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Meeting of the MAP Focal Points on the Medium-Term Strategy (2022-2027)

Teleconference, 13-15 April 2021

Agenda Item 3: UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy 2016-2021: Draft Evaluation Report

Draft Evaluation of the UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy (MTS) 2016-2021

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2021

Note by the Secretariat

1. At their 19th Meeting (Athens, Greece, 9-12 February 2016), through Decision IG.22/1 entitled “UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy 2016-2021”, the Contracting Parties “*Request[ed]* the Secretariat to launch an independent evaluation of the MTS implementation in 2020 for the consideration of COP 22 in 2021, with special emphasis on the interlinkages with the objectives of the MSSD 2016-2025 and the UNEP/MAP EcAp-based Ecological Objectives”. At their 21st Meeting (Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019), through Decision IG.24/2 on “Governance”, the Contracting Parties “*Approve[d]* the Roadmap for the Evaluation of the 2016-2021 Medium-Term Strategy and the preparation of the 2022-2027 Medium-Term Strategy, as set out in Annex V to the present Decision;”
2. The Secretariat initiated the independent evaluation of the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2016-2021 (MTS) very early in the biennium, in close cooperation with the MAP components. The relevant discussions were initiated at the 40th Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel (ECP, Rome, Italy, 30-31 January 2020), and continued at the following ECP meetings and intersessionally. The ToRs for the independent evaluation of the MTS were prepared and published in February 2020 (Information Document UNEP/MED WG.504/Inf.3) and the work of the consultant was initiated in May 2020.
3. Following the guidance provided by the Bureau at its 89th meeting (Teleconference, 22-23 April 2020), the Secretariat prepared a note with an explanation of the expected roles and relations of the different structures involved in the preparation of the new MTS (i.e. Bureau, Steering Committee, Open-Ended Working Group and MAP Focal Points) and a revised timeline of actions for the evaluation of the current MTS 2016-2021 and the preparation of the new MTS, which was then consulted with the Bureau members and subsequently shared with the MAP Focal Points in June 2020.
4. Following the agreed roadmap, the Initial Findings of the Evaluation of the MTS 2016-2021 were submitted and discussed at the first meeting of the Steering Committee on the MTS (Teleconference, 10-11 November 2020). The initial findings of the evaluation and the outcome of the first meeting of the Steering Committee were submitted to the 90th Meeting of the Bureau (Teleconference, 10-11 November 2020); the Bureau took note of the progress in the evaluation of the current MTS and asked the Contracting Parties to provide all the necessary information to the consultant undertaking the independent evaluation of the MTS. Furthermore, the Bureau requested the Secretariat to ensure the timely finalization of the draft evaluation report for submission to the first MAP Focal Points Meeting of the 2020-2021 biennium, as well as to ensure interlinkages and cross-fertilization between the processes of the evaluation of the current MTS and the preparation of the new MTS.
5. The work on the independent evaluation continued following the guidance of the Bureau; background information was provided to the consultant by the Secretariat to facilitate his work. The draft evaluation report is presented in the current document, which initially touches upon the concept and design of the MTS 2016-2021 and then focuses on the assessment of the implementation of the MTS and the achievement of its outcomes and the delivery of related outputs. The evaluation has also analyzed, to the extent possible, the financial aspect of the MTS implementation. The conclusions and recommendations presented at the end of the document summarize the findings of the evaluation. The results of the survey on the MTS evaluation are provided in Information Document UNEP/MED WG.504/Inf.4, while the interlinkages between the draft Evaluation of the 2016-2021 UNEP/MAP MTS and the draft 2022-2027 UNEP/MAP MTS are provided in Information Document UNEP/MED WG.504/Inf.5.
6. The MAP Focal Points are expected to comment on the draft evaluation report of the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2016-2021 and provide guidance and recommendations for consideration before its transmission to the second Meeting of the MAP Focal Points of the 2020-2021 biennium in September 2021. The Second Meeting of the Steering Committee on the MTS (Teleconference, 5-6 July 2021) and the 91st Meeting of the Bureau (Teleconference, 7-8 July 2021) will also have the opportunity to discuss the revised evaluation report.



**Mediterranean
Action Plan**
Barcelona
Convention

EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNEP/MAP MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY 2016- 2021

Draft

March 2021

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List of Acronyms

TBA

Executive summary

TBA

1 Introduction

1. The evaluation of the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) follows the request of Contracting Parties as in Decision IG.22/1 of the COP19 held in Athens, Greece in February 2016, which states the following: “Requests the Secretariat to launch an independent evaluation of the MTS implementation in 2020 for the consideration of COP 22 in 2021, with special emphasis on the interlinkages with the objectives of the MSSD 2016-2025 and the UNEP/MAP EcAp-based Ecological Objectives.” The current MTS covers a period of six years until COP 22 (i.e. 2016-2021).

1.1 Purpose and scope of the evaluation

2. The main objective of the Independent Evaluation (IE) is to assess the implementation of the MTS with the aim of enhancing/strengthening the delivery of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system’s mandate in the future and, to this end, of providing feedback for the new MTS. The MTS is a policy document and, necessarily, the respective evaluation necessarily is what is usually called the “process” evaluation. A process evaluation, generally, focuses on the implementation process and attempts to determine how successfully a certain initiative/program (in this case: MTS), including its outcomes and outputs, followed its implementation logic and determines whether program outputs have been implemented as intended and resulted in predetermined outcomes.

3. The purpose of the IE is to provide an impartial review of MTS implementation in terms of its effectiveness, overall performance and achievements. The information, findings, lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations generated by the evaluation will feed the preparation of the next MTS covering the period 2022-2027 and possibly beyond that timeframe. The IE has assessed the extent to which planned results have been achieved since the beginning of the MTS implementation in 2016 and the likelihood of their full achievement by the end of its validity in 2021.

4. The IE covers the entire scope of the MTS with all its components, and in particular by assessing the success of implementation of the strategic themes, the over-arching, the core and the cross-cutting ones. The IE’s scope revolved around three major aspects, namely: (1) review of the MTS’s strategic approach, concept and design; (2) evaluation of the MTS’s implementation, i.e. progress towards results; and (3) conclusions and recommendations.

1.2 Methodological approach

5. The evaluation methodology focuses on analyzing the concept and design of MTS and its implementation, and provides a set of recommendations for the new MTS. The IE is carried out through five overlapping phases:

- Document review and analysis (desktop study);
- Consultations with key stakeholders;
- Preparation of the First Draft IE Report;
- Preparation of the Second Draft IE Report; and
- Preparation of the Final IE Report.

6. The **concept and design** of MTS was assessed by focusing on the approach used in its design and selection of its main strategic directions, with a reference to other relevant global and regional initiatives assessing the level of incorporation of these into the MTS’s design. The aim of the assessment of MTS **Implementation** was to define the rate of achievement of MTS outcomes and delivery of related outputs. The evaluation has also analyzed, to the extent possible, the financial aspect of the MTS implementation. However, it is not an audit report, but only an approximation of

the rate of expenditure of funds, which will provide an indication of the commitment of Contracting Parties to the implementation of MTS. Finally, the **conclusions and recommendations** are the summary of findings in the previous two stages of the evaluation.

7. While it was envisaged that the evaluation consultant should undertake three missions (visit to Coordinating Unit in Athens; attend the Bureau Meeting in 2020 and MAP Focal Points Meeting in 2021), due to the Covid-19 pandemics, none of these missions was possible to materialize. This can be considered as a serious limitation to carrying out this task. In the absence of the missions, the consultant relied heavily on other means of communication, in particular video conferencing. The consultant made every effort to contact relevant stakeholders, and a limited number of consultations took place. However, it has to be noted that the consultant had very effective support from the MAP Coordinating Unit, whose assistance was critically important when other limits to his performance were present.

8. As part of the evaluation process, a survey among the stakeholders has been undertaken. The questionnaire had 34 questions grouped in 5 sections: (1) General information; (2) Design of the MTS; (3) MTS implementation; (4) Achievement of outcomes and outputs; and (5) Recommendations for the future MTS. The questionnaire was sent to all groups of stakeholders that have participated in the development and implementation of the MTS. The MAP Coordinating Unit and RACs were not included in the exercise. The response rate was received from 23 addresses, out of which 8 were from national Focal Points. It should be noted that this survey is only an indicative one and that it served the purpose of signaling the major issues related to development and implementation of MTS.

2. MTS Description

2.1 Brief MTS description

9. The MTS is meant to guide the path towards the protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and contribute to the sustainable development of the Mediterranean Region for the period 2016-2021. The priorities of the MTS are intended to be "action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, universally applicable to all countries in the region, while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities." They are developed to be "focused on priority areas for the achievement of sustainable development". The priority themes reflect legal commitments and major needs at the regional and national levels, they contribute to the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) objectives and they are part of the global efforts for sustainable development. Their respective outputs are expected to be achieved through the three successive MAP biennial Programmes of Work of the 6- year period. The vision of the MTS is to achieve "a healthy Mediterranean with marine and coastal ecosystems that are productive and biologically diverse contributing to sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations".

10. The concept of the MTS is reflected in Figure 1. The **Ultimate Objectives** are the achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES) of the Mediterranean and the contribution to sustainable development. The **Strategic Themes** are selected accordingly, and will be promoted under the Overarching Theme of Governance. The **Core Themes** are:

- Land and sea-based pollution;
- Biodiversity and ecosystems;
- Land and sea interactions and processes.

The **Cross-cutting Themes** are:

- Integrated coastal zone management;
- Sustainable consumption and production;
- Climate change adaptation.

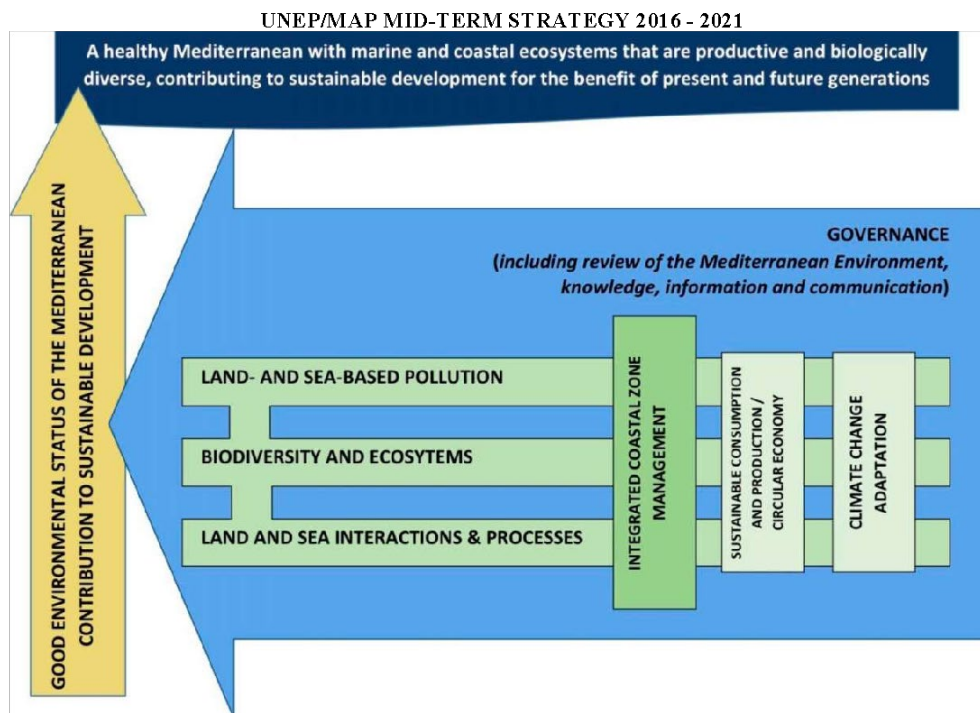


Figure 1: The concept of the MTS

2.2. Assessment of the MTS design

11. The introduction to the document is succinct and up to the point. It shows, in a general manner, how the MTS priorities, in fact the themes, are selected. They are legal commitments stemming out of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, and they cover all the issues these legal documents are dealing with. The paragraph that explains it is the following:

"In line with the Rio+20 Outcome Document, the priorities of the MTS are intended to be 'action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, universally applicable to all countries in the region, while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.' They are developed to be 'focused on priority areas for the achievement of sustainable development'."

12. While the above paragraph is sufficiently enough guidance for the selection of the priorities, the evaluation finds that **the scope of themes covers the entire range of issues MAP** is dealing with and it is a bit difficult to spot the real priorities while analyzing the themes, outcomes and outputs. It looks like the entire scope of the MTS reflects the MAP institutional structure. However, the evaluator respects the fact that the MTS' priorities are decided upon by the Contracting Parties. The stakeholders interviewed largely find that the structure and the scope of action of the MTS is relevant

to the MAP-Barcelona Convention mandate, as well consistent with national and local policies and priorities and the needs of intended national beneficiaries.

13. The evaluation finds that **the Vision of the MTS is too general and is not focused enough on the specific time period it is covering**. The vision, normally, describes the state that is to be achieved by the end of the planning period. This MTS vision is, definitely, a long-term one and describes the long-term goals to be achieved in a relatively distant future, or after a several medium-terms, for example. It is true that the current MTS vision is based on the vision approved by the COP 16 in 2009 and inspired by the vision of the MSSD. The MTS Vision is very similar in style and the “spirit” to both. However, while both former visions are really aimed at achieving the long-term goals, the MTS’ vision should be aiming at results to be achieved in the medium term and its “spirit” should actually reflect that time frame, or medium-term goals such as, for example, establishing coastal and marine governance systems, full or partial (but precisely defined) ratification of legal documents, increasing coastal resilience, full application of Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) in the region, etc., which could be easily monitored. In fact, in the absence of these, the current vision could easily be repeated verbatim for the next MTS. Besides, the scope of the current vision seems to be limited because there is no reference to increasing the coastal and marine ecosystems’ resilience including mitigating the impacts of climate change.

14. The issue of **vision is important because it is the major milestone against which the final outcome, and the “change of behavior” as a result of the MTS implementation should be judged**. The evaluation proposes that the next MTS vision reflects the medium time-frame and be more concrete in terms of the major objective(s) to be achieved. The MTS vision could, however, be placed in the context of the longer-term visions such as the COP 16 and the MSSD visions but should be more concrete in terms of visioning the state to be achieved at the end of the planning period.

15. In its concept and structure, the **MTS looks like a very complex document**, which is sometimes difficult to follow and the user/reader may lose track of its main objectives. The MTS has the total of 42 strategic outcomes and 84 indicative key outputs. The impression is that during the development of MTS, a “Christmas tree” approach was taken, intended to accommodate the full range of MAP activities and, judging by the number of outputs, it was done in considerable detail. Maybe it would be better if the MTS, as any strategy does, establishes clear priorities early on during the strategy development process. It should be noted, though, that in the document there are only 20 odd mentions of priority/priorities, albeit not in a systematic but in a very haphazard manner.

16. The MTS exhibits a somewhat **intricate concept of objectives**. Besides relationships among objectives presented in Figure 1 above, the Table 1 below shows how the objectives, in terms of type and number, are distributed among the strategic themes.

Strategic Theme	Accomplishments	Objectives	Ecological Objectives	Strategic objectives related to a protocol	Strategic objectives	Linked to strategic objectives of cross-cutting theme	Outcomes	Outputs
Governance	3	7					6	16
Land and sea Pollution			5	2		4	7	15
Biodiversity and Ecosystems			6	2		4	7	17
Land and Sea Interactions and Processes			3	4		4	6	10
ICZM					9		6	11

SCP					8		4	7
Climate Change Adaptation					2		5	8
TOTAL							42	84

Table 1: Distribution of objectives among Strategic Themes

17. There are several categories of objectives: ultimate, objectives (linked to accomplishments within the governance theme only), ecological objectives, strategic objectives related to a protocol, strategic objectives linked to the strategic objectives of the cross-cutting themes, and accomplishments, which are neither objectives, outcomes or outputs. The evaluation finds that this structure of objectives is too complex and that the understanding of the MTS would greatly benefit from its simplification. The evaluation proposes that each theme has clearly identified objective(s), which should then be linked to indicators and targets, as an efficient way to monitor the implementation of the activities within the theme. However, in separate paragraph it could be indicated what are the linkages with the objectives of other strategic documents (ecological objectives, protocol's objectives and objectives with the cross-cutting themes).

18. Seven strategic themes are grouped into an overarching theme (governance), core themes and cross-cutting themes (three in each group). Each theme has a number of strategic outcomes that are contributing to the achievement of eight generic "products": implementation of existing regional legal framework and decisions; development and approval of new or updated plans / programs / guidelines; assistance to Contracting Parties for implementation at national level; monitoring / evaluation; technical assistance/capacity building; networking; regional cooperation; and dealing with emerging issues. The evaluation finds that this structure is robust and clear. It allows for exercising the full potential of the MAP – Barcelona Convention system to assist Contracting Parties in their endeavors towards achieving sustainable development. However, the evaluation also finds that **the total number of outcomes (42) and outputs (84) is too large**. Although they reflect the full scope of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, such large number makes monitoring of implementation difficult. The distribution of outputs per strategic outcome is presented in Table 2 below.

Themes	Outputs	Outputs per Strategic Outcome							
		Existing regional legal framework implementation	New/updated plans/ programs/ guidelines	National impl.	Monitoring/ evaluation	Capacity building	Networking	Reg. coop.	Emerging issues
Governance	16	3		3	5	2	1	2	
Land and sea Pollution	15	1	2	3	3	3	1	1	1
Biodiversity and Ecosystems	17	2	3	3	4	2	1	1	1
Land and Sea Interactions and Processes	10	1	2	1	2	1	1		2
ICZM	11	3	2	3	1	1		1	
SCP	7	3			1	1	2		
Climate Change Adaptation	8	2	3	3	1	1			
TOTAL	84	15	12	14	17	11	6	5	4

Table 2: Distribution of outputs per outcomes

19. The evaluation finds that the **elaboration of individual themes is coherent and that all of them follow the predetermined format**. The titles of specific MTS outputs per outcome are then reflected in the Programme of Work, which then further divides each output into a number of activities. The evaluation finds that there is a **high degree of coherence and consistence between the MTS and PoW**.

2.3 Implementation arrangements

20. Some of the stakeholders that responded to the survey (National Focal Points, MCSD members, NGOs, IGOs, local actors) commented that only a limited number of **national stakeholders participated in the MTS design phase**. This may be understandable considering the fact that this was the first strategy prepared and, consequently, adequate experience in developing such a complex document was lacking. Also, there was a relatively short time available to prepare and adopt it. However, this is certainly an area for improvement during the preparation of next strategies.

21. Majority of the stakeholders surveyed felt that the **MTS should have a clearly defined budget for its implementation**. However, the evaluation is aware of the fact that PoW has the budget for implementation of the activities, and this is clearly stated in the MTS (paragraph 106). The evaluation suggests that this may be an issue to discuss further. This will largely depend on the structure and character of future strategies.

22. The evaluation finds that **the role of the private (business) sector and its contribution to the MTS implementation is not adequately covered in the MTS**. It is only cursorily mentioned in the implementation section. Again, this could be justified by the short time available for its preparation and adoption, but certainly is an issue of strategic importance for the future MTSs.

2.4 Monitoring and evaluation, timing and milestones

23. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) component of the MTS is not adequately developed. **There is no timeline for the implementation** of the specific outcomes and outputs/deliverables, which is a basic constitutive element of any strategy. Existence of the implementation timeline would also be an indication of the MTS priorities. The timeline could also indicate important milestones to be reached during the implementation of the MTS, such as when a certain predefined number of new ratifications is achieved, or significant amount of external resources confirmed, or significant thematic action plans implemented, etc.

24. The **system of indicators and targets is not a constituent part of the MTS**. There is a system of indicators and targets that accompanies the PoW, but not all the MTS outcomes are covered with one or more indicators and targets. For example, the Overarching Theme "Governance" has a total of 16 indicators, but only 9 outputs are accompanied by one or more indicators/targets. Similar situation is also found with the remaining themes. The evaluation suggests that future MTSs have, at least, a number of limited indicators and targets that may be linked to major priorities and outcomes, and which should be a constituent part of the MTS document. A more detailed set of indicators and targets should be provided in the PoW.

25. The evaluation is aware of the **complementarity between the MTS and PoW in the matter of M&E** and the need to avoid the repetition of tasks, which is also related to indicators and targets. However, it is of the opinion that, when **indicator system exists in the PoW that it should be more consistent and cover all the MTS's outputs**. However, it is also aware of the fact that MTS has 42 outcomes and 84 outputs and that devising the system to cover all of these would make it very

complex. In this respect, the evaluation stresses again the need for prioritization and simplification of the MTS's structure which would, consequently, lead towards a more simplified M&E system.

2.5 Linkages with other international initiatives

26. The MTS is **integrating well all major guidelines entrenched in main international and/or regional evolutions of the last 5 years**. The regional evolutions, in particular the MSSD 2016-2025 and the UNEP/MAP EcAp-based Ecological Objectives, are directly integrated in the MTS's objectives, themes, outcomes and outputs. The three Core Themes are directly linked to the respective EcAp Ecological Objectives. The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted in September 2015 and came into force on 1 January 2016, just around the time or soon after the MTS was developed and approved. The 2030 Agenda and especially the SDG 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development), are mentioned in the Decision IG.22/1 and in the preamble of the MTS, but no further elaboration and/or direct linkage exist in the document itself.

3. MTS implementation

3.1 Evaluation of the Strategic Outcomes implementation

27. As the MTS states, its aim is "...to guide the path for the protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and contribution to sustainable development of the Mediterranean Region for the period 2016-2021." The ultimate objectives of the MTS are to achieve the Good Environmental Status (GES) of the Mediterranean and contribute to sustainable development. These objectives are quite general and far-reaching and do not fully show what is to be achieved in the medium term, i.e. after six years of the MTS's implementation. However, the evaluation finds that definition of the MTS priority themes, which "... reflect legal commitments and major needs at the regional and national levels..." better expresses the real objectives of MTS even if that has not been clearly stated in the document itself. Having the above in mind, this evaluation analyses and assesses the realization of strategic outcomes grouped under the seven priority themes.

28. Table 3 below shows the extent of achievement of targets at the level of strategic outcome with an indication of the current status of realization. Information used to compile Table 3 was mainly taken from existing documentation that was provided by the UNEP/MAP Secretariat. The results shown in the table are based on the analysis of indicators that have been defined for each Strategic Outcome in the PoW. Each indicator had assigned targets for each biennium. All the documents that were put at the disposal of the evaluator were thoroughly inspected and each output/deliverable that constituted a "finished" product was recorded. The activities that were ongoing and that were not resulted in a finalized product were not recorded as "finished". Equally so, most of the meetings were not considered as deliverables because they were means to achieved the deliverables/targets as considered such in the PoW. Also, some outcomes do not have associated indicators and targets, but if it was obvious that the respective outputs were completed they were recorded and, as such contributed to the assessment of a specific outcome. The evaluation for the bienniums 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 is complete as much as it was possible with the documents that were provided. The analysis for the biennium 2020-2021 is, obviously, not complete and for many outcomes the progress could not be recorded. The respective activities, though, were carried out but not completed yet and, thus, could not be counted as a progress towards the outcomes.

“Traffic lights” system for the implementation of the Strategic Outcomes

Target completely or largely achieved	Target on course to be achieved	Target’s activities need speeding up	No data on indicators
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Theme	Strategic Outcome	Assessment	Remarks
Overarching Theme: Governance	1.1 Contracting Parties supported in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols, Regional Strategies and Action Plans		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratifications of legal documents already exceeded the 6-year target • Satisfaction with the MAP meetings’ services is good • Very good success rate in attracting the external finance has been achieved, in particular the GEF MedProgramme and new EU-funded projects
	1.2 Contracting Parties supported in compliance with the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols, Regional Strategies and Action Plans		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of CPs reported on compliance but there is still a number of countries that have to improve their reporting (82% and 50% per biennium respectively) • BCRS established and UNEP/MAP Secretariat has to see whether this could improve the reporting rate
	1.3 Strengthened participation, engagement, synergies and complementarities among global and regional institutions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil society organizations and private sector increasingly partnering with MAP • Cooperation on joint activities with partners such as EEA, OSPAR, HELCOM, GFCM, WWF and other
	1.4 Knowledge and understanding of the state of the Mediterranean Sea and coast enhanced through mandated assessments for informed policy-making		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the outcome is on a steady course • Many countries have adopted national IMAPs • Guidance factsheets for IMAP CI prepared • IMAP implementation is on course
	1.5 MAP knowledge and MAP information system enhanced and accessible for policy-making, increased awareness and understanding		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IMAP Infosystem has been developed • Speed up development of SEIS national nodes
	1.6 Raised awareness and outreach		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New MAP website • Communications Strategy implemented • A number of interesting communications products • MAP present at many events
Core Theme 1: Land and sea-based pollution	2.1 Strengthening regional implementation of the obligations under the Barcelona Convention and 4 pollution-related Protocols, and of programmes of measures in existing relevant Regional Strategies and Action Plans		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of Regional Plans implementation completed • Support provided for the implementation of existing regional measures

Theme	Strategic Outcome	Assessment	Remarks
	2.2 Development or update of new/existing action plans, programmes and measures, common standards and criteria, guidelines		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement to develop 6 pollution regional plans. Work on 3 Regional Plans in progress • Good at producing knowledge products (9 guidelines developed and adopted)
	2.3 Strengthening and implementation of marine pollution prevention and control legislation and policies at national level, including through enforcement and integration into sectorial processes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No special indicators and targets for this outcome • NAPs analysis undertaken • NAP H2020 indicators developed • 11 countries supported on marine litter and/or circular economy • 4 SCP NAPs developed
	2.4 Marine Pollution Monitoring and assessment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed record of countries submitting their reports • Countries supported to update/develop their national pollution control system • QSR 2017 pollution chapter and H2020 pollution report finalised
	2.5 Enhanced capacity at regional, sub-regional and national levels including technical assistance and capacity building		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows good level of training activity at national level • Large number of people trained • Activities in 2020-21 biennium still need to show results
	2.6 Enhanced cooperation at regional, sub-regional and national levels to prevent and control marine pollution		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No indicators established to assess progress in this outcome • 2 MOUs and 1 sub-regional plan
	2.7 Identifying and tackling new and emerging issues, as appropriate		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No concrete indicators to assess progress in this outcome • REMPEC established SO_x Technical Committee • The work on identification of key elements for the preparation of new/updated Regional Plans has considered emerging issues, like microplastics, sludge management, aquaculture pollution impacts etc.
Core Theme 2: Biodiversity and ecosystems	3.1 Strengthening regional implementation of the obligations under the Barcelona Convention, and its relevant Protocols and other instruments		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No record of countries implementing action plans • SPA organized MPA Forum • Data collected on SPA management • National Ballast Water Management Strategy for Morocco
	3.2 Development of new action plans, programmes and measures, common standards and criteria, guidelines for the conservation of Coastal and Marine biodiversity and ecosystems		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Action Plans adopted in 2019 • 6 guidelines developed • Biodiversity component integrated in MSP project GEF Adriatic
	3.3 Strengthening national implementation of biodiversity conservation policies, strategies and legislation measures		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of NAPs developed • Regulatory measures including MPAs • Biodiversity component integrated in CAMP Italy and GEF Adriatic project
	3.4 Monitoring, inventory and assessment of biodiversity with focus		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countries supported on monitoring of biodiversity

Theme	Strategic Outcome	Assessment	Remarks
	on endangered and threatened species, non- indigenous species and key habitats		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPA/RAC worked on IMAP implementation for Biodiversity and NIS clusters • Review of SPAMI platform
	3.5 Technical assistance and capacity building at regional, sub-regional and national levels to strengthen policy implementation and compliance with biodiversity -related national legislation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 scientific meetings on Mediterranean marine biodiversity in 2016-17 and 2018-19 • Slow progress in 2020 due to Covid-19 on scientific meetings and pilot projects • Training in 11 countries
	3.6 Enhanced cooperation at regional, sub- regional and national levels to protect and conserve biodiversity and ecosystems		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 working strategies/working programmes developed with partners
	3.7 Identifying and tackling with new and emerging issues, as appropriate		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No concrete indicators to assess progress in this outcome • SPA/RAC participated in UNEP BBNJ initiative • Needs to be speeded up
Core Theme 3: Land and sea interactions and processes	4.1 Strengthening regional implementation of the obligations under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, and of programmes of measures in existing Regional Strategies and Action Plans		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement according to the planned targets • MSP related chapter for ICZM Protocol and MSP annex to Regional Framework for ICZM
	4.2 Development of new action plans, programmes of measures, common standards and criteria, guidelines		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common Regional Framework for ICZM adopted • MSP Conceptual Framework adopted • LSI Testing Tool
	4.3 Strengthening national implementation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAMPs targets achieved in first 2 biennia • Possibly critical in the third since 2 CAMPs are planned (if there will be delays in starting them)
	4.4 Monitoring and assessment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No concrete indicators to assess progress in this outcome • IMAP implementation for coast and hydrogeography cluster
	4.5 Enhanced capacity at regional, sub-regional and national levels including technical assistance and capacity building		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 training courses on coast and hydrogeography, and on MSP
	4.6 Enhanced cooperation at regional, sub- regional and national levels		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAMP networks established and functioning
	4.7 Identifying and tackling with new and emerging issues, as appropriate		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No concrete indicators to assess progress in this outcome
Cross-cutting theme 1: Integrated coastal zone management	5.1 Strengthening regional implementation of the obligations under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, and of programmes of measures in existing Regional Strategies and Action Plans		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully achieved
	5.2 Development of new action plans, programmes of measures, common standards and criteria, guidelines		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No concrete indicators to assess progress in this outcome • ICZM CRF adopted

Theme	Strategic Outcome	Assessment	Remarks
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSP Conceptual Framework adopted
	5.3 Strengthening national implementation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No record of national ICZM strategies produced, but consultations ongoing • Needs stepping up efforts because 7 strategies are planned for the entire period
	5.4 Monitoring and assessment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No concrete indicators to assess progress in this outcome • 2 factsheets produced
	5.5 Enhanced capacity at regional, sub-regional and national levels including technical assistance and capacity building.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MedOpen courses implemented
	5.6 Enhanced cooperation at regional, sub- regional and national levels		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICZM Platform functioning • CAMP network functioning • 2 national coordination mechanisms established • In the third biennium 3 more ICM inter-ministerial national committees to be established
Cross-cutting theme 2: Sustainable consumption and production	6.1 Development of new action plans, programmes of measures, common standards and criteria, guidelines and implementation of current ones		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good progress in the first two biennia • Need to step up activities in the biennium 2020-21
	6.2 Monitoring and assessment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No concrete PoW indicators to assess progress in this outcome • Set of SCP indicators produced
	6.3 Enhanced capacity at regional, sub-regional and national levels including technical assistance and capacity building		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large number of persons trained • 16 training courses • Interactive Sustainable Business Development Online Platform launched
	6.4 Enhanced cooperation at regional, sub- regional and national levels to prevent and control marine pollution		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCP Hub launched with great number of members • Green Business Online Development Platform
Cross-cutting theme 3: Climate change adaptation	7.1. Strengthening the regional implementation of the obligations under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, and of programmes of measures in existing Regional Strategies and Action Plans		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines on mainstreaming biodiversity in climate change adaptation • “Climagine” guidelines • Regional online knowledge platform • Guidelines on coastal resilience
	7.2 Development of new action plans, programmes and measures, common standards and criteria, guidelines		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress reports show only 1 strategy streamlining climate change adaptation issue • Need to step up the activities
	7.3 Strengthening national implementation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No progress recorded relative to respective indicator
	7.4 Monitoring and assessment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No concrete PoW indicators to assess progress in this outcome • Indicators on vulnerability and impacts of climate change developed
	7.5 Enhanced capacity at regional, sub-regional and national levels including		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No progress recorded relative to respective indicator

Theme	Strategic Outcome	Assessment	Remarks
	technical assistance and capacity building		

Table 3: Outcomes assessment summary table

29. From the above Table 3, a number of interesting MTS implementation trends could be observed. It has to be noted that this evaluation is not about the individual MAP components or the MAP system as a whole, but about the implementation of the MTS itself. Also, although this is not an evaluation of the implementation of the PoW, because of the close relationship between the PoW and the MTS, the conclusions could be applicable also to the PoW.

30. In terms of the delivery of outputs, there is evidence of a **dominance of products that belong to legal instruments** or “implementation of existing regional legal framework and decisions”. This is a somewhat expected outcome as this aspect is deeply inherent to the very existence of the overall system of MAP - Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, and what Contracting Parties have been continuously supporting. Also, the dominance of activities related to **regional cooperation and networking** could also be observed. This is also justifiable, since MAP is a long-established institutional system in the region and has built many collaborations through the years.

31. The evaluation finds that the delivery of the **knowledge products (guidelines, standards, criteria, etc.), monitoring and assessment deliverables, and capacity building was effective and successful**. However, an increased activity on finalizing the knowledge products during the last year of the third biennium would be beneficial.

32. With regards to the above two issues, one interesting correlation could be observed and it is that **more resources have been used for the legal component, regional cooperation and networking than for the group of knowledge products**. However, while the resources for knowledge products were smaller in size, the rate of their utilization, at least during the first two biennia, has been higher, usually in the range between 80 and 100% of the funds allocated. This finding shows that utilization of these funds has been more effective.

33. National interventions, i.e. **implementation of regional guidelines at a national level in the form of pilot projects, policy interventions, NAPs implementation etc., is also an area where more could have been achieved**. The evaluation proposes that this should be an area for increased intervention in the future, though more precise modalities how these interventions will be carried out are open for a wider discussion among regional stakeholders and national authorities. For example, while CAMPs have been carried out for more than 30 years now and have been implemented in almost all countries of the region, maybe the time has come to discuss new forms of intervention and accompanying institutional and financial solutions at national level. This could also be one of the strategic areas for some future MTS.

34. Two areas are considered as critical. The available data show that **moderate to low progress has been made in addressing climate change adaptation issues**. Similarly, **very few new emerging issues have been addressed**, at least during the first two biennia of MTS implementation. This may need more attention considering the amount of activity and initiatives at the global and even at regional level.

35. Finally, a specific problem is that a **rigorous and consistent system of indicators and targets that will cover all the MTS outcomes and outputs and, consequently, their monitoring and reporting on implementation through PoW does not exist**. Out of the total of 42 outcomes, 11 have

not been monitored because there were no accompanying indicators and targets. It is true, though, that some outputs related to those outcomes have been reported in the biannual progress reports, but this does not add up to the need for more rigorous monitoring and reporting. The evaluation found it very difficult to navigate through reports and other documents to find out what was really achieved. Also, the manner of reporting does not seem to be harmonized among the MAP components. In particular, it was not always easy to spot when an activity was really completed and output delivered. The evaluation finds that this is an area where considerable improvements will have to be made in the future.

3.2 Stakeholders' perspective

36. Majority of stakeholders (National Focal Points, MCSD members, NGOs, IGOs, local actors) contacted during the survey felt that there were some **obstacles to more effective MTS implementation**. There was a number of challenges that have probably resulted in this partial satisfaction, in particular the lack of data, lack of adequate financing, lack of political will to implement the strategy at national level, lack of interest among stakeholders, and delay in delivery of outputs. They also mentioned the following:

- measures to be implemented at local level were not specifically identified neither monitored;
- new and innovative financing mechanisms (at national or local level) have not been developed and/or supported enough;
- there was also a problem of transversal work at national level between the ministry in charge of environment and other sectorial ministries to reach an agreement and an effective implementation of measures.

37. Some stakeholders were not informed of the availability of the resources for the implementation of the MTS, as only a minority had an answer (mostly not enough resources). This may be caused by the inadequate explanation in the section of the MTS where resources for its implementation were discussed. The majority of stakeholders did not have an opinion on the issue. This is certainly an issue to be pursued more strongly in the future, in particular in explain the regional, national and local actors that the financing of MTS is secured through the PoWs, which are adopted by the COP every two years, and which could effectively be considered as the biannual action plans to implement the MTS.

38. They were generally **satisfied with the level of communication with the MAP Coordinating Unit (CU)** during the implementation of the strategy, but a significant number stated that it could be more frequent. Their frequency of the communication with the Coordinating Unit was once a year or not at all.

39. The majority of stakeholders felt that **MTS outputs and outcomes have only partially been delivered as planned, i.e. against the indicators provided**. This is an important issue for the implementation of MTS and it may be related to the point raised above on the difficulty to identify the activities that were really completed and outputs delivered. Among the **factors critical to achieving better delivery of intended objectives, outcomes and outputs**, the following were considered as the most important:

- the role played by the Coordinating Unit and MAP Regional Activity Centres,
- MAP Focal Points regularly monitoring the implementation of MTS,
- the implementation structure established at national level,

- the adaptive management tools, which allowed changes in case of lagging delivery of outputs.

40. The majority of the stakeholders felt that the implementation of the MTS has brought improvement of environmental indicators of the Mediterranean Region, better biodiversity protection, better environmental governance, and better coastal and marine management. However, a clear distinction should be made between eventual benefits accrued by implementation of the MTS and the PoWs. Again, the respondents felt that the resources available for the implementation of the MTS were not enough. However, this is also an issue that has to be looked upon by taking in consideration the entire MAP budget and whether it is sufficient for the implementation of the PoW. Consequently, almost all respondents thought that the MTS objectives have been achieved only partially. Of course, the survey does not cover the last year of the MTS implementation.

41. Respondents felt that the **MTS has positively influenced the stakeholders** and that they have become more engaged in its implementation, or have expressed readiness to implement it. This is definitely a positive sign.

42. Regarding the future MTS, the respondents overwhelmingly thought that the **current institutional structure, led by Coordinating Unit and RACs, should be kept and strengthened to support and monitor MTS implementation**. They were definite in answering that other institutions will not be needed.

43. The respondents felt that the **future MTS should have clearer budgetary considerations, and have clear targets and indicators for each output and outcome**. Also, they thought that greater emphasis should be placed on the **alignment of MTS targets with those of the global agenda**, such as climate change and the Sustainable Blue Economy. Some of them expressed the view that the structure of the document should have **reduced number of priorities**.

44. Among specific suggestions they thought that:

- MTS should be more targeted, because the subjects are too broad and cover all ecosystems;
- enforcement should become the top priority of the next MTS;
- there should be more emphasis on climate change vulnerability and adaptation, consideration of global processes and emerging issues;
- new MTS needs to include an analysis of functioning of MAP system, including SWOT analysis of current institutional setup, technical and financial means that are needed to ensure new MTS to respond to ever growing challenges in Mediterranean region;
- new MTS needs to be fully driven by the national needs;
- UNEP needs to exercise maximum flexibility in administrative rules and procedures to run UNEP/MAP as its oldest Regional Seas Programme in order to maximize its efficiency in delivering UNEP/MAP mandate during the implementation of new MTS;
- Barcelona Convention does not have the capacity to take on too many priorities but could integrate those without necessarily taking the lead on these issues;
- there should be more integration among thematic subjects;
- Land-Sea Interactions priority is not as clear as the other priorities and seems to overlap with the others;
- Logical Framework Analysis should be prepared;
- Theory of Change approach should be integrated based on achieving measurable impacts;

- implementation structure should be better defined;
- an assessment of the financial and human resource required for the implementation of the new MTS prepared in order to be more realistic;
- the modalities of implementation are unclear and the communication of progress (status check) in a meaningful way is lacking;
- more explicit role of MAP Focal Points and national authorities and institutions presented; core and cross cutting themes need to be designed again.

45. Among the current MTS elements, they would like to retain the following: Vision, Ultimate Objective, Strategic Themes, Core Themes, Cross-Cutting Themes, Strategic Objectives, Strategic Outcomes and Key Indicative Outputs. In a nutshell, it seems that they would like to **retain the current MTS structure as much as possible**.

46. Among the main **suggestions** to achieving a “healthy Mediterranean with marine and coastal ecosystems” that should be given particular importance in the new MTS, the respondents mentioned the following:

- higher engagement and accountability by the countries;
- the decision-making system would benefit more from the promotion of an overall coordination with equal participation from all Contracting Parties rather than groupings of CPs;
- as the enforcement of the legal provisions remain a weak point of the system, it should be reinforced in the next MTS to become the top priority;
- land-based pollution including pollution by marine litter, biodiversity conservation, resilience of coastal area from climate change and development, implementation of MSP, reducing air pollution from ships by implementing available tools should also be a priority;
- regulatory process on the decisions to be binding and its enforcement would be a key process leading towards achievement of the MTS goals;
- address increased risks and instability in the region.

47. Among **specific implementation tools**, respondents overwhelmingly supported development of the Monitoring & Evaluation Plan to become a constitutive element of the strategy. The strategy should be made more adaptable and responsive to unforeseen emerging issues and priorities. The respective adaptive mechanisms should be, among other:

- establish the contact/focal point of UNEP/MAP when a Contracting Party or stakeholder identifies an emergency and wants to share it with the UNEP/MAP community;
- MTS should cover a longer period of time, until 2030, for example, to allow long-term processes to contribute to achieving SDGs under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- a mid-term assessment, in 2026, could allow adaptation/flexibility, while the new MTS should not be as detailed as the previous version, leaving details to the level of the biannual Programme of Work, which could also be adapted to address new emerging challenges;
- allow more proactive role of the Bureau of Contracting Parties and specially Coordinating Unit;
- contingency planning allowing revision of the Strategy; emergency funds to be allocated to new and urgent challenges and the possibility that they enter as part of

"an emergency action plan" within the Strategy to be implemented, monitored and evaluated.

3.3 Assessment of the financial implementation

48. The assessment of financial implementation of MTS is limited because of lack of data. At the moment this evaluation has been drafted, the audited financial data showing the distribution of expenditure per outcome and output were available only for the biennium 2016-2017. In addition, the proposed budgetary allocations, including the external secured and non-secured sources, were available for the biennium 2020-2021. **The lack of timely disposition of certified financial documentation presented per outcome and output may be considered as a serious impediment to the evaluation of the MTS implementation from the financial perspective.**

49. As mentioned earlier, the expenditures during the first biennium, financed through the MTF, were tilted towards legal and regulatory activities as well as towards regional cooperation and networking. The latter has had a positive effect on integration of a larger number of stakeholders, including civil society organizations and private sector into implementation of the PoW. Another important issue at stake at the moment, and which is also related to the financial aspect, is the implementation of actions at national level. The external sources provided had a larger share devoted to sub-regional and national levels of implementation than was the case with the MTF funds. In this respect, it is important to note that the MAP – Barcelona Convention system has been quite successful in attracting the external resources, in particular from GEF and EU.

50. The funding of PoW and, consequently, of MTS is showing a minimal increase in regular funding over the recent years. Although this evaluation is not mandated to assess this aspect, it is evident that the provision of external funds is showing steady increase, in the same period, which is much larger than the regular funding. Thus, for example, in the biennium 2020-2021, the proportion between regular MTF funding and external resources (secured and non-secured) is for some outcomes 1:26. This is extremely high. The evaluation is aware of the fact that these numbers may be somehow inflated, in particular if the majority of funds belong to the non-secured ones and whose actual materialization may come into question. Also, this MTS period is characterized by an extremely and unusually high grant to be received from GEF for the MedProgramme, and which may not be repeated during the subsequent MTS periods. However, the evaluation still points to large difference between the MTF and external (secured and non-secured) funds. Evaluation also points to the fact that such large proportion of external funds may stretch the MAP-Barcelona Convention system's capacity for implementation to extreme limits.

51. In the biennium 2016-2017, and presumably in biennium 2018-19, **the utilization of funds available has been relatively good.** It was ranging from 60% to 184% of total utilization of available funds per strategic theme. The total amount of funds allocated to activities during the 2016-17 biennium has been around Euro 4.5 million, which is roughly 1/3 of the total budget for that period.

4. Conclusions

52. The major operational objective of the MTS to guide the implementation of the PoW has been achieved. The MAP-Barcelona Convention system, including the Contracting Parties, the Coordinating Unit and Regional Activity Centres, and other stakeholders should be congratulated for the successful implementation of the overall programme of activities. There are some activities

whose implementation should be speeded up such as those related to climate change adaptation and other emerging issues. It seems that the whole system, at a regional scale, has become more robust as the major outcome of the activities implemented. There is still a lot to do to improve the transmission, and by consequence improved efficiency, at the national level of implementation. This could be one of the main MTS's strategic directions in the future. The respective modalities will have to be discussed at length between stakeholders to secure the most effective implementation.

53. The MTS concept is encompassing and tries to integrate elements of as many regional and international initiatives as possible. As a result, the document turned out to be complex and not always easy to understand and follow. Another point that needs to be raised is the fact that the MTS to a large extent resembles the Programme of Work even if MTS is meant to be implemented by the PoW. The specific value added of the MTS, thus, is not always evident. If the PoW is a mirror image of the MTS, then it is not clear what the real priorities are, of course if one doesn't consider the entire PoW as a priority.

54. The document lacks some important elements such as the timeline for implementation, the system of indicators and targets to monitor its implementation, and a more rigorous implementation structure that will be somehow independent from the MAP - Barcelona Convention system's institutional structure. It is true, though, that the PoW contains the targets and indicators, which can be considered relevant for the MTS as well. But even in the PoW, a number of outcomes lack adequate indicators and targets. However, every strategic document needs to show how it will be monitored and its implementation assessed.

55. MTS's perception by the stakeholders (Contracting Parties, MCSO members, other MAP partners) is positive. They have given a number of suggestions on how to improve its design and implementation. Points to be stressed here are the need to prioritise, make financial resources for the implementation of MTS more transparent, and the fact that MTS has had positive influence on the regional and national stakeholders. They have commended the role of MAP Coordinating Unit and RACs as well as the level of communication between them.

56. The question, thus, is what is MTS? Is it a strategy or medium-term plan of action? The strategy, by definition, covers a longer time period and it is usually focused on the limited number of issues of a strategic nature. Therefore, it should deal with priorities and not with everything that is repeated in the PoW. In this respect, it should be considered as a guiding document to the PoW, and focus on the priorities of the strategic nature only, which the PoW develops in much more detail. As a document on which the PoW builds upon, each action elaborated should have clear objective, and provide the framework for the time-frame for implementation, cost, implementation responsibilities, benefits of intervention, deliverables, internal and external linkages, etc.

57. The implementation rate of the MTS outcomes and outputs, in view of the evaluation, has been on time for most of the outcomes. Those outcomes that are facing difficulties in being fully implemented in the time remaining until the expiration of the planning period should attract special attention by the Contracting Parties and the Coordinating Unit and Regional Activity Centres. It is true that the Covid-19 pandemic has seriously affected many implementation efforts during 2020 and it is now continuing well into 2021. This is particularly relevant for the activities where face-to-face contacts are of great importance such as implementation of activities at the national level, or the capacity building activities. It is fairly safe to assume that some of the activities will not be completed until the end of 2021.

5. Recommendations

58. Based on the above assessment, the evaluation proposes a set of recommendations to improve the formulation and implementation of the MTS. Some of the recommendations are of the operational nature, while some are of a more strategic nature. The following is recommended:

59. **Recommendation 1:** The MTS vision should be more operative and should focus on the period covered by the MTS, i.e. the six-year time-span. It has to be more concrete and provide some indication what changes are expected at the end of that planning period as a result of the implementation of the strategy. It should, however, be embedded in the longer-term vision of the COP 16 and MSSD as well as other relevant regional and international initiatives (2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular), which provide a larger context for medium-term intervention. In this context it would be very useful to develop a Theory of Change, which will describe and illustrate how and why a desired change is expected to happen in the Mediterranean context.

60. **Recommendation 2:** The MTS should identify priorities and not be fully repeated in the Programme of Work. The Programme of Work is being adopted by the Contracting Parties and the MTS should be considered as a precursor and guide to the PoW, focusing on issues that need support and strengthening. However, both documents should be considered as complementing each other. It is of great importance to develop a timeline for every outcome/output, which in itself will be the prioritization of issues, as the most urgent and important ones should be tackled first.

61. **Recommendation 3:** The MTS should be simpler with regards to its concept and structure. The number of strategic outcomes and key indicative outputs needs to be reduced to make the strategy more operative, even in case the number of themes is kept at the present number.

62. **Recommendation 4:** The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system needs to be better developed. Although the indicators and targets are developed for monitoring the implementation of the PoW, and they are conveniently used to monitor the implementation of MTS, a more elaborate description of the M&E system than one existing now in the document is needed. In addition, population of the MTS indicators needs to be more consistent as many values are not existing or are extremely difficult to find in the MAP documentation, which makes timely monitoring of the implementation almost impossible.

63. **Recommendation 5:** The MTS should have a basic budget for its implementation, in particular if it would focus on priorities. Although budgetary issues are dealt with in the context of biannual PoWs, it would be important to show that the MTS is financially viable, in particular if it will focus on issues that are not always present in the regular PoW, or are of cross-sectoral nature. Furthermore, financial monitoring of implementation of outcomes and outputs needs to be more consistent, accurate and timely. The present financial data have been difficult to find or could not be found at all.

64. **Recommendation 6:** Consider reorienting the nature of the MTS in the future. Instead of its subjects being, to a large extent, repeated in the PoW, it could prioritise a few strategic directions such as improved effectiveness of the MAP – Barcelona Convention system; better visibility of the strategy and PoW; financial sustainability, viability and resource mobilization; improving impacts at national level; capacity building, etc. Such initiative could be a complement to the PoW by giving it a strong sense of direction. By focusing on strategic issues, it could largely improve the implementation of the PoW. Such reorientation of the MTS should be brought about by initiating the consultation

process among a wide range of regional and national stakeholders. Strategy's value is not in the document itself; its real value lies in achieving the stakeholders' ownership achieved through an intensive consultation process.

65. **Recommendation 7:** Improve the visibility of MTS and communicate its achievements to the general public. The communication should focus on the MTS-specific achievements showing the value added of its implementation and not to leave the impression of it being merely mirror-imaged in the PoW. Furthermore, this will provide to the stakeholders a clearer view of the achievement of outputs and deliverables, which they appear to lack. Consider having a separate web page devoted specifically to the MTS implementation focusing on clear achievements.