



**UNITED
NATIONS**

EP

UNEP/MED WG.483/4



**UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN**

13 November 2020
Original: English

22nd Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee

Videoconference, 15-16 December 2020

Agenda Item 4: Specific Issues

Report on Specific Issues

For environmental and cost-saving reasons, this document is printed in a limited number. Delegates are kindly requested to bring their copies to meetings and not to request additional copies.

Report on Specific Issues

1. The present document deepens topics presented in the Progress Report (Working Document UNEP/MED WG.483/3) and introduces specific issues related to activities which derive from COP 21 Decisions IG.24/3 and IG.24/4 and from the mandate of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD), for review and discussion by the MCSD Steering Committee:

- A. Mid-Term Evaluations of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) and of the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP Action Plan);
- B. The Mediterranean Green Business Award;
- C. Assessment Studies;
- D. Introduction by UNEP Science Division of the World Environment Situation Room (WESR), Indicator Reporting Information System for Sustainable Development Goals (IRIS for SDGs) and Measuring Progress II;
- E. Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard and Integration of Sustainable Consumption and Production Indicators;
- F. Structures and Processes for Implementing the 2030 Agenda and SDGs in the Mediterranean Countries;
- G. The UNEP/MAP Strategic Response to COVID-19 crisis in the Mediterranean;
- H. MCSD Membership;
- I. Preparation of the 19th Meeting of the MCSD.

A. Mid-Term Evaluation of the MSSD and of the SCP Action Plan

2. In line with Decision IG.24/3 adopted at COP 21, the mid-term evaluations of the MSSD and of the SCP Action Plan provide an opportunity to make the implementation of these strategic and forward-looking policies, at their respective second phase, more efficient and focusing on gaps, shortcomings and opportunities. The mid-term evaluations represent also a good opportunity to anticipate on possible further alignment of those policy frameworks with the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.

3. The final and synthesis reports of the mid-term evaluations will ensure that the MCSD and its Steering Committee, as well as the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat are informed with key findings on the status of the MSSD and SCP Action Plan implementation, including achievements and lessons learned, as well as recommendations for the remaining period (MSSD: 2022-2025; SCP Action Plan: 2022-2027) and for future related developments within the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system.

4. The results of the MSSD mid-term evaluation are expected to be submitted in 2021 to the 19th Meeting of the MCSD (June 2021), the Meeting of MAP Focal Points (September 2021) and COP 22 (December 2021), in a consolidated manner and following an integrated approach with the results of the SCP Action Plan mid-term evaluation.

5. As indicated in Working Document UNEP/MED WG.483/3, the methodology of the MSSD mid-term evaluation was shared with the MCSD Steering Committee and is available in Information Document UNEP/MED WG.483/Inf.3

6. Regarding the SCP Action Plan mid-term evaluation, the methodology consists in a quantitative and qualitative evaluation using three main components, as below:

- SCP indicators: the list of 25 SCP indicators for monitoring the implementation of the SCP Action Plan is being updated, populated and assessed. Factsheets will be prepared for each indicator, following the template of the indicator factsheets of the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard;
- Reporting on the SCP Action Plan: the mid-term evaluation will analyse the official reporting from the Contracting Parties on the SCP Action Plan, as agreed through Decision IG.22/5 adopted at COP 20 (Tirana, Albania, December 2017), as part of the reporting on the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution from Land-Based Sources (LBS Protocol) – Part III: Implementation of Regional Actions Plans and their effectiveness. In July 2020, SCP/RAC invited its Focal Points to complete the reporting for 2016-2017 and advance the reporting for 2018-2019.
- Inventory of SCP initiatives: A review of projects and initiatives supporting the attainment of the operational objectives and actions of the SCP Action Plan in the four key sectors¹ is being undertaken. Reviewed initiatives include global, regional and transnational SCP projects implemented in the Mediterranean region and countries. This list will be complemented by an additional stocktaking of SCP initiatives coming from the stakeholder's consultation process. SCP projects and initiatives will be organized by SCP sector, operational objective and geographical area.

Issues for consideration:

7. Based on the preliminary outputs of the MSSD Mid-Term Evaluation – State of Play and Gap Analysis (Information Document UNEP/MED WG.483/Inf.4), the Secretariat will use a Note for the Stakeholder Consultation (Information Document UNEP/MED WG.483/Inf.5) to consult various decision-makers and stakeholders, including MCSD Members, UNEP/MAP Partners and UNEP/MAP Components, through bilateral interviews, focus groups (webinars, online workshops) and an online survey. Following a joint approach, the stakeholder consultation will address both the MSSD and the SCP Action Plan.
8. In addition of Information Document UNEP/MED IG.483/Inf.4, key findings of the State of Play and Gap Analysis are submitted in Annex I of the present document for consideration, comments from and possible adjustments by the MCSD Steering Committee. A summary of the initial findings related to the SCP Action Plan Mid-Term Evaluation will be presented during the 22nd Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee for review and comments by the Committee.

B. The Mediterranean Green Business Award

9. At its 21st Meeting, the MCSD Steering Committee encouraged the Secretariat (SCP/RAC) to pursue its efforts for preparing and launching the Mediterranean Green Entrepreneurship Award, as planned by Decision IG.24/3. The Committee stressed the importance of emphasizing the application of environmental and governance-effective criteria and welcomed the proposal to include one Member of the MCSD in the jury of the award.

Issues for consideration:

10. The Secretariat (SCP/RAC) would appreciate MCSD Steering Committee's views and suggestions on the following points:
 - A list of criteria for the selection of the candidates under the two categories opened for the first edition of the Award (i.e. Businesses and Public Authorities) is included in Annex III of the present document for consideration and comments by the MCSD Steering Committee.
 - The process for the establishment of the Award was slightly delayed and might be finalised by December 2020 towards announcement in the Official Journal of *Generalitat de Catalunya*. This delay is impacting the date for the launch of the Award, which has been postponed at the beginning of 2021.

¹ Food, Fisheries and Agriculture (FFA); Goods Manufacturing; Tourism, and Housing and Construction.

- As the 2020 SwitchMed Connect initially planned in November 2020 was cancelled, the next edition of the event will most probably take place in November 2021 and, if this is confirmed with SwitchMed partners and the European Union (EU), the Award ceremony will take place during this regional event. An updated timeline for the Award will be presented during the 22nd Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee. Proposal towards the next MCSD Meeting will be made in view of a discussion with the Steering Committee.
- Regarding the representation of the MCSD within the jury of the Award, and following conclusions from the 21st Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee on that topic, the Secretariat (SCP/RAC) would like to further discuss this topic with the MCSD Steering Committee, taking into account that SCP/RAC initially suggested to mobilize the ANIMA Investment Network².

C. Assessment Studies

MedECC First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) and its Summary for Policymakers (SPM)

11. Following the wide consultation with policymakers and stakeholders, including the MedECC Plenary consultation held remotely on 22 September 2020 (see Working Document UNEP/MED WG.483/3), the SPM of MAR1 is expected to become an important deliverable of the UfM Ministerial Meeting on Climate and Environmental Action to be held in 2021 in Egypt.
12. MAR1 will be presented during the Med2020 virtual conference³ co-organized on 16-18 November 2020 by Plan Bleu, MedECC, the French National Centre of Scientific Research (CNRS) and the MISTRALS scientific programme⁴. MAR1 will also receive attention in the context of the 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (COP 15) (scheduled for the second quarter of 2021 in Kunming, China) and the 26th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (COP 26) (1-12 November 2021, Glasgow, United Kingdom).
13. In 2021, the SPM will be submitted for consideration by the 19th Meeting of the MCSD and then for possible endorsement by COP 22, where the MedECC work should support legally binding decisions by the Contracting Parties. COP 22 will also be expected to adopt the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2027, whose climate change-related dimension will be informed by MedECC.
14. To continue its mission aiming to consolidate and provide scientific knowledge on climate and environmental change in the Mediterranean, it becomes crucial to sustain MedECC and its perspectives beyond the publication of MAR1. The MedECC secretariat and steering committee envisions three actions to be developed in the future, as summarized below:
 - (i) Communication on MAR1 and its SPM: A communication campaign will be conducted, including translation of the SPM in Arabic and French, distribution of infographics with MAR1 key messages, regular information updates on the MedECC website and in social media, etc. This communication campaign is expected to be supported by the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system, in particular by Plan Bleu, with possible joint actions with the UfM Secretariat.
 - (ii) Identification of knowledge gaps, reinforcing the network and capacity-building in the South and the East of the Mediterranean: Taking into account the knowledge gaps in terms of thematic and

² ANIMA (MCSD Member) implements initiatives to develop investment and business ecosystems favoring an attractive, sustainable and inclusive economy in the Mediterranean (Europe, Middle East and Africa). ANIMA works with public institutions (e.g. chambers of commerce), the private sector, local authorities and networks of territorial actors, and academic networks. <https://anima.coop/en/>

³ <https://www.medecc.org/3151-2/>; <https://med2020.sciencesconf.org/>

⁴ Mediterranean Integrated Studies at Regional And Local Scales (MISTRALS) is a decennial programme for systematic observations and research dedicated to the understanding of the Mediterranean Basin environmental process and its evolution under global change.

geographical coverage of climate change related issues, as well as differences in monitoring and research efforts between the Mediterranean countries, it is essential to involve scientists from different countries towards a geographical balance among MedECC members. In order to further reinforce the network across the entire Mediterranean region, contacts have been initiated and MedECC has already gained the interest of several partner institutions, in particular in the South and the East of the region, and of high-level scientists who could play a key role in the future. Efforts should be maintained and expanded to materialize possible partnerships.

(iii) Preparation of thematic reports related to the challenges identified in MAR1: It is proposed that, from 2021, three targeted scientific thematic reports are developed on the following topics:

- *Coastal risks and potential for adaptation measures*, including coastal erosion, sea level rise, extreme climatic events, reduced sedimentation, infiltration of seawater into coastal aquifers, and the degradation of habitats (e.g. wetlands, agricultural systems), taking into account that a third of the Mediterranean population lives near the sea;
- *Climate-water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus*, through a risk analysis focusing on the linkages between water, energy, and food to advance towards the SDGs and to ensure resilience and adaptation to climate change. This thematic report should provide a comprehensive understanding of linkages and interdependencies between water resources, energy production and consumption and provision of food, as well as the links between water and ecosystem services in the Mediterranean, under the pressure of climate and environmental change. The report could also address the transfer and integration of nexus-related knowledge into national, regional and transboundary policymaking by defining specific policy issues related to the use of limited resources, mainly related to water, e.g. extreme events (flood and droughts), water scarcity, pollution, and food and energy security;
- *Environmental change and human migration*, through a study of the possible interrelationships between environmental change and the degradation of human livelihoods, and potential outcomes for migration. This thematic report will assess the scientific evidence underpinning current assumptions and projections for human migration related to climate and environmental change in the region.

Issues for consideration:

15. The MCSD Steering Committee is invited to share further ideas for a broad dissemination of MedECC MAR1 and its SPM.

16. The Committee is also invited to discuss the actions envisioned by MedECC beyond the MAR1 communication campaign and more generally the future of the initiative, as introduced above, towards possible constructive comments and advice.

Dissemination of the State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean Report (SoED)

17. The UNEP/MAP system-wide communication plan on SoED has a three-pronged objective: (1) ensure a broad dissemination of the report's findings; (2) articulate and convey advocacy messages for consideration by policymakers in the Mediterranean; and, (3) position the SoED as a flagship knowledge product to bolstering the knowledge base for informed policymaking in the Mediterranean. Info/RAC and Plan Bleu are taking the lead on its implementation, with the participation of the UNEP/MAP Communication Taskforce (bringing together the communication specialists of UNEP/MAP Components) under the overall supervision of the Coordinating Unit.

18. Beyond the launch of the SoED core products, the Secretariat will step up efforts for the dissemination of the report across the Mediterranean region. Events taking place with audiences across the region will be organized to ensure communication and dissemination in an inclusive manner notwithstanding travel restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

19. Plan Bleu is planning to publish SoED-derived notes on maritime transport and emerging pollutions; two policy briefs are under finalization and will be published by mid-2021.

Issues for consideration:

20. The Secretariat will seek to enlist the support of MCSD Members and UNEP/MAP Partners in disseminating the findings of SoED, including through full uptake of the report and the organization of dissemination events, such as webinars focusing on key messages or specific themes. The Secretariat would appreciate MCSD Members' involvement in further promoting the consideration of SoED findings at regional, national and local levels. The MCSD Steering Committee is invited to consider potential opportunities in that direction: e.g. virtual events such as webinars, advocacy campaigns, policy briefs, training material encompassing SoED findings and key messages, etc.

21. Further ideas and support for broad dissemination of SoED findings from the MCSD Steering Committee are welcome.

MED 2050 Foresight Study on the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean

22. Following progress presented in Working Document UNEP/MED WG.483/3, the next steps of MED 2050 include:

- Meeting of the MED 2050 Steering Committee (tentatively planned on 13 January 2021);
- Meeting of the MED 2050 Foresight Group (tentatively planned on 28 January 2021);
- Draft report on outcomes of MED 2050 Module 1 "Trends, disruptions and weak signals" (early 2021);
- Scoping and implementation of Module 2 "Sharing and comparing contrasting visions across the Mediterranean, including a draft report" (by end 2021);
- Scoping and starting implementation of Module 3 "Reconciling trends, disruptors and weak signals, and contrasting visions to identify a preferred yet realistic scenario" (by end 2021);
- Progress report, including updated MED 2050 Roadmap for submission to COP 22 (drafts to be first submitted to Plan Bleu Focal Points, the MCSD, and MAP Focal Points at their respective meetings in 2021).

23. Plan Bleu renews its invitation to the MCSD and its Steering Committee Members to subscribe to the MED 2050 network, thus receiving newsletters and being informed about possibilities to get involved in the exercise through surveys, workshops, or webinars. See registration form available at:

<https://planbleu.org/inscription-reseau-med-2050/>.

Issues for consideration:

24. The Secretariat would appreciate MCSD Steering Committee's views and suggestions on the following issues for consideration:

- The Secretariat is constantly completing its knowledge and resource base on foresight, outlook and strategic long-term planning on sustainable development issues in the Mediterranean. The MCSD Steering Committee is invited to communicate to the Secretariat any references to recent work of this type, or contact details of resource persons having conducted such work at the Mediterranean or national level.
- The Secretariat invites the MCSD Steering Committee to communicate via the MED 2050 newsletter on potential activities conducted by MCSD Members on foresight, outlook or strategic long-term planning. Contributions could take the form of brief articles, interviews or videos.

D. Introduction by UNEP Science Division of the World Environment Situation Room (WESR), Indicator Reporting Information System for Sustainable Development Goals (IRIS for SDGs) and Measuring Progress II

25. As recommended by the 21st Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee, the Secretariat invited UNEP Science Division representatives to introduce, through an interactive live demonstration during the 22nd Meeting of the Committee, the UNEP Environment Live portal⁵ – which is moving to the World Environment Situation Room (WESR) in the context of the preparation of the Fifth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5, February 2021).

26. Presentations to be introduced during the 22nd Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee will cover the following elements:

- The World Environment Situation Room (WESR)⁶ is a global project with overarching environmental policy relevance and impact. It includes geo-referenced, remote-sensing and earth observation information integrated with statistics and data on the environmental dimension of sustainable development. The themes of the global platform cover complementary dimensions for Global Green Solutions for the Environment. It targets national policymakers, top environmental policymakers, the environmental scientific community, businesses, and interested citizens. As a knowledge instrument, the platform is essential to support progress on delivering the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda;
- The Indicator Reporting Information System (IRIS) for SDGs⁷ is the reporting tool for SDG indicators where UNEP is the custodian agency and where there is no data collection mechanism in place. The tool aims at facilitating the SDG data reporting by countries and can be used to report any other SDG indicators to different custodian agencies. The reporting will be done using online questionnaire like the online survey systems, questionnaires to be filled and uploaded, and Application Programming Interface (API) to connect IRIS directly to SDG national databases;
- Measuring Progress II⁸ is an assessment report (publication) which aims at assessing the relationship between actions that countries are taking and that have impacts on the environment, the national state of the environment, and the secondary social impacts. This evidence-based publication, based on SDG indicators and Drivers, Pressures, State, Impact, Response (DPSIR) frameworks, analyses the interlinkages between SDGs and the need for policy coherence.

27. A discussion (questions and answers) will follow those live demonstrations to collect general feedback and detailed comments from the MCSD Steering Committee in view of developing further collaboration.

E. Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard and Integration of Sustainable Consumption and Production Indicators

28. Following Decision IG.24/3 adopted at COP 21, Plan Bleu will produce in 2021, in view of its Focal Points Meeting (May 2021) and of the 19th Meeting of the MCSD (June 2021), an updated populated version of the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard. This version will be based on most recent and comprehensive data, aligned with SDG indicators, and interconnected with SCP indicators.

29. Working jointly towards the integration of the SCP indicators in the dashboard, Plan Bleu and SCP/RAC will respectively hire a consultant on data and indicators and a GIS specialist. In addition of the updated indicators' factsheets, a series of maps will be designed to illustrate relationship between pressure from human activities and the environmental status.

⁵ <https://environmentlive.unep.org/>

⁶ <https://wesr.unep.org/>

⁷ <https://environmentlive.unep.org/myiris>

⁸ <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/27627/MeaProg2019.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

30. In October 2020, Plan Bleu and SCP/RAC organized a virtual meeting to coordinate for the integration of the SCP indicators within the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard. A review of the common indicators was completed, and nine indicators were identified for further work. For those common indicators, it was agreed that Plan Bleu will start updating the existing factsheets and SCP/RAC will review them to ensure that the analysis is also considering the SCP perspective. Challenges on the sources of information and data availability were also addressed.

31. Following a specific conclusion of the 21st Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee, Plan Bleu will initiate work to consider the development of indicators to monitor the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis in the Mediterranean region and countries, especially on the relationship between the state of the environment and health. Possible adjustments of the dashboard may also include legal indicators on environmental regulations in the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard to better cover MSSD Objective 6 “Governance” and SDG 17 “Partnership”. A discussion on those perspectives can be engaged with the MCSD Steering Committee.

32. In 2020-2021, Plan Bleu is planning the following activities related to the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard:

- By end 2020 – early 2021:
 - Update of the 28 indicators’ factsheets;
 - Design additional maps illustrating relationship between pressure from human activities and environmental status;
 - Study the feasibility to integrate SCP indicators into the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard;
 - Launch the development of a new website for the Plan Bleu’s Observatory on the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean; and,
 - Preparation of a roadmap towards a Regional Observatory on the Environment and Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean.
- By May 2021, in view of the Plan Bleu Focal Points Meeting and 19th Meeting of the MCSD:
 - Presentation of the roadmap to strengthen the Plan Bleu’s Observatory in the short, medium and long terms.
- By November 2021, in view of COP 22:
 - Compendium of the updated indicators’ factsheets;
 - Final version of the Plan Bleu’s roadmap towards a Regional Observatory on the Environment and Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean.

Issues for consideration:

33. Based on the review of the lists of indicators for the follow-up of the MSSD and the SCP Action Plan, the Secretariat (Plan Bleu and SCP/RAC) will present preliminary results during the 22nd Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee.

34. The Secretariat (Plan Bleu and SCP/RAC) will gather information on the analysis of the indicators (factsheets) under the same portal of information (i.e. Plan Bleu Observatory of the Environment and Development) and using the same format.

35. Comments and advice from the MCSD Steering Committee on activities introduced above would be appreciated.

F. Structures and Processes for Implementing the 2030 Agenda and SDGs in the Mediterranean Countries

36. As a follow-up of experience sharing among Contracting Parties on national structures and processes for implementing and monitoring the SDGs – including the interactive session held during the

18th Meeting of the MCSD, as well as the two first editions of the Simplified Peer Review Mechanism (SIMPEER) carried out by Plan Bleu with France, Montenegro and Morocco in 2016-2017 and with Albania, Egypt and Tunisia in 2018-2019 – the Secretariat consulted remotely the Members of the Commission representing Contracting Parties to collect inputs from their respective Voluntary National Review (VNR) experiences at the High-level Political Forum (HLPF).

37. Most Contracting Parties (except Cyprus, Libya, Monaco, Slovenia, and Spain⁹) provided interesting inputs on the transposition, implementation and monitoring of the SDGs at national level, as well as on encountered challenges and solutions to overcome obstacles. Based on those inputs and on the SIMPEER key findings, the Secretariat drafted a synthesis paper (Working Document UNEP/MED WG.483/5), which identifies commonalities among Mediterranean countries and national specificities.

38. This draft synthesis paper is structured around the following key ideas:

- Ministries or departments in charge of environmental affairs are often the most aware and active national bodies to promote and implement SDGs and the MSSD at national level, but they are not in a coordinating position;
- Contracting Parties experienced common challenges in implementing SDGs at the national level, including those related to coordination and effective mobilization of all governmental actors. There is a need to strengthen the institutional set-up towards efficient and systemic governance frameworks to break the “silo effect” created by thematic and sectoral (vs. integrated and systemic) approaches;
- There is a lack of capacities and resources in national administrations to address the SDGs adequately, in particular for monitoring programmes to follow SDG indicators;
- Multi-stakeholder partnerships, national/local fora on sustainable development, and engagement of civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental actors and other stakeholders are critical to address the above-mentioned challenges.

Issue for consideration:

39. The draft synthesis paper (Working Document UNEP/MED WG.483/5) is submitted for consideration and comments by the 22nd Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee towards its finalisation and possible submission for discussion to the 19th Meeting of the MCSD.

G. The UNEP/MAP Strategic Response to COVID-19 crisis in the Mediterranean

40. Following the session on “The Coronavirus Pandemic: Initial Consideration on its Impact on the Sustainable Development of the Mediterranean Region and Possible Responses” held at the 21st Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee, the Secretariat has prepared and disseminated the “The Mediterranean Action Plan’s strategic response to COVID-19: a blueprint for action”¹⁰.

41. Aligned with the building blocks of the UNEP COVID-19 strategic response¹¹, this document identifies main issues and priorities of relevance to the UNEP/MAP mandate, taking also into account the UN Secretary General’s report on the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19¹² and the UN Sustainable Development Group’s framework for the immediate socio-economic response to the crisis and its impact¹³.

⁹ The Secretariat will follow up with those countries to collect their respective inputs.

¹⁰ <https://www.unenvironment.org/unepmap/mediterranean-action-plans-strategic-response-covid-19-blueprint-action>

¹¹ See UNEP’s COVID-19 Response Paper “Working With the Environment to Protect People”:
<https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/working-environment-protect-people-covid-19-response>

¹² <https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/launch-report-socio-economic-impacts-covid-19>

¹³ <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/un-framework-immediate-socio-economic-response-covid-19>

42. A summary of the strategic directions of the UNEP/MAP response to the COVID-19 crisis in the Mediterranean is summarized below:

(i) **The Medical and Humanitarian Emergency Phase:** The COVID-19 crisis is having increasingly visible implications for waste management, requiring an adequate waste management response to address the increase in the quantity of discarded single-use plastic items and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This response will be based on relevant provisions of the LBS Protocol, which is the legal framework for prevention, reduction, assessment and control of waste, including plastics, in the Mediterranean.

(ii) **A Transformational Change for Nature and People:**

- Better understanding and responding to zoonotic threats: COVID-19 is a reminder of the importance of better understanding potential risks of transmission of zoonotic diseases from marine species to humans, including pathways, and of responding to zoonosis risks adequately. The main legal basis for this work is the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol). Due consideration will be given to the aforementioned reflections in the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity (SAP BIO), taking into account the way that relevant issues are addressed at global level, e.g. Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

- Better understanding poverty, human and environment health linkages: The LBS Protocol provides for the assessment of linkages between marine pollution and human health related action. The response to the COVID-19 crisis may open a new path and opportunity to rebuild the collaboration between MED POL and the World Health Organization (WHO) to address preventive responses to human health risks from marine pollution. In addition, the SPA/BD Protocol will serve to address links between human health and the status of marine and coastal biodiversity.

- Making progress on the climate, biodiversity and chemical crises: The COVID-19 crisis may raise risks of weakened environmental regulation and enforcement in cases where emergency responses do not adequately integrate environmental protection as an important dimension. The UNEP/MAP response can address the multi-faceted nature of the challenge through its strategic and programmatic framework, legal and regulatory instruments, policy measures, monitoring and assessment activities, and capacity building.

(iii) **Investing to Build Back Greener:** Fiscal stimulus packages provide an opportunity for building back greener, initiating a green recovery by accelerating integrated, life-cycle approaches, including SCP and circular economy, green jobs, marine renewable energy, sustainable tourism, nature-based solutions, and transition to sustainable blue economy. The Naples Declaration adopted at COP 21 put forward a regional consensus on the importance of triggering economic prosperity and contributing to the stability of the region with green jobs and innovation opportunities in full respect of the environmental protection, in a circular approach and good governance pattern. UNEP/MAP will build on this consensus to support that the post COVID-19 recovery is fully based on principles of environmental protection and sustainable development. Green fiscal policies can also be a powerful lever to orient actions towards nature-based and climate-neutral strategies.

(iv) **Modernising Global Environmental Governance:** The COVID-19 crisis provides an opportunity to re-assess our traditional ways of work and the future of environmental governance. Areas to be addressed include every-day office operations, activities implementation, budget implications and resource mobilisation, partnerships, and communication. The pandemic has shown that technology and modern tools can help us shift our traditional ways of work, while maintaining the same level of efficiency and reducing the environmental footprint of our operations. These methods (e.g. telecommuting, zero-printing, virtual meetings) should be maintained and further promoted to the extent possible. In addition, the implementation of activities in the field (monitoring, pilot implementation, trainings and capacity building activities) is impacted by travel restrictions in most Mediterranean countries. It is therefore crucial to identify alternative ways of working with the countries in order to

ensure that activities will continue and expected outputs will be delivered. The COVID-19 crisis may also have budgetary implications: budget savings from limited operations and virtually held meetings during the crisis may be redirected to support activities related to the strategic response to COVID-19. Finally, outreach, communication and advocacy campaigns will mobilize the attention of and engage stakeholders in seizing the historic opportunity for a green renaissance in the Mediterranean.

43. The implementation of the priority actions identified in the UNEP/MAP Strategic Response to the COVID-19 crisis in the Mediterranean will be based on partnerships and coordination with regional and global actors, including in priority the Contracting Parties, the MCSD and UNEP/MAP Partners.

44. The Secretariat is also assessing which of the priority response actions can be achieved through its Programme of Work and existing activities, with possible adjustments and/or redirection, and which actions require new activities in the framework of the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2027 and Programmes of Work 2022-2023.

Issues for consideration:

45. The MCSD Steering Committee is invited to provide concrete comments on the UNEP/MAP Strategic Response to the COVID-19 crisis in the Mediterranean and advice on the way forward in the context of the MCSD and its work.

46. The Members of the Committee are also invited to share their own initiatives and activities addressing the impacts of COVID-19 in their countries or related to their mandate.

H. MCSD Membership

47. Based on written expressions of interest received by the Secretariat, the following tentative MCSD composition is submitted for discussion and possible agreement in principle from the MCSD Steering Committee in view of its consideration by the 19th Meeting of the MCSD and by COP 22:

Composition of the MCSD for 2022-2023 – Non-Contracting Party Members – Proposal based on written expressions of interest (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)**; and,
- Parliamentarians: As per the Updated MCSD Constitutive Documents (Decision IG.22/17), the three MCSD Members under the group of Parliamentarians (i.e. the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians on Sustainable Development (COMPSUD), the Parliamentary Assembly of the

Mediterranean (PAM), and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA UfM)) should be considered for replacement as they will have completed their three consecutive mandates by end 2021.

48. Considering the difficulties faced in identifying potential candidates under the group of Parliamentarians, at its 21st Meeting, the MCSD Steering Committee concluded as follows: “*xxvi. Taking into account the limited number of Parliamentarians networks in the Mediterranean, if any relevant candidate is not identified or does not express interest to join the MCSD, the MCSD Steering Committee may examine the possibility to recommend to the Contracting Parties to maintain the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians on Sustainable Development (COMPSUD) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) in the MCSD for the next biennium, noting the proactiveness of these organizations in the work of the MCSD and of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system, encouraging the Secretariat to pursue efforts for identifying potential candidates to be considered for this group*”.

49. Following-up on this conclusion of the 21st Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee, the Secretariat mobilized efforts to identify potential candidates under the group of Parliamentarians. As of today, the Secretariat has not received any letter of expression of interest from regional parliamentary associations in the Mediterranean region. Given these unprecedented circumstances, in order to proceed with the completion of the MCSD membership in due time to ensure the effective functioning of the Commission, and in line with the conclusion of the 21st Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee, it is proposed to the MCSD Steering Committee to make a recommendation for expanding the mandate of COMPSUD and PAM for an extra period of two years on an exceptional basis. Should the Committee adopt such a recommendation, the Secretariat would inform the Bureau of the Contracting Parties accordingly and seek its recommendation for submission to COP 22. In the meantime, the Secretariat will continue to pursue its efforts to identify and mobilize potential candidates to be considered for the group of Parliamentarians.

Issue for consideration:

50. The MCSD Steering Committee is invited to express its opinion on the proposal related to the MCSD membership for 2022-2023.

51. The MCSD Steering Committee is also invited to address the aforementioned issue about the group of Parliamentarians.

I. Preparation of the 19th Meeting of the MCSD

52. In line with the mandate of the MCSD (Decision IG.22/17 adopted at COP 19 in 2016), the Secretariat is submitting the following topics to the consideration of the MCSD Steering Committee Members for facilitating their discussion on the preparation of the 19th Meeting of the MCSD and the definition of possible agenda items:

- Discussing the Analytical Report of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention Coordinator. This report could include inputs from the Members of the MCSD;
- Producing opinions on the overall draft UNEP/MAP Programme of Work for 2022-2023, with the aim of integrating sustainability considerations;
- Addressing a substantive theme through the organization of a roundtable on (several options):
 - a) *Sustainable and Inclusive Blue Economy* in collaboration with the UNEP Sustainable Blue Economy Coordination Group and relevant initiatives supported by the European Commission (e.g. EU4Ocean Coalition for Ocean Literacy¹⁴, EU International Ocean

¹⁴ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/en/node/4484>

Governance¹⁵), the OECD Ocean Economy Group¹⁶, Secretariat of the UfM and/or WWF-Med;

- b) *Climate change – State of Play, Risks for the Future, and Responses.* From a scientific perspective, this roundtable could be informed by the work of MedECC and by SoED. From an operational perspective, the Med Programme implementing partners may be mobilized. A specific focus could also be put on the work done by the Secretariat in the context of the implementation of Decision IG.24/8 adopted at COP 21 towards the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides (Med SOx ECA). If relevant, the Lab debate proposal on “Decoupling development from air pollution from ships in the Mediterranean” to the 2020 European Development Days expected to be held in Brussels, Belgium, on 9-10 June 2020, could be explored since this important event was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This proposal focused on a multi-stakeholder dialogue, including the private sector (shipping and cruise companies) and port and local authorities, on game-changing measures and solutions to address air quality degradation caused by maritime transport in The Mediterranean basin, which represents one of the world’s busiest shipping lanes; or,
 - c) *Building Back Greener through the deployment of Circular Economy in the Mediterranean.* In view of building back greener, SCP and circularity principles should be placed at the core of the post-COVID recovery. Virtuous behaviour that we have seen during the pandemic may lay the groundwork for scaling up SCP as part of a new, green normality. Based on the UNEP/MAP response to the COVID-19 crisis in the Mediterranean (see above), this roundtable could be fed by the work of SCP/RAC (e.g. regional measures to support the development of green and circular businesses and to strengthen the demand for more sustainable products, Mediterranean Entrepreneurship Award, SwitchMed II Programme), key partners, and possible invited speakers from other organizations.
- Implementing the 2030 Agenda and SDGs and producing opinions and recommendations for integration and coordination of the work of the MCSD with the other existing international and regional sustainable development and environmental programmes, policy frameworks and initiatives. For this specific topic, several complementary options may be envisaged:
 - a) Mobilizing international and regional organizations and programmes towards invitation of potential keynote speakers: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and/or relevant bodies in charge of the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration and/or UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development;
 - b) Building on previous collaboration with the three UN Regional Economic Commissions sharing the Mediterranean basin (UNECA, UNECE, UNESCWA) and strengthening the regional dimension through a meaningful dialogue with the UNEP Regional Offices for Africa, Europe and Western Asia;
 - c) Building on collaboration initiated with the UNEP Science Division on (i) reporting, monitoring and indicators; and, (ii) foresight and assessment studies;
 - d) Making the MCSD aware of the work of faith-based organizations and religious leaders on environmental protection and sustainable development through a presentation of the UNEP “Faith for Earth” initiative¹⁷;

¹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/ocean-governance_en

¹⁶ <https://www.oecd.org/ocean/topics/ocean-economy/>

¹⁷ <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment-programme/faith-earth-initiative/why-faith-and-environment-matters>

- e) Establishing a dialogue between the MCSD and Mediterranean Youth Organizations; Youth SDSN could be mobilized in that direction through SDSN-Med – University of Sienna, Italy, as MCSD Member and UNEP/MAP Partner;
 - f) Dedicating a special session to the sub-regional level, with emphasis on the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region (EUSAIR) and the West Med Blue Economy Initiative; and/or,
 - g) Mobilizing the MCSD Members that have been elected at the 18th Meeting of the MCSD and approved at COP 21 to present their work in implementing the 2030 Agenda/SDGs and the MSSD, namely AVITEM, FAIC, ASCAME, ESCG, ECO UNION, ESDF, MedPAN, AFED, and GWP-Med;
- Focusing a specific agenda item on peer learning and experience sharing on national structures and processes for sustainable development, keeping in mind the mission of the MCSD to support Mediterranean countries and stakeholders in implementing sustainable development policies. This agenda item could be introduced by a discussion on the synthesis paper “Structures and Processes for Implementing the 2030 Agenda and SDGs in the Mediterranean Countries” (Working Document UNEP/MED WG.483/5). In addition, Contracting Parties which presented in 2020 or will present in 2021 their Voluntary National Reviews at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), namely Libya, Monaco, Morocco, Slovenia and Syria in 2020, and Cyprus, Spain and Tunisia in 2021, could be invited to share their respective experiences.
 - Ensuring the follow-up of the MSSD implementation, including inputs (presentations) from MCSD Members, UNEP/MAP Components and other stakeholders. In addition of the presentation and discussion of the updated, populated Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard and the integration of SCP Indicators, an important agenda item should engage a discussion on the outputs of the MSSD and SCP Action Plan mid-term evaluations, including opportunities for the coming period and possible recommendations to the Contracting Parties. This session on the MSSD mid-term evaluations should also offer space towards a discussion on the draft MTS 2022-2027.
 - Organizing an interactive session (consultation) on the MED 2050 foresight study prepared by Plan Bleu. MCSD Members will be invited to discuss the preliminary outputs of MED 2050 towards possible recommendations to COP 22.
 - Organizing a session on the MSSD Flagship Initiatives which have been launched during the current biennium: on-going work, preliminary and expected outputs, and next steps.
-

Annex I

MSSD Mid-Term Evaluation – Key Findings of the State of Play and Gap Analysis Draft Report

Annex I: MSSD Mid-Term Evaluation – Key Findings of the State of Play and Gap Analysis Draft Report

The Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD)¹⁸ 2016-2025, adopted through Decision IG.22/2 by the 19th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (COP 19) (Athens, Greece, February 2016) is a strategic guiding document to translate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Mediterranean region and countries.

The present summary of the draft deliverable “State of Play and Gap Analysis” is part of the MSSD Mid-Term Evaluation, which aims to inform on (i) the state of the sustainability in the Mediterranean (supported by a literature review) and (ii) the progress and gaps regarding the strategy’s implementation. It tentatively identifies main achievements, shortcomings and opportunities of the MSSD implementation during the first phase (2016-2020) of the MSSD, with the aim to improve and accelerate the second phase (2021-2025).

The follow-up of the MSSD has been correlated to the global UN mechanisms to monitor progress on 2030 Agenda and SDGs, as described in the table below.

Global	Regional (Mediterranean)
2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD)
High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)	Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSDD)
Volunteer National Review (VNR)	Simplified Peer Review Mechanism (SIMPEER)
SDG Indicators; SDG Index and Dashboards	Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard

The **Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard**¹⁹, consisting of 28 indicators related to SDGs and populated by Plan Bleu, aims to ensure the monitoring of the MSSD implementation. It was last published in July 2019 with 25 out of 28 indicators (89%) populated for at least one year, although only 18 out of 28 indicators (64%) are providing two different years, with at least one year in the period 2016-2019, to get a sense of progress over time (trends). Full update of the dashboard is planned every two years, next release being planned in mid-2021.

Level of population of the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard (Source: own assessment)

Clusters of Indicators per MSSD Objective	Number of indicators / Objective	Indicators distribution / Objective	Indicator with data from at least one year	Indicator with data from at least two years, including one year between 2016-2019
General indicators	5	18%	5	4
1 – Sea and coast	3	11%	2	1
2 – Rural & Resources	9	32%	9	9
3 – Cities	3	11%	2	1
4 – Climate change	2	7%	2	0
5 – Green/blue economy	1	4%	1	1
6 – Governance	5	18%	4	2
	28	100%	25	18

¹⁸ https://planbleu.org/sites/default/files/publications/mssd_2016-2025_final.pdf

¹⁹ <http://obs.planbleu.org/en/>

The **Simplified Peer Review Mechanism (SIMPEER)**²⁰ promoted by UNEP/MAP supports volunteer countries towards the transposition, implementation and monitoring of the MSSD and SDGs at the national level. Through a series of technical meetings, field missions and interviews at different ministries levels, countries identify common obstacles and opportunities in the implementation of their national strategies on sustainable development. To date, the following countries have been reviewed: France, Montenegro and Morocco (2016-2017); Albania, Egypt and Tunisia (2018-2019).

The **Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)**²¹, presented by countries at the UN High-Level Policy Forum (HLPF), aim at facilitating the exchange of national experiences, successes, challenges and lessons learned for accelerating the 2030 Agenda and SDGs implementation. To date, all Mediterranean countries have undertaken this voluntary exercise. Three countries (Egypt, Morocco and Slovenia) have even been able to repeat it twice during two different years.

The **MSSD Implementation Reporting Tool** was last updated by the UNEP/MAP Secretariat in April 2019 ([UNEP/MED WG.469/3 - Annex II](#)). It tracks the development and implementation of 14 MSSD Flagships Initiatives and Targets (out of 19 in total). Although it is mainly descriptive, it provides updated information about the state of the MSSD Flagship Initiatives by their promoters. Implementation and delivery of most MSSD Flagship Initiatives are supported by MCSD Members, UNEP/MAP Components and Partners, and external stakeholders, with external secured resources.

According to the **Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020**, published by UN in July 2020²², the world is not on track to achieve the global Goals by 2030. Even before the COVID-19 outbreak, progress had been uneven and more focused attention was needed in most areas. The pandemic abruptly disrupted SDGs implementation and, in some cases, turned back decades of progress. Forecasts indicate that the pandemic will push million people back into extreme poverty in 2020, many of these being workers in the informal economy. COVID-19 is also increasing the vulnerability of the world's slum dwellers, who already suffer from inadequate housing with limited or no access to basic infrastructure and services. Older persons, persons with disabilities, migrants and refugees are more likely to experience severe effects due to their specific health and socioeconomic circumstances. Similarly, the pandemic is taking a toll on the world's women and children.

As stated in the report²³, the importance of timely, quality, open and disaggregated data and statistics has never been as necessary as during the COVID-19 crisis. Over the years, good progress has been made in increasing the availability of internationally comparable data for SDG monitoring. However, huge data gaps still exist in terms of geographic coverage, timeliness and the level of disaggregation required. Moreover, challenges remain in compiling and disseminating metadata to document the data quality of SDG indicators at local and national levels. Therefore, investments in data and statistics are needed to maintain adequate coverage of all population groups, as well as to guarantee the internal consistency, comparability and overall quality of data produced to advance implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The annual report from the **Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)**²⁴ also shows that Mediterranean countries are currently far from reaching the SDGs by 2030. Nine of the 21 countries had not achieved any of the SDGs in 2019, and for almost two thirds of the SDGs, significant or major challenges remain for their achievement. In most situations, efforts undertaken since 2015 have brought about positive developments, but changes have occurred at a level and/or pace that is insufficient for achievement of the SDGs by 2030. The situation is particularly critical for SDG 2 on hunger, nutrition and sustainable agriculture, SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities

²⁰ <https://planbleu.org/en/projects/1st-technical-meeting-on-simplified-peer-review-mechanism-simpeer-of-national-strategies-for-sustainable-development/>

²¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>

²² <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/>

²³ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2020/the-need-for-data-innovations-in-the-time-of-COVID-19/>

²⁴ Sachs et al. (2019), Sustainable Development Report 2019, New York: Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)

and SDG 14 on life below water - which is most relevant to the Barcelona Convention - for which none of the Mediterranean countries are considered to be on track to reach the SDG targets by 2030.

The report on the **State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean (SoED)**²⁵, a comprehensive assessment of the interactions between environment and development in the Mediterranean region coordinated by Plan Bleu (UNEP/MAP), recalls that over the last decades, human-induced pressures have increasingly affected the Mediterranean region. Population growth and unsustainable production and consumption patterns have led to environmental degradation. Despite some progress, economic growth continues to increase resource consumption and carbon emissions. Land- and sea-use change, in particular on the coast, are detrimental to the environment. Exploitation of resources and organisms, pollution and climate change are projected to exacerbate pre-existing fragilities in the Mediterranean, leading to multiple stresses and systemic failures, putting health and livelihoods at risk.

SoED shows that progress has been achieved in policy responses and actions to manage the Mediterranean more sustainably. However, these results have not been sufficient to reduce the most significant pressures on the environment and to safeguard the Mediterranean for present and future generations while meeting human development needs. Current trends do not allow to achieve the Good Environmental Status (GES) of the Mediterranean Sea by 2020. SoED highlights that urgent and collective efforts for transformative change are required to safeguard the Mediterranean environment, while simultaneously fostering human development, taking into account differences between Mediterranean countries. A fundamental reorganization of economic and social systems, including changes in paradigms and values, is required to achieve sustainability commitments.

SoED recalls that the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system can play a major role in fostering sustainability transitions. However, this requires an urgent step up from planning, engagement and local innovation, to widespread implementation on the ground and effective enforcement, in collaboration with local authorities and relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and funding agencies. Implementation and enforcement are lagging behind the ambition of commonly agreed objectives and measures, and risk discrediting their comprehensiveness and the major achievements in environmental diplomacy in the region. The imminent threat of severe and irreversible damage to ecosystems and subsequent human well-being calls for the urgent implementation and enforcement of agreed actions, capitalization, scaling-up and dissemination of a multitude of relevant innovations within a coherent approach, as well as adequate monitoring and evaluation to ensure that measures are leading to the desired effects, and necessary adjustments when achievements fall behind.

Main Gaps

- The **path of implementation** of the MSSD and SDGs is too slow to match 2020, 2025 and 2030 deadlines. Without transformative acceleration and leverage on synergies between those strategic frameworks, the targeted Objectives and Goals will not be reached in time.
- The **MSSD suffers from a lack of visibility, awareness and engagement** from non-UNEP/MAP related stakeholders. Non-environmental policy and decision makers in the Mediterranean region and countries are not always knowledgeable of the MSSD, as shown by the relatively low references to the MSSD in the academic and policy literature.
- The **MSSD does not identify clearly the owners and implementing partners** of Strategic Directions and Actions, which leads to a lack of empowerment and commitment. Often the Strategic Directions and Actions are too vague or generic to be correctly implemented, and they are lacking SMART²⁶ indicators to monitor efficiently its state of progress.

²⁵ <https://planbleu.org/en/activites/report-state-environment-and-development-mediterranean>

²⁶ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

- **The monitoring mechanisms of the MSSD are not providing a timely and exhaustive picture of the state of sustainability in the Mediterranean region.** It does not cover adequately the level of implementation of MSSD Strategic Directions, Actions, Flagship Initiatives and Targets.
- **Data gaps** exist in terms of geographic coverage, accuracy, timeliness and the level of disaggregation required. The Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard is today incomplete, partially outdated and is not treating equally all MSSD Objectives.
- **The level of financial investment** into the MSSD activities seems insufficient to ensure its effective implementation and reach the Objectives in due time. The amount of funds is not adequately tracked, which impedes the possibility to evaluate the quantity and quality of stakeholders' initiatives contributing to the MSSD. In addition, the MSSD is lacking an action plan to attract relevant financial actors and increase available funds
- **The complexity and diversity of international sustainability frameworks and multilateral agreements** (MSSD, 2030 Agenda, Convention on Biological Diversity, Paris Agreement, etc.) requires a strong institutional, technical and political coordination that goes beyond the current capability and competences of the existing MSSD monitoring mechanisms.

Main Opportunities

- **The MSSD can be a strategic instrument accelerating the SDGs implementation**, by providing a mid-term milestone by 2025, five years ahead of the 2030 Agenda target. The MSSD can also guarantee a better focus on sustainability issues most relevant to the Mediterranean region.
 - **The MSSD can leverage the active involvement of Contracting Parties and relevant stakeholders through the MCSD and UNEP/MAP Partners consultation mechanisms.** The MCSD can be empowered, and enhanced technically and financially, to become the multi-stakeholder platform and a regional forum supporting the MSSD implementation in a timely and effective manner.
 - **The clustering of Flagship Initiatives with key Regional Actions and other identified sustainability-driven initiatives** contributing to the MSSD can simplify the monitoring and support the upscaling, dissemination and replication at regional, national or local level, through adequate financing as well as political and technical support.
 - **The massive investment in post-COVID recovery plans can be directed** towards MSSD and SDGs transformative actions, providing a unique opportunity to accelerate the sustainability transformation and avoid harmful subsidies or initiatives.
 - **The diversity, complementary and inter-relations between the existing Mediterranean platforms, institutions, initiatives and actors** can create major synergies and potential gains that can be harvested through innovative collaboration and multi-stakeholder partnerships.
-

Annex II

Mediterranean Green Business Award – List of Criteria (first draft)

Annex II: Mediterranean Green Business Award – List of Criteria (first draft)

BUSINESS CATEGORY

a) Basic criteria (mandatory)

- a.1. The sustainable business is profitable, according to its economic results and feasibility.
- a.2. The sustainable business addresses environmental challenges and minimizes its environmental impacts. It applies tools like eco-innovation, product life cycle thinking and/or eco-design, circular economy. It prevents pollution, applies resource efficiency and contributes to consumer's sustainable lifestyles.
- a.3. The sustainable business addresses social needs, empowers communities, and operates using a networking approach.

b) Additional criteria (desirable)

- b.1. The sustainable business has an equitable working system in place, either on decent job conditions or a fair cooperative business model or freelance services.
- b.2. The sustainable business faces socio-economic contextual difficulties through successful coping strategies.
- b.3. The sustainable business has a potential for replicability and scaling-up.

Proposed distribution for the evaluation of the basic and additional criteria:

Criteria	% for the evaluation
a.1	25%
a.2.	30%
a.3.	15%
b.1.	10%
b.2.	10%
b.3.	10%

PUBLIC AUTHORITIES CATEGORY

Evaluation criteria

- 1) The policy, the plan or the legislation has influenced the creation, the enlargement or the replication of sustainable businesses that address environmental challenges and social needs. A proper evaluation of the results of the public action has been made by the authority.
- 2) The policy, the plan or the legislation has been adequately supported by funding mechanisms or green tax incentives.
- 3) The policy, the plan or the legislation has been set-up through a public participatory procedure.

Proposed distribution for the evaluation of the criteria:

Criteria	% for the evaluation
1	50%
2	25%
3	25%
