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Agenda items 5: Specific Matters for Consideration and Action by the Meeting

Green Entrepreneurship as a Key Leverage Point Contributing to the Implementation of the MAP Mid-Term Strategy 2016 – 2021 and the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016 – 2025

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I. Introduction

1. This document provides: (1) an overview of green entrepreneurship and related concepts in the framework of the UN Environment/MAP MTS and the MSSD; (2) examples of how the actions of the UN Environment/MAP through its Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP/RAC) are contributing to achievement of the objectives in this policy framework related to green entrepreneurship; (3) early findings of a series of national stakeholder consultations on green entrepreneurship and eco-innovative grassroots initiatives being undertaken by SCP/RAC in eight Mediterranean countries, including the expressed need of countries for support to step up efforts in this domain; and (4) information about the expanded business services for green entrepreneurs that are planned to reinforce the programme and to further extend its impact (5) an Annex with an Extract of the Conclusions of the 11th Meeting of SCP/RAC National Focal Points concerning activities supporting Green Entrepreneurs.

2. SCP/RAC's current actions in support of green entrepreneurship and related initiatives are mainly funded by the SwitchMed Programme. SwitchMed is financed by the European Union (EU) and has the objective of supporting Mediterranean countries in shifting to sustainable patterns of consumption and production. The programme focus its actions on Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco, Lebanon and Tunisia as Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. Also Palestine and Jordan are beneficiary countries of the Programme.

II. Green entrepreneurship in the framework of the UN Environment/MAP MTS 2016-2017 and the MSSD

3. Supporting Green entrepreneurship and green jobs and the promotion of eco-innovation have been identified as main drivers in the implementation of policy framework for the protection of the Mediterranean environment in the Mediterranean, including the UN Environment MAP's Mid-Term Strategy, the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development and the SCP Action Plan for the Mediterranean, amongst others.

4. The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention have acknowledged the policy relevance of green entrepreneurship as a key driver of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) solutions that assist countries in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and several of its Protocols (LBS, SPA & BD, HW and ICZM Protocols).

5. Accordingly, the UN Environment MAP Mid-Term Strategy 2016 – 2021 calls for training and support of green entrepreneurs in Indicative Key Output 6.3.1 and establishes SCP as one of its three cross-cutting themes. The Strategic Objectives of the SCP cross-cutting theme call for strengthened capacities of entrepreneurs and others to implement SCP solutions that in turn will reduce toxic chemicals and marine litter and contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems. Green entrepreneurs and their implementation of eco-innovation and circular economy approaches are important sources of these SCP solutions.

6. Likewise, the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) 2016 – 2015 calls for the promotion of green jobs, green entrepreneurs and eco-innovation in Strategic Objectives 5.1 and 5.4, in support of the transition to green and blue economies.

7. Furthermore, the SCP Regional Action Plan for the Mediterranean calls for the creation of business models integrating a SCP approach in all areas, and for green businesses and jobs in the goods manufacturing sector in particular¹.

8. Likewise the need to support the creation of sustainable business models and eco-design tools to promote the shift to SCP patterns is also expressed by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

¹ The SCP Regional Action Plan for the Mediterranean is available at http://www.cprac.org/docs2/decision_scp_ap_cop19.pdf

expressed by its Declaration of the Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Change. Accordingly the collaboration between UNEP/MAP and the UfM in the support to sustainable business models and eco-design is one of the activities that those institutions are developing under the framework of the MoU signed in 2013.

III. UN Environment/MAP's progress on green entrepreneurship, green jobs and eco-innovation through SCP/RAC activities

9. Following the indications of the MTS, the PoW and the MSSD SCP/RAC develops the so-called Switchers Initiative that provides green entrepreneurship training, coaching and advisory services. According to a global benchmarking study that investigated more than 50 international entrepreneurship support programmes and networks, the green entrepreneurship training methodology² developed under the Switchers Initiative³ is unique among its peers.

10. To date, nearly 1,500 green entrepreneurs and SMEs as well as 120 eco-innovative grassroots initiatives have benefitted from the activities executed by SCP/RAC. So far these efforts have contributed to the creation of 100 new green businesses. More than 70% of the green businesses supported and incubated by the Programme target three main areas, namely circular economy, sustainable food and renewable energies. 800 trainees and green entrepreneurs have expressed satisfaction with the services provided and requested continuity through additional business support services (Figure 1).

11. By the end of 2018, SCP/RAC will have trained a total of 2,500 individuals on the green entrepreneurship methodology, incubated 45 new green entrepreneurs, and contributed to the launch of 200 new green businesses and the creation of hundreds of new jobs in the region (Figure 2).

² The green entrepreneurship handbook is available at https://www.switchmed.eu/en/documents/ge-green-entrepreneurship-corner/handbook_en.pdf. Its companion workbook can be accessed at https://www.switchmed.eu/en/documents/ge-green-entrepreneurship-corner/wb_eng_digital_single.pdf.

³ Additional details at <http://switchmed.eu>.

Figure 1 – Results of the Switchers Initiative developed through SwitchMed funding between 2015 and 2017

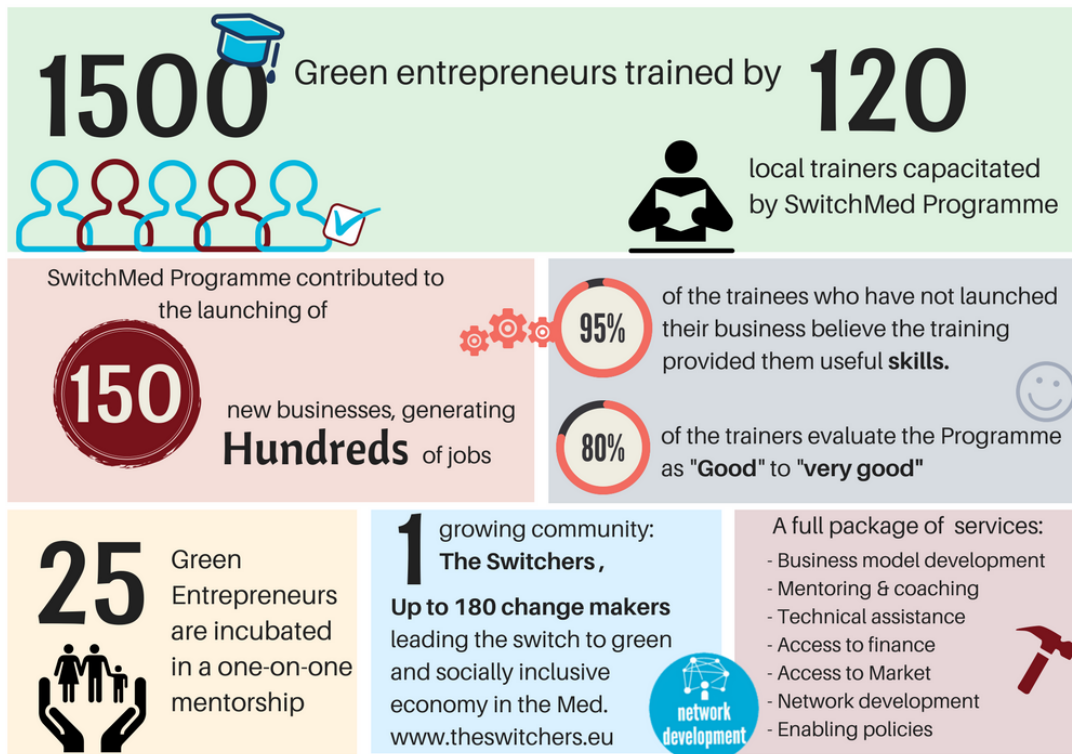
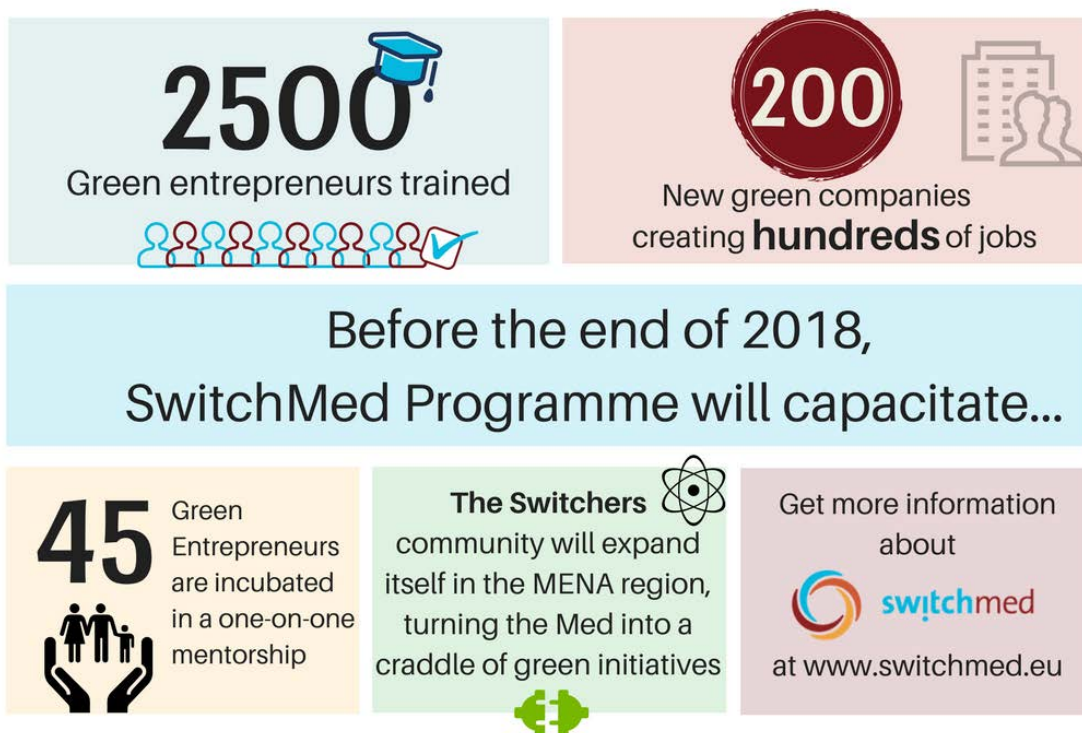


Figure 2 Overall expected results by 2018



12. The quality of the training and support programme developed by SCP/RAC is reflected in the success of the entrepreneurs and SMEs, many of which have received awards or have been recognized by national and international institutions (e.g., Jadara Initiative of Palestine, British University in Egypt, WeMENA competition, Energy Globe Award).

13. Likewise, several national and international organisations are actively promoting the innovative methodology and tools developed by SCP/RAC under the SwitchMed Initiative. One example is the case of UNDP and the Government of Japan, which have provided financial support for the implementation of the green entrepreneurship training methodology to build the capacity of 350 unemployed youth in Jordan. Another example is the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) which is providing grants to the entrepreneurs trained by SCP/RAC, to assist with the development of their green business models.

14. The Switchers Initiative includes the development of 'The Switchers', a community of more than 300 entrepreneurs and change makers that are leading the shift to green and socially inclusive economies in the Mediterranean region⁴ through activities in a variety of domains, including organic farming, sustainable tourism, waste management, and eco-construction. Switchers benefit from the community through increased visibility of their initiatives, opportunities for peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, and more recently by increased access to regional and international markets through a platform to showcase their products online.

IV. Recommendations from national stakeholders on how to further promote green entrepreneurship and eco-innovative grassroots initiatives

15. In the context of the Switchers Initiative, SCP/RAC is conducting a series of national stakeholder consultations to identify recommendations about how to further promote green entrepreneurship and grassroots ecological and social innovations at the country level. The stakeholders for these consultations include green entrepreneurs, grassroots eco-innovative initiatives, supporting organisations, the public sector, as well as financial institutions. The main result of each consultation is a set of recommendations and proposed actions for the different stakeholder groups. A total of eight national stakeholder consultations will be organized in the Southern Mediterranean countries.

16. To date, SCP/RAC has undertaken four national stakeholder consultations (Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco and Jordan). A number of common recommendations have emerged from these consultations, including:

- a) policy makers must support efforts to create an enabling legal framework for green entrepreneurship and eco-innovative grassroots initiatives;
- b) financial actors can support expansion of green entrepreneurship by improving access to affordable financing;
- c) additional technical support services – in the form of incubators, accelerators and innovation hubs – are needed to help people transform their green business ideas into actions;
- d) efforts are required to raise awareness in the region about the environmental and social benefits associated with green products and services, so that the public is better informed about their value and consequently more likely to invest in them.

17. Results of the national stakeholder consultations indicate that countries recognize the contributions green entrepreneurship and eco-innovative grassroots initiatives are making to

⁴ Additional details at <http://theswitchers.eu>

sustainable development objectives in the region, and that additional technical, financial and policy support is needed to realise the full potential of the environmental and social benefits of these kinds of activities.

V. Proposed expansion of business services for green entrepreneurs to reinforce the programme and to further extend its impact

18. In view of building on the success of the activities in support to green entrepreneurs, SCP/RAC is developing strategies for scaling up the progress achieved on green entrepreneurship for future activities

19. In a second phase of the Programme, the consolidation of a complete package of business development services would position UNEP/MAP as the main catalyser of green innovation and green employment as strategic sectors for development in the Mediterranean region. These services will include:

- Business model development,
- Mentoring and coaching,
- Technical assistance,
- Enabling access to finance,
- Network development,
- Enabling access to markets, and
- Enabling policies.

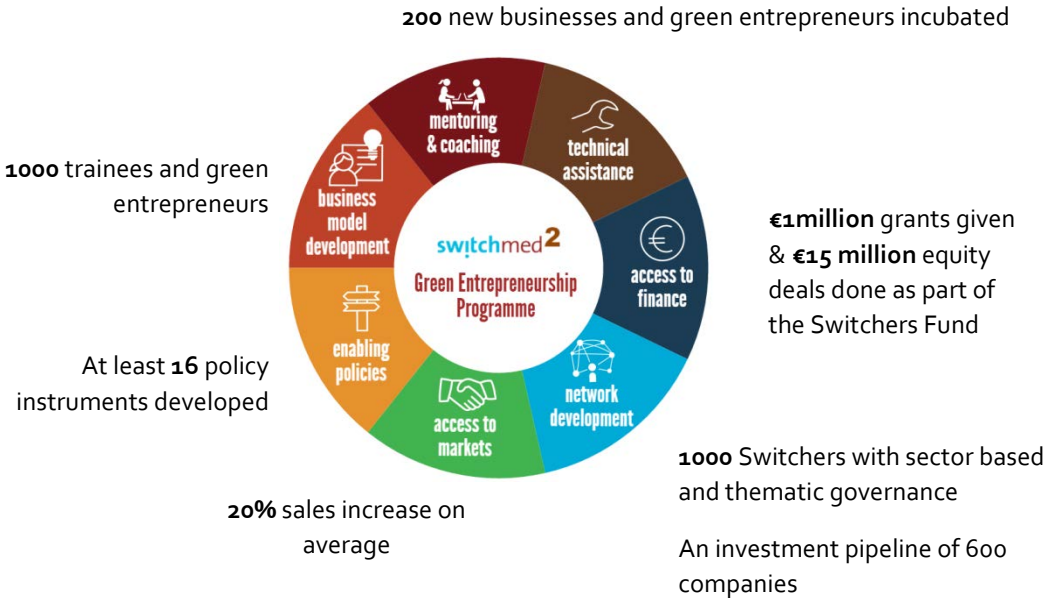
20. The Initiative will focus on the creation of new green businesses to expand the Switchers community to 1,000 members; to provide specific training and coaching services as well as networking opportunities with other businesses and investors to the existing businesses in the Switchers community (Figure 3).

21. It is anticipated that the second phase of the Switchers Initiative would enable the creation of an additional 200 companies, an investment pipeline of 600 companies, and €16 million worth of business deals including those with Southern European countries.

22. The relevance of the activities developed by SCP/RAC in support of Green Entrepreneurs has been specially acknowledged by the SCP/RAC National Focal Points who have stressed the importance of EU-funded SwitchMed in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols in which the development of a Training and support programme for green entrepreneurs, SMEs and civil society is identified as key output of the UN environment/MAP Middle Term Strategy 2016-2021 and a strategic direction of the reviewed MSSD (refer to Annex to this document including an extract of the Conclusions of the 11th Meeting of SCP/RAC National Focal Points)

23. Likewise the 17th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development has expressed support to the continuation of the SwitchMed Programme and SCP/RAC's activities to foster green entrepreneurship ecosystems in the region.

Figure 3 Business development services foreseen in the second phase of the Green Entrepreneurship Programme under the UN Environment/MAP Middle Term Strategy



Annex: Extract of the Conclusions of the 11th Meeting of SCP/RAC National Focal Points concerning activities supporting Green Entrepreneurs, SMEs and CSOs

Congratulate SCP/RAC during the last biennium and in particular appreciate the way in which the SwitchMed programme is designed to provide a full range of technical support to Green Entrepreneurs, SMEs and CSOs, including financial support and networking activities, and the way in which the activities are communicated.

Stress the importance of EU-funded SwitchMed in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols in which the development of a Training and support programme for green entrepreneurs, SMEs and civil society is identified as key output of the UN environment/MAP Middle Term Strategy 2016-2021 and a strategic direction of the reviewed MSSD.

Highlight the particular contribution of SwitchMed and especially its activities in support to green entrepreneurs and SMEs for the creation of local employment and in boosting the Mediterranean region as region where economy and innovation go hand in hand with the protection of the environment and the social inclusion and hence to support prosperity and economic stability in partnership with other relevant programmes.

Hence strongly support the continuation of the SwitchMed programme in order to increase and strengthen the support to Green Entrepreneurs, SMEs and CSOs and offering them networking and financial opportunities and policy support and will engage to inform the relevant institutions on this important need. In this respect, welcome the conclusions of the UFM working Group on Environment and Climate Change, 14th-15th March 2017.

Will actively ally with SCP/RAC to jointly work to engage possible donors that will fund the extension of the actions to support eco-innovation and ecodesign in entrepreneurs, SMEs and CSOs

Request SCP/RAC to emphasize communication on the environmental benefits provided by the Switchers and Green Entrepreneurs so that they could receive further support by National Governments.

Request the extension of the SCP/RAC activities developed in the framework of the EBRD project within the framework of the UfM MED RESCP Labelled Project, related to eco-design and eco-innovation to other Mediterranean countries not targeted by the project.