical Science Basis" and the Cross-Chapter Paper on the Mediterranean region of the IPCC Working Group II contribution to the AR6.

83. In the context of the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (Geneva, Switzerland, 6-7 April 2022), the Secretariat collaborated with the UNEP Europe Office and UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe to organize the SDG 14 peer learning round table on "Enhancing ocean literacy and the sustainable development of regional seas".

84. At the 16th Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 9-10 March 2022, the UNEP/MAP Coordinator participated in the ceremony for the signature of the MoU between UNEP and PAM.

85. The UNEP/MAP Coordinator also participated in the ceremony for the signature of the MoU between UNEP and COMPSUD during the Plastic Busters MPAs Hybrid Capitalization Conference held in Athens, Greece, from 12-13 April 2022.

86. The Secretariat will continue working with the Secretariat of the UfM for the implementation and update of the MoU which was signed in 2013 by the two organizations.

H. Outreach, Information and Communication

87. The UNEP/MAP Coordinator and Mr Guillaume Sainteny, Plan Bleu President, attended the One Ocean Summit in Brest, France, on 9-11 February 2022, ensuring high visibility of the MAP system during the workshop dedicated to the Mediterranean Sea.

88. The UNEP/MAP Coordinator participated in the online side event organized during UNEA-5.2 "A 'zero pollution ambition' to protect nature and people". Organized by the Directorate-General for the Environment of the European Commission, with support from UNEP, this high-level side event set out challenges arising from pollution for achieving nature and biodiversity goals and to demonstrate how actions to reduce pollution protect nature and people, contributing to SDGs implementation.

89. Marking the 45th anniversary of the Barcelona Convention, a new video presentation of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system has been released[12].

[12] https://bit.ly/3JVMDfv

90. On the occasion of the 2022 edition of International Women's Day, UNEP/MAP has published a blogpost[13] in which the Coordinator reflects on "gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow".

91. The *Young Person's Guide to the Mediterranean Action Plan and the Barcelona Convention*[14] was released on 8 February 2021, offering a simplified introduction to the legal framework that UNEP/MAP and the Contracting Parties have established and gradually upgraded.

92. To boost digital presence, UNEP/MAP has launched a new page on LinkedIn, publicizing vacancies and calls for consultants, and offering content mirroring the MAP twitter account.

93. The UNEP/MAP digital presence will continue to rely on coordinated communication by the MAP Communication Task Force across social platforms through the consistent use of generic hashtags on all relevant platforms, i.e., #BarcelonaConvention and #Act4Med.

94. COP 22 highlights are accessible from a dedicated web page[15]. In addition to the two press releases issued by UNEP/MAP, a media encounter with representatives of *Agence France Presse* (AFP), BBC Turkey and TRT World was arranged on 10 December 2021 in Antalya, Turkey. An AFP dispatch on Med SOx ECA, quoting the UNEP/MAP Coordinator, was picked up widely by pan-Mediterranean media, including France 24[16]. The COP 22 exhibition is also available virtually, as a webpage[17] showing the stand including the panels developed by INFO/RAC on the main outcomes for the last biennium. The web page hosts also the products displayed during the side events and the videos produced, including the COP 22 trailer, the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award promotional video clip, and the IMAP Common Indicators video designed by INFO/RAC.

95. With about 6,000 on site and 3,500 online participants, the 7th IUCN World Conservation Congress took place in Marseille, France, from 3-11 September 2021. The Mediterranean Solutions Stand was co-organized by Plan Bleu and SPA/RAC, along with partner organizations. Plan Bleu and SPA/RAC are working with partners involved in the Mediterranean stand to further synthetize and publish the knowledge displayed during the various events. Communication material will include a catalogue of nature-based solutions in the Mediterranean region, and a policy brief for regional and local authorities to foster the implementation of nature-based solutions.

96. The Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean was co-organized by SPA/RAC, MedPAN, WWF and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, in Monaco and online from 28 November – 1 December 2021. It brought together ~220 in person and ~470 online participants. The forum post-2020 roadmap for Mediterranean MPAs integrated the feedback from the MPA Forum sessions and is expected to support the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean, adopted by COP 22.

97. Each year on 15 April, the Mediterranean region will mark a new official observance celebrating the Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs). The theme of the 2022 SPAMI Day celebration was "Cooperation and Collaboration", with the following slogan: *Together to protect the Mediterranean biodiversity*. The celebration started with an online SPA/RAC-led campaign supported by the Coordinating Unit and INFO/RAC, which the public can follow on social media platforms through the hashtags #SPAMIday2022 and #ProtectMedDay. Celebrations will culminate with a special event to be held in Monaco on 20 May 2022 under the auspices and with the participation of H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco. The Monaco "SPAMI Day special event", which SPA/RAC is organizing jointly with the Pelagos Agreement Permanent Secretariat and the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco, will be attended by the managers of the 39 SPAMIs, representatives of national institutions involved in SPAMIs' management and governance, relevant regional and international organizations, non-governmental organizations and donors.

[13] https://www.unep.org/unepmap/news/blogpost/gender-equality-people-and-nature-mediterranean
[14] https://bit.ly/334k92q
[15] https://bit.ly/BC-COP22
[16] https://bit.ly/3s83ggU
[17] www.info-rac/COP22exhibition

98. In collaboration with its MAVA projects partners, SPA/RAC is contributing to the production of documentary films on the conservation efforts in various Mediterranean countries.

99. Following the submission of the joint and coordinated proposal on the designation of the Med SOx ECA to the IMO in early February 2022, Plan Bleu launched a series of thematic videoconferences "Les Rendez-Vous du Plan Bleu"; the first edition focused on the Med SOx ECA.

100. The Resilience Information Platform for Adriatic Cities and Towns, prepared within the EU Interreg Croatia-Italy project AdriAdapt[18], and in which PAP/RAC was strongly involved, was populated with a set of adaptation options ranging from societal, green (nature-based) and grey (engineering) options; adaptation guidelines and handbooks including the Integrated Adaptation Planning tool; good practices; awareness raising material; and many other useful information. The tools and information contained in the platform can be easily used by all Mediterranean countries.

101. Plan Bleu participated in the *Forum des mondes méditerranéens* (Mediterranean Worlds Forum), held in Marseille from 7-8 February 2022, and organized several roundtables and workshops on blue economy opportunities and perspectives, solutions to climate change, adaptation to climate change in the coastal zones, and youth and sustainable tourism to save the Mediterranean.

102. In April 2022, Plan Bleu has launched "Planet Med", the first podcast series on the Mediterranean environment. A set of five podcasts features interventions from the UNEP/MAP Coordinator and Plan Bleu President, amongst other experts and partners, and is available online[19].

103. SCP/RAC turned the set of *Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products*, adopted at COP22 (Decision IG.25/18), into a publication (see Document UNEP/MED WG.523/Inf.1). Regarding Measure B1 "Mediterranean Network of Networks of Business Support Organizations (BSOs)", the network of BSOs has been created. SCP/RAC launched a call to action to establish Measure F1 "the first Sustainable Finance MED Observatory", gathering regional financial experts and impact investors around a platform for dialogue and promotion of common sustainable investment solutions. SCP/RAC is working on the creation of the Switchers Policy Hub, in the context of Measure P1 "Regional Policy Hub to support peer learning on policy instruments". Finally, SCP/RAC, CPMR and Plan Bleu, launched a publication on the Blue Economy (see Document UNEP/MED WG.523/Inf.5), aiming to foster the development of circular economy practices, thus contributing to Measure T2 "Creating an enabling framework for sustainable and inclusive businesses within sectors of the Blue Economy". A conference to share the main findings is scheduled in Barcelona, Spain, on 10-11 May 2022.

104. UNEP/MAP will participate at the MARLICE 2022 Conference (Seville, Spain, 18-20 May 2022). All Directors of the European Regional Seas and the European Union will participate to the open session "Connecting Seas" to discuss the way forward after the outcomes of UNEA-5.2, including the UNEA-5.2 Resolution "End plastic pollution: towards an international legally binding instrument" and the role of the Regional Seas in supporting the implementation of the envisaged actions framed and planned in the framework of that global treaty on plastics.

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[18] https://adriadapt.eu
[19] https://www.podcastics.com/podcast/planet-med/?tab=episodes

Annex I

Composition of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development for 2022-2023 –

Non-Contracting Party Members

Annex I: Composition of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development for 2022-2023 – Non-Contracting Party Members

Non-Contracting Party membership of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD), as approved by the 19th Meeting of the MCSD (Teleconference, 7-9 June 2021) and agreed by COP 22 (Antalya, Turkey, 7-10 December 2021).

New members are indicated in bold below:

- The Local Authorities Group: the *Agence des Villes et Territoires méditerranéens durables* (AVITEM – 2nd mandate), the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian cities (FAIC – 2nd mandate), and the **Mediterranean Cities Network (Med Cities)**

- The Socio-Economic Stakeholders Group: the Association of the Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASCAME – 2nd mandate), and the Economic and Social Council of Greece (ESCG – 2nd mandate), and the ***Fondation Mohammed VI pour la protection de l'environnement***

- The Non-Governmental Organizations Group: ECO UNION (2nd mandate), the Egyptian Sustainable Development Forum (ESDF – 2nd mandate), and the Network of Marine Protected Areas managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN – 2nd mandate)

- The Scientific Community Group: the **Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC)**, the ***Centre International de Droit Comparé de l'Environnement*** **(CIDCE)**, and **Dr. Fatima Driouech (Vice-Chair of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group I, University Polytechnic Mohammed VI, Morocco**)

- The Intergovernmental Organizations Group: the Arab Forum for the Environment and Development (AFED – 2nd mandate), the Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med – 2nd mandate), and the **Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN-Med)**

- Parliamentarians: the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians on Sustainable Development (COMPSUD), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), and the **Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (PA OSCE)**.

Annex II

Status of Implementation of the MSSD Flagship Initiatives

Annex II: Status of Implementation of the MSSD Flagship Initiatives

The table below presents the status of implementation of the 11 MSSD Flagship Initiatives – in green: launched/on-going; in yellow: under development/to be launched; in orange: not yet launched. Details are provided in the MSSD Reporting Table, as included in Document UNEP/MED WG.493/Inf.6, which is available online[20].

MSSD Flagship Initiative	**Leader, main partners**
1.1.10. Support the Trust Fund for Mediterranean marine protected areas The MedFund: https://themedfund.org/	Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, the Oceanographic Institute (Monaco), SPA/RAC, the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, MedPAN, WWF Med, IUCN Med, *Conservatoire du Littoral* (France) and the Mediterranean Small Islands Initiative
2.3.5. Promote the "Green list" (IUCN World Parks Congress) in riparian states to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of parks managing bodies	IUCN (the Green List) through its Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation: https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/our-work/iucn-green-list-protected-and-conserved-areas
3.1.9. Promote the "Environment Friendly City" Award approved by COP18 (Istanbul Declaration, December 2013)	UNEP/MAP through the voluntary contributions from Turkey, as per Decision IG.22/19 adopted at COP 19: https://www.unenvironment.org/unepmap/istanbul-environment-friendly-city-award
3.2.5. Create a sustainable urban toolbox for the Mediterranean, with a view to planning cities that will work for everyone, in order to make them inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	Med Cities through MedUrbanTools: http://medurbantools.com/
3.4.5. Undertake regional assessments, as well as knowledge exchanges, of high- and low-tech solutions, that have been successfully implemented to achieve waste reduction	Regional assessment and online repository launched in 2021 by MIO-ECSDE, COMPSUD and UfMS through the EU funded WES Regional Project: www.wes-med.eu
4.1.9. Establish a regional science-policy interface mechanism, including the social and behavioral sciences, endorsed by all the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, with a view to preparing consolidated regional scientific assessments and guidance on climate change trends, impacts and adaptation and mitigation options MedECC: https://www.medecc.org/	MedECC, UNEP/MAP and Plan Bleu, UfMS, Gov. of the Principality of Monaco, French Ministry for Ecological Transition, *Generalitat de Catalunya* (Spain), ADEME (France), Aix-Marseille University (France) and its Labex OT-MED, French National Institute of Research for Sustainable Development (IRD), MISTRALS Research Programme, Aix-Marseille Provence Metropole (France), etc.
5.4.5. Create and promote a Mediterranean business award for environmental innovation	SCP/RAC through Decision IG.24/3 adopted at COP 21 with the support of the SwitchMed Programme. WeMed Mediterranean Sustainability Award: https://www.wemedaward.org/.
5.6.5. Integrate sustainability principles into public procurement at national and local levels	*Not yet launched*
6.2.3. Encourage the adoption and implementation of the Aarhus Convention on Public Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters;	Activities launched in 2020 by MIO-ECSDE, COMPSUD and MEPIELAN through the EU LIFE Programme and further strengthened in 2021 through the EU-funded Water and Environment Support (WES) in the ENI Neighborhood South Region project: www.wes-med.eu

20 https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/36015/21wg493_inf6_engonly.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

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.	A first set of activities launched in 2021 by Panteion University of Athens/MEPIELAN, in cooperation with the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention Secretariat
6.5.5. Establish a publicly accessible Mediterranean integrated information system through a triumvirate of national governments, international institutions and the private sector to collate and transparently display information on the state of the environment	Plan Bleu through the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard and the Regional Observatory on the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean http://obs.planbleu.org/en/

Annex III:

Draft Roadmap – Fourth Edition of the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award (2022-2023)

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This roadmap is prepared in the context of the implementation of Decision IG.22/19 adopted in 2016 at COP 19 of the Barcelona Convention.

- **Secretariat**: UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit (CU) and Components (MEPDOL and Regional Activity Centres / RACs)
- **Task Force** led by the CU and composed of representatives of all MAP Components
- **Technical Committee**: Task Force supported by three independent experts to be approved by the Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD)
- **Jury**: The Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and the President of the MCSD

Draft Roadmap

Tasks, actions (what)	Implementers (who)	Period, dates, deadlines (when)
• **Benchmark study (technical report)** on similar initiatives (i.e., Awards and Prizes for cities/local authorities or tourist destinations in the domains of the environment and sustainable development), addressing criteria and key performance indicators (KPIs), processes (organization), eligibility criteria, outreach and communication, etc.	ENI CBC MED Sustainable Mediterranean Cities Project, in collaboration with the Secretariat	February-April 2022 towards finalization of a technical report in May 2022
• **Capitalization:** Revisiting and consolidating all the comments and feedback[21] received about the Istanbul Award's process and methodology (from independent experts, applicant cities, and MAP Components) in view of preparing a short **synthesis note**, to be discussed by the MCSD Steering Committee towards technical recommendations for improving and fine-tuning the methodology. The synthesis note should point out pros and cons (positive aspects and points to be improved), highlighting bottlenecks, and resulting in a few recommendations to overcome obstacles.	ENI CBC MED Sustainable Mediterranean Cities Project, in collaboration with the Secretariat	February-April 2022 towards finalization of a technical report in May 2022
• **Review and update of the methodology** (assessment framework), including list of criteria/indicators, application form, user's guide, evaluation tool, based on desktop work and lessons learned from previous experiences. One of the objectives will be to	• **Draft updated methodology (assessment framework) and application form** by ENI CBC MED Sustainable Mediterranean Cities Project • Consultation of relevant experts, Med Cities and MAP Components (Secretariat)	• May 2022 • May-June 2022

[21] Beyond relevant notes from the three independent experts, plus a few interesting suggestions by MAP Components/Regional Activity Centres, most of the Power Point presentations of the 2021 Barcelona Workshop include relevant 1-2 slides each.

simplify as far as possible the assessment framework, including the application form and its indicators. If it may be needed to maintain mandatory KPIs in the application form, applicant cities should be able to provide data for calculating them at two different dates (e.g., 2020-2021 and 2015-2016), taking into account technical capacities of municipalities and data availability. It is important to keep in mind that the technical committee is expected to measure progresses towards sustainability rather that the state of sustainability. Relevant qualitative indicators should also be maintained or introduced in the application form, allowing to applicant cities to tell a story and to report on their partnerships (including city-to-city cooperation and twinning between cities, partnerships with civil society organizations or academia, etc.).	• Finalization of the assessment framework and application form (in English) (Sustainable Med Cities project and Secretariat) • Translation into French of the updated application form • Updated application form available online, including online calculation tool for quantitative indicators (Sustainable Med Cities project and Secretariat)	• June-July 2022 • July-August 2022 • September 2022 – noting that any delay may put the 4th edition of the Award in difficulty
• **Launch the call for applicant cities** • Disseminate a press release and leaflet • Send a letter to MAP Focal Points, MCSD Members, MAP Partners and MAP Components, inviting them to disseminate the call • Mobilizing key partners and targeted local authorities *** *Need for a helpdesk: pre-check before official submissions of applications. Possible training session for participating cities (tbc)* ***	• Secretariat, in collaboration with MAP Components and key partners • Secretariat, with support of the Sustainable Med Cities project	• 25 September 2022: Mediterranean Coast Day
• **Select three independent experts** to support the Task Force, and invite the MCSD Steering Committee to approve the selection	• Secretariat	• March 2023
• **Collect applications** and acknowledge receipt	• Secretariat	• April 2023 (deadline tbc)
• **Initial screening:** candidate cities fulfil the eligibility criteria, and the submission forms are correctly filled in. • **Share applications with the Technical Committee**	• Secretariat, in collaboration with the Technical Committee	• End of April 2023
• **Establish the short list (three candidate cities) and draft the evaluation report**	• Technical Committee, including 3 independent experts	• May-July 2023

• **Share the evaluation report with the Jury** for approval	• Secretariat	• September 2023
• **Organize a Regional Workshop** with applicant cities and partners (experience sharing, peer learning)	• Med Cities and Secretariat, in collaboration with the Sustainable Med Cities project	• September-October 2023
• **Communication with applicant cities** to notify them about the results of the selection and nomination process	• Secretariat	• October 2023
• **Prepare the Award ceremony**, communication items and media coverage (videos, press releases…) at COP 23 • Invite the Mayor of the winning city to the ceremony • Confer the Award	• Secretariat, in cooperation with the Technical Committee, Med Cities, and key partners	• October-December 2023