

Mediterranean Environmental Replication Strategy “MEREs”

Proposal for Steering Committee Consideration

The 2nd meeting of the Steering Committee of the MedPartnership, held in Damascus in March 2011, after reviewing the results of the work undertaken by the UNEP/MAP PMU on the drafting of the new Replication Strategy, “...approved the overall Portfolio Assessment as its first output...” and recommended that “...synergies with ongoing initiatives in the region that have similar replication objective and potential...” be achieved. In response to this call for cooperation among the various ongoing initiatives aimed at reversing environmental degradation trends and enhance sustainability in the Mediterranean region, three major programs – MedPartnership, Horizon 2020, and SWIM - have decided to join forces and work together to promote the replication of good practices throughout the region, targeting strategically important areas of concern.

The present document summarizes the proposed methodology and general organization recommended for this “expanded” replication strategy. Should the Steering Committee, having taken note of the contents of this document, approve them and encourage the partners to move ahead to implementation, the UNEP/MAP PMU will include as the main topic for discussion at the next Coordination Group Meeting in September 2012 the definition of a Work Plan and of other arrangements for starting the implementation of MEREs in 2013. The PMU will also start exploring ways to enhance MEREs sustainability beyond the life of the participating projects.

The proposed Mediterranean Environmental Replication Strategy “MEREs” is the result of the joint work of UNEP MAP and EU experts. It draws on the methodology, and on the experience gained so far thanks to the work on replication promoted by MedPartnership, and to the approach and the results being achieved by the Horizon 2020 initiative and the SWIM project.

Why replication? The term “replication” is generally used to indicate the process through which “practices” that have been proven cost-effective and sustainable in achieving a desired beneficial impact, are adopted, implemented or up-scaled in contexts similar to the one where the demonstration of effectiveness has occurred. It is hence evident that success in catalyzing replication of good practices is critical particularly when addressing hugely complex tasks as environmental stewardship and sustainable development. There is in fact a need (i) for taking stock of regional and global experiences in addressing critical issues such as loss of habitats and biodiversity, salinization of groundwater, eutrophication of inland and coastal waters, pollution from solid and liquid wastes, impacts of climatic variability and change, (ii) for identifying– based on successful experimentation - those that best apply to the regional natural, socio-economic and cultural contexts, and (iii) for leveraging political commitment and new and additional funding for a region-wide effort to replicate regionally tested and validated cost-effective practices. “MEREs” will take some initial steps to collect those good experiences, and promote them throughout the region, in order to achieve longer term sustainability of these initiatives.

The purpose of MEREs is to provide the key elements of a replication methodology, and a road map for the establishment of a sustainable joint replication mechanism in the Mediterranean region.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Based on lessons learned from the previous partnerships (such as the Black Sea Basin Strategic Partnership), specific funds and activities were allocated to the MedPartnership's UNEP MAP led Regional Component, to assess and promote good (termed "replicable" practices) to ensure sustainability of actions within the region, for both the UNEP/MAP led Regional Component and the WB investment demonstration projects. In order to fully achieve the expected enhanced benefits and synergies that would derive from strategic regional multi-project and multi-agency programs, these initiatives should create stronger and more systematic coordination mechanisms within the Partnership. The MedPartnership has taken into consideration this lesson learnt by introducing a specific project activity in the Regional Component led by UNEP, with resources dedicated to facilitate interagency coordination, effective communication, dissemination of information, and regional replication mechanisms. During the early stages of implementation of MedPartnership, one of its key partners, the European Union, strongly encouraged its major relevant initiatives in the region, namely Horizon 2020 and subsequently the SWIM project, to engage in similar efforts and cooperate with MedPartnership in this respect.

Its aim is to ensure a common approach is taken to the identification and promotion of "good" or "replicable practices" for the protection of the marine and coastal environment of the Mediterranean Sea, including its water resources. Whilst it originally specifically focused on the targets adopted by all countries in the two Strategic Action Programmes (SAPs) for the conservation of biological diversity (SAP-BIO) and for the reduction of pollution from land-based sources (SAP-MED) and their National Action Plans (NAPs), it scope also encompasses regional policy documents mentioned in the figure 1 below. This joint effort should also benefit from the involvement of both environment and water related ministries in countries.

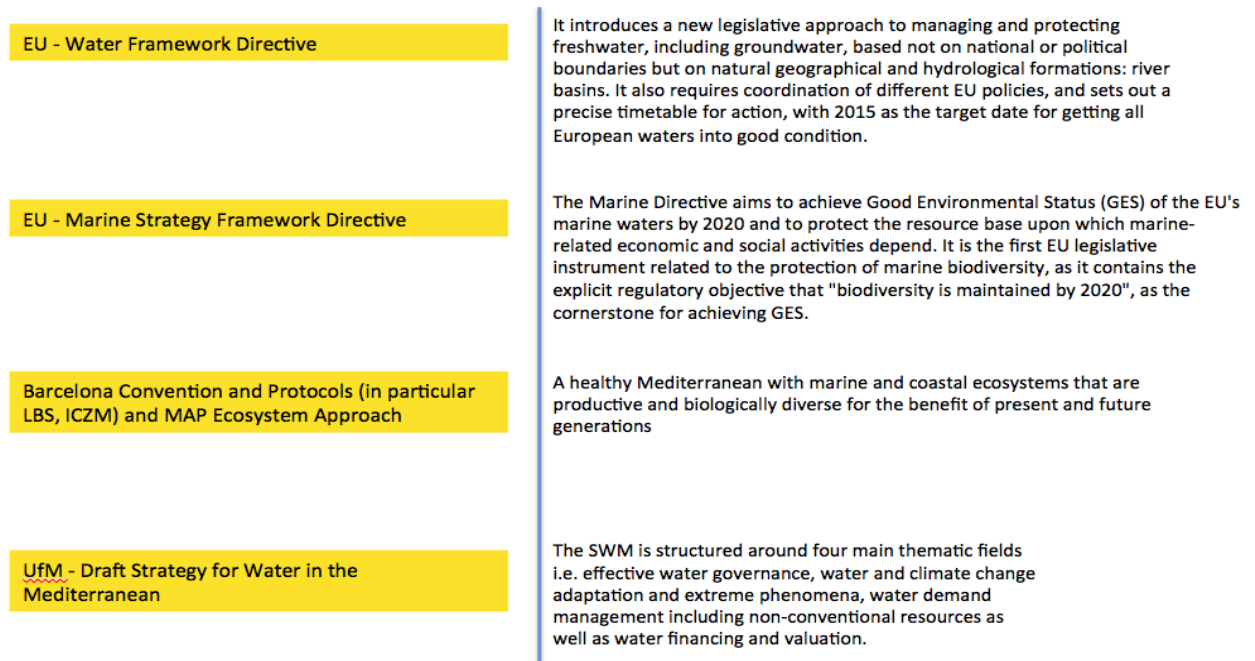


Figure 1. Policy guidance relevant for Mediterranean water and environmental resources

The three partner programs that would implement MEReS have clear complementarities, and together form a coherent response to the main threats that are endangering the sustainability of the Mediterranean ecosystem, and of the livelihoods that depend on it: water pollution (marine and freshwater) deriving from urban waste waters, solid wastes and industrial pollution; overexploitation

of conventional freshwater resources; loss of coastal habitats and biodiversity; climate variability and change.

The main objectives of the partner programs are (i) to build at the national level the capacity and the needed enabling environment for policy, legislative and institutional reforms in line with existing policy guidance; and (ii) through targeted investments, implement on the ground approaches and technologies, and demonstrate their stress reduction effectiveness. If complemented by a systematic replication promotion effort, such as the one being proposed, *the positive impacts of the programs will not remain localized, but will become a patrimony of experience, lessons learned, and inspiration shared by all countries of the Mediterranean* (Table 1).

Priority Concerns	Means of Mitigation	Program and Partner
Land Based Pollution – Point Sources - Excess Nutrient and Toxic Discharges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction of Nutrient Discharges from Urban Wastewaters 	MedPartnership (World Bank) Horizon 2020 SWIM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction of Industrial Effluents and Emissions and Toxic Discharges 	MedPartnership (UNIDO TEST) MEDPOL HORIZON 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disposal of POPs 	MEDPOL
Water pollution from leachate and marine litter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solid Waste Disposal 	Horizon 2020
Land Based Pollution – Non Point Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction of Nutrients Discharges and Erosion Control through IWRM 	MedPartnership (World Bank, GWP MED)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depollution of coastal waters and lagoons 	Horizon 2020. MedPartnership (World Bank)
Anthropogenic Pressures on Coastal Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICZM 	MedPartnership (UNEP MAP)
Overexploitation and salinization of coastal aquifers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal Aquifers Protection and Sustainable Use 	MedPartnership (UNESCO-IHP)
Stress on freshwater resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Reuse and Desalinization 	SWIM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved water productivity in agriculture 	SWIM
Climate Variability & Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managed Aquifer Recharge 	SWIM MedPartnership (World Bank)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Droughts and Floods management 	SWIM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional knowledge (water) 	SWIM
Conversion of Critical Habitats; overexploitation of Marine Living Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening of MPAs Management, Creation of New MPAs, 	MedPartnership (WWF MedPO, UNEP MAP)
Overfishing; Use of non-selective fishing gear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management 	MedPartnership (FAO)

Table 1. The scope of the programs/projects partners in MERE.S.

TARGET AND OBJECTIVE

MEReS will aim to achieve Stress Reduction, i.e.: the reversal of negative trends in the state of water and environmental resources. It will strive to do so by facilitating the replication and upscaling of those practices that directly (technologies, infrastructure, behaviors) or indirectly (processes such as policies, laws, enforcement and incentive schemes, organizational setups, capacity building modules and/or modalities) have proven cost-effective in determining a reduction of the stresses that impact coastal and marine environment and freshwater resources. Following MedPartnership example, these practices will be referred to in the context of MEReS as Replicable Practices – RPs.

Medium Term Objective: MEReS will aim to accelerate the implementation of RPs addressing the priorities identified by the countries through the participatory and science based processes that have been developed during the last decade in the Mediterranean region: primarily the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis – Strategic Action Program – National Action Program three steps priority setting approach recommended by the GEF International Waters focal area, the various hot spot identification efforts carried out by Horizon 2020 and the World Bank as well as the survey for the identification of priorities of Mediterranean countries and stakeholders for CB activities, carried out by H2020-CB/MEP during its inception phase (2010-11). All of these processes are interlinked and have resulted in rather consistent set of national level priority actions, addressing main causes of degradation of the Mediterranean coastal and marine environment (Table 1).

IDENTIFICATION OF REPLICABLE PRACTICES

As stated at paragraph 9, RPs will focus on stress reduction, and will consist of: *technologies, infrastructure, behaviors, and processes such as policies, laws, enforcement and incentive schemes, organizational and institutional setups, capacity building modules and/or modalities.*

The identification of the replicable practices is a process that:

- will be done periodically - possibly on an yearly basis - as the partner programs will advance in execution;
- will produce a number of RPs on which the replication effort will concentrate during a defined period of time.

For the selection of RPs among the large number of activities and outputs of the partner programs, the criteria listed in table 2 could be applied. In essence, the replicability of the activity could be assessed according to criteria classified in three categories where a balance rating should be obtained among them: (A): Political relevance, (B) Investment interest, (C) Capacity building potential. In addition, there should be an effort to include projects – activities representing different types of activities, different size/scale of projects (as it concerns investment and/or time – duration), etc, projects addressing different target groups etc. Such an approach will ensure flexibility and relevance/timeliness and connection with specific policies and frameworks.

Selection Criteria for Replicable Practices	Demonstration of compliance	Rating
Relates to a transboundary environmental concern (TDA) or Hot Spot		
Addresses one or more priorities/targets identified in SAP MED or SAP BIO		
Fosters NAP implementation		
Enhances national compliance with globally and regionally agreed instruments and policy guidance		
Is innovative for the region		
Achieves measurable stress reduction		
Can be proven as cost-effective and sustainable		
Has an high replication potential, i.e.: can be broadly replicated within the Mediterranean physical and socio-economic context, achieving a substantial cumulative stress reduction		
Responds to demand in countries		
Adheres to national priorities		
Is likely to attract funding from countries, donors, IFIs		

Table 2. Selection Criteria for Replicable Practices

Candidatures will be submitted on a yearly basis to the review of an **Independent Selection Panel** by the Partner Programs, together with countries, and/or local administrations, the private sector, NGOs.

Each candidate RP will have to demonstrate its satisfactory compliance with the Selection Criteria applicable in the specific case (e.g.: most processes will not produce measurable stress reduction, etc.), and outline the set of replication activities deemed most appropriate for the specific case. Compliance will be rated according to a three levels scale: Highly Satisfactory – HS; Satisfactory – S; Unsatisfactory – U.

The Selection Panel will provide feed back to candidates, may ask for clarifications, and recommend re-submission. The Panel will produce a “**selection report**” containing the list of selected RPs, and recommendations on the more suitable replication activities.

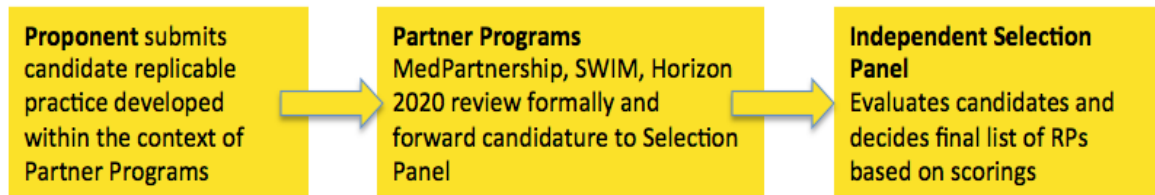


Figure 2. RP selection process

PROMOTION OF REPLICATION: POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES

It is proposed that these activities be targeted primarily to **decision makers** within the key sectors in countries. This will depend on the activity being promoted, and could range from heads of ministries, to businessmen from industry, to NGO's, and local stakeholders, such as fishermen.

Limited funding is available under MedPartnership and under SWIM for implementing replication promotion activities. MedPartnership has already gone through several steps of its replication strategy:

- (i) An "Overall Portfolio Assessment and Replication Plan" has been submitted to and approved by the Steering Committee. The Assessment identifies potential replicable practices, and recommends two of them for action in 2012: the Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies (TEST MED of UNIDO) for small-medium sized industries; and the Strengthening of Marine Protected Areas Management Capacity (WWF-MedPO and SPA RAC).
- (ii) Replication promotion activities foresee ad hoc region-wide dissemination events (Workshops), some of which may utilize the CB/MEP H2020 model. Table 3 shows the MedPartnership Replication Work Program for 2011-2012,.

Replication Promotion Activities so far considered by MedPartnership	Meetings, Workshops, Consultations–2011-2012	Reports, Assessments–2011-2012	Expected Results for the period2011-2012
Overall Coordination: lead partner: MAP PMU	<p>Consultation Meetings with Partners: Athens, Marseille</p> <p>Presentation of MedPartnership Replication Activities at the GEF IWC6 in Dubrovnik</p> <p>Oversight of all Replication Activities and participation to Regional Dissemination Events</p>	<p>Preparation of Overall Portfolio Assessment</p> <p>Preparation of Replication Plan for 2012</p>	<p>The Work Program for Replication Promotion Activities defined based on Overall Assessment</p> <p>Start up of on the ground implementation of replication promotion activities</p>
Capacity building and dissemination of lessons learnt			
Publication of Reports on Selected Replicable Practices Partners: UNIDO, WWF	Preparation, translation and publication of selected reports (TEST, MPAs)		2 Priority Replicable Practices disseminated
Final Regional Replication Report			
Regional Replication Workshops Partners: UNIDO, WWF	Regional Workshop Reduction of Industrial Discharges - TEST experience, Turkey		TEST methodology replicated (one country?)
Mediterranean Replication Conference			

Table 3. MedPartnership 2011-2012 Replication Work Program

Availability of funding for promotion of replication activities is of course the factor determining the typology of activities, and the intensity of the effort. It is considered however that at a minimum these activities will be aimed at **enhancing the visibility** of RPs through ICT tools and ad hoc events, (as in the case of MedPartnership). The preparation of RP Special Reports should also be included in this minimum level of effort.

Ideally, should additional funding become available, replication activities could include the following:

- Annual Mediterranean Water and Environment Conferences, showcasing achievements of Partner Programs;
- Awarding of an yearly prize to the highest scoring RP; the prize amount would be in part destined to twinning programs (see the extremely successful experience of the International River Foundation: “River Prize”);
- Implementation of pre-scheduled and/or “ad hoc” capacity building modules; these may include CB workshops, exchanges among projects, and study tours, etc
- Pre-investment studies; for replication of good practices
- etc.

LONG TERM VISION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Consideration should be given to the desirability of extending MEReS beyond the life of the Partner Programs, should it be successful in achieving its objectives of accelerating implementation of NAPs and of other country priority planning instruments. MEReS could continue to operate with a view to the achievement of the Good Environmental Status targets set by UNEP MAP ECAP, and by EU Directives, and be applied to new cohorts of projects and programs.

There would also be the need for a neutral repository of the wealth of experiences and data that MEReS would gather as it progresses. The repository would maintain the “database” and make it available and easily accessible to all interested parties, from government agencies to academia and to the public at large. There are several options for such a repository and ideas for solutions could be borrowed from other relevant regional projects.

The financial sustainability of MEReS could be ensured in various ways, from mandatory contributions from projects and initiatives wishing to be part of and benefit from the mechanism, to ad hoc funding as part of regional development assistance, to the expansion of the mandate of existing Mediterranean regional entities.

EXECUTION ARRANGEMENTS

The actual implementation of the MEReS would revolve around four main actors:

- (i) An entity having overall responsibility for the MEReS implementation and coordination (MEReS Steering Committee?)- This body would nominate a Chairman (one year duration), approve the composition of the Independent Selection Panel, and give final approval to the list of selected RPs and replication work programs based on the recommendations of the Panel. This body would meet periodically (once every year?).¹
- (ii) The Partner Programs–They will remain the major player of MEReS, having responsibility for the actual implementation of MEReS and of the final definition and implementation of the yearly Replication Work Program. They will also perform a first review of all submissions of candidatures from a formal point of view (completeness of the documentation, etc.), and assemble the final package of candidates for Panel review. To do so the Partner Programs could either establish a small coordination unit or adopt a “by rotation” scheme among Partner Programmes.
- (iii) The Independent Selection Panel –It will be integrated by experts not involved in the actual execution of the projects/programs, nominated by the MEReS Steering Committee based on a proposal of the Program Partners. The Panel will review candidatures, evaluate each and apply the selection criteria, providing ratings. It will submit a final list of RPs for approval by the Committee, and prepare an Evaluation Report for each RP, containing also a recommendation for the replication work program.
- (iv) Executing agencies or entities contracted for the execution of the replication activities – These agencies/entities will execute the replication promotion activities, under the oversight and with the support of the respective Partner Program. In most cases they will coincide with the proponents of the RP.

¹This role could be developed by a Steering Committee, integrated by a limited number of members that could either be representatives of the main funding sources (EU, GEF) and agencies (UNEP, World Bank, EU bodies), and/or representatives of the countries, and/or of regional bodies such as the secretariats of the Barcelona Convention and of the Union for the Mediterranean.

Figure 3. MERE S possible organization and execution arrangements

