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Action Plan**
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91st Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the
Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment
and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

Teleconference, 7-8 July 2021

Agenda Item 5: Specific Issues**Note on the interlinkages between the draft Evaluation of the 2016-2021 UNEP/MAP MTS and
the draft 2022-2027 UNEP/MAP MTS**

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**Mediterranean
Action Plan**
Barcelona
Convention

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2nd Meeting of the Steering Committee on the Medium-Term Strategy

Teleconference, 5-6 July 2021

Agenda Item 3: Review of the UNEP/MAP MTS 2022-2027

Note on the interlinkages between the draft Evaluation of the 2016-2021 UNEP/MAP MTS and the draft 2022-2027 UNEP/MAP MTS

Note by the Secretariat

This document is based on document UNEP/MED WG.504/Inf.5 submitted to the MAP Focal Points Meeting on the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), revised so as to reflect the discussions at the MAP Focal Points Meeting on the MTS and the updates in the Evaluation Report of the 2016-2021 UNEP/MAP MTS.

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2021

Interlinkages between the draft Evaluation of the 2016-2021 UNEP/MAP MTS and the draft 2022-2027 UNEP/MAP MTS

The text below presents the interlinkages between the recommendations of the draft evaluation report of the UNEP/MAP MTS 2016-2021 and the structure and content of the draft UNEP/MAP MTS 2022-2027:

MTS 2016-2021 Evaluation 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 the 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 mid-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.*

- Following the discussions at the MAP Focal Points Meeting on the MTS (Teleconference, 13-15 April 2021), two proposals on the vision are included in the draft UNEP/MAP MTS 2022-2027 (document UNEP/MED WG.513/3): one proposal with a shorter time-horizon, based on the recommendation of the draft Evaluation Report of the UNEP/MAP MTS 2016-2021, and one proposal with a longer time horizon. The Secretariat stressed during the MAP Focal Points Meeting on the MTS that, irrespective of its timeframe, the vision must contain explicit references to the Barcelona Convention and UNEP/MAP, in order to be fully in line with the system's mandate.
- The vision of the MTS 2022-2027 will need to be in line with the visions of the current MTS and of the MSSD 2016-2025, as well as with the Vision of the UNEP MTS 2022-2025 at the global level. The achievement of the MTS and of its vision will be assessed through the monitoring of the MTS outcomes, indicators and targets. Operationalization is also enhanced through the proposed objectives of the new MTS, which are more concrete and measurable, and further specify and support the Vision.
- In the MTS 2022-2027, a similar approach was undertaken as the one followed in the global UNEP MTS 2022-2025. It uses elements of a Theory of Change approach, while efforts are taken to ensure more concrete and measurable objectives and outcomes. A number of key measurable indicators and targets are included as an inherent part of the draft MTS 2022-2027.
- The MTS 2022-2027 is aligned with the global agenda, in particular Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, as well as the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity framework under the UNCBD, the Paris Agreement under the UNFCCC, etc.

MTS 2016-2021 Evaluation 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.*

- The MTS 2022-2027 was developed building upon a bottom-up approach; a mapping of main products was performed at the initial stages and these products were further elaborated and

grouped under key building blocks of priorities, focusing on a more flexible, integrated and innovative approach.

- The suggestion to develop a timeline and prioritization is noted. This is usually elaborated in the PoW rather than the MTS. General directions on priorities are given in the new MTS on implementation, while timelines are set within the programme of work. This is inline also with the Governance paper (Decision IG.17/5).
- The MTS and PoWs will be complementing each other, with the MTS providing the strategic priorities and outcomes and a general guidance on their implementation, while the biennial PoWs will provide more details on implementation (including timelines, budget, partners per outcome/output and key deliverables).

MTS 2016-2021 Evaluation 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.*

- Efforts were made to simplify the concept and structure of the MTS 2022-2027 with 7 Programmes following a similar approach to the one of the UNEP MTS as also reflected in its schematic presentation (page 16 of document UNEP/MED WG.513/3). A total of 27 outcomes are proposed and - unlike the MTS 2016-2021 - outputs are omitted.
- While outputs are not included, outcome titles are clearer and more coherent in the MTS 2022-2027 and are supported by a narrative part explaining how outcomes are to be achieved.

MTS 2016-2021 Evaluation 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 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.*

- Efforts were made to ensure clear and coherent outcomes, supported by key measurable indicators and targets which can be monitored and reported on each biennium, as appropriate.
- Key measurable indicators and targets are proposed for inclusion as an inherent part of the MTS 2022-2027 to facilitate its monitoring and evaluation (in the current draft, presented in document UNEP/MED WG.513/3, indicators and respective targets are included in Annex I).
- Including the targets and the indicators in the MTS will enable a better monitoring of the implementation, while further steps will be taken during the implementation period to ensure the timely and effective population of the indicators and the follow-up of the achievement of targets.

MTS 2016-2021 Evaluation Recommendation 5: *Regarding the budgeting policy, the MTS should identify priorities among themes, outcomes and outputs, which will then be transposed in definition of key principles for the biennial budget preparation. Furthermore, financial monitoring of implementation of outcomes and outputs needs to be more consistent, accurate and timely.*

- The MTS is a strategic document which is closely linked and will be implemented through the biennial PoWs. Detailed budgetary considerations and prioritization take place within the PoW. This also allows to consider the budget in a biennial basis, which is more effective.
- The preparation of the PoW at each biennium is based on the outcomes of MTS, which are then further refined through outputs and deliverables. Therefore, consistency is ensured, and financial reporting is conducted through the biennial PoWs, with financial information provided in a consistent manner.
- Guiding information on budgetary sources and key partners are provided in the implementation section of the MTS 2022-2027 (section 6 of document UNEP/MED WG.513/3). The Updated Resource Mobilization Strategy adopted at COP 20 and its revised Appendix adopted at COP 21 will be the guide to continue and strengthen collaboration with donors, including bilateral cooperation with individual Contracting Parties, building on successful practices of the MTS 2016-2021 cycle.

MTS 2016-2021 Evaluation 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.*

- The MTS 2022-2027 is being developed to set the priorities and strategic guidance for the next 6-year period, in order to best reflect the obligations and commitments of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols and to contribute to the 2030 Agenda and the Decade of Action for the SDGs. This was done through seven integrative programmes, as is also the case for the UNEP MTS 2022-2025.
- *“The MTS 2022-2027 has been structured in a way to be: integrated and coherent across the system; consistent; inclusive; adaptive and flexible; attentive to regional and national needs; collaborative, based on participation and partnerships; knowledge generating and sharing; result-based, and resource-efficient”* (para. 39, page 18, document UNEP/MED WG.513/3). A more clear, integrated and coherent overall structure and relationship between the thematic, foundational and enabling programmes was considered, moving away from a silo approach. Furthermore, an effort was made to set up priorities in an integrated manner and not necessary based on the priorities of individual MAP components. It is expected that this will also promote and facilitate inter-ministerial coordination at the national level.
- A number of key areas for action were noted in the evaluation of the MTS 2016-2021 that are being taken into account in the MTS 2022-2027. The MTS 2022-2027 focuses on strategic issues and provides the overall framework of implementation, while detailed implementation modalities will be set within the biennial PoWs. The MTS needs to reflect all obligations and commitments, in line with the COP21 decision and following an integrative approach, representing, thus, an overall coherent framework strategy.
- Advocacy and visibility are an inherent part of the MTS (Programme 7). Reference to financial sustainability and resource mobilisation elements, including the role of the private sector, is made in the MTS in a strategic manner, while financial elements will be further elaborated in the PoWs, thus facilitating the implementation of the MTS.

- The MTS 2022-2027 is being more targeted through designated outcomes, including the narrative parts that describe how each outcome will be achieved. Priorities are included there, while prioritizing in time will be undertaken through the PoWs. This also allows for the adequate flexibility to be adaptable and responsive to unforeseen emerging issues and priorities.
- The role of the stakeholders, including the private sector, is fully recognized, both in the process of the preparation of the current MTS, which included an online consultation with stakeholders through the Open-Ended Working Group and will also involve stakeholders in the inclusive MAP Focal Points Meeting of September 2021, as well as in the implementation of the MTS, as reflected in document UNEP/MED WG.513/3 and especially its section 6.

MTS 2016-2021 Evaluation 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.*

- The MTS 2022-2027 gives greater emphasis on communication, awareness and advocacy through the standalone enabling Programme 7, which is a marked improvement from the MTS 2016-2021. The Information and Communication Task Force, comprising of representatives from all MAP components and lead by the Coordinating Unit, will be working during the implementation of the MTS 2022-2027 to ensure improving the visibility of the MTS and communicate its achievements to the general public. An online tracking tool could be a possible approach to monitor the progress in MTS implementation in this respect.