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Agenda Item 3: Ecosystem Approach Roadmap 2008-2021 evaluation of implementation and renewal

UN Decade on Ocean Science “The Mediterranean Sea We Need for the Future We Want” (SciNMeet)

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Note by the Secretariat

The Science We Need for the Mediterranean Sea We Want (SciNMeet) Programme aims to be the Mediterranean contribution to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. The Programme is designed on the basis of the outcomes of the 2020 Regional consultations of the Preparatory Phase of the Ocean Decade and builds on relevant initiatives active in the region.

A SciNMeet launch event will take place 12-13 July 2022, hosted by the Italian Oceanographic Commission, co-organized with the United Nations Environment/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC/UNESCO). The launch event is the first chance for SciNMeet stakeholders to meet. It will offer the opportunity to frame the initiative in the Mediterranean science-to-policy landscape and operationally start-up the activities aimed at achieving the Objectives included in the Operational Plan of SciNMeet Programme. Seven Task Teams (TT) will start working on thematic and cross-cutting lines of actions towards the implementation of the Operational Plan. This launch event follows up on the outcome of the Regional Workshop “The Mediterranean Sea We Need for the Future We Want” that was held 21-23 January 2020, in Venice, Italy, in the framework of the preparations for the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030 (Decade). In line with the commitment confirmed by the UNEP/MAP regarding the Implementation Plan of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, the UNEP/MAP Secretariat has been involved in the co-design of SciNMeet during the preparatory phase of the proposal, for consideration within the operationalization of the Implementation Plan the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. SciNMeet was approved in October 2021. UNEP/MAP has continued to support the efforts of the temporary Secretariat regarding the operationalization of the SciNMeet implementation, including setting the permanent governance structure.

1. Introduction

The Regional Workshop “The Mediterranean Sea We Need for the Future We Want” was held 21-23 January 2020, in Venice, Italy, in the framework of the preparations for the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030 (Decade). This important event followed up on the outcomes of the First Global Planning Meeting that was held 13-15 May 2019, in Copenhagen, Denmark. The MED Workshop was co-organized by the Italian Oceanographic Commission, the IOC-UNESCO, the European Commission, the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan and the Mediterranean Science Commission. The National Research Council of Italy (CNR), the Euro-Mediterranean Center on Climate Change (CMCC), the National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology (INGC), Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn (SZN), BlueMed CSA Project and European Commission sponsored organization of the Regional Workshop. Information on this event and UNEP/MAP’s contribution to its organization was provided in the Meeting document submitted to the Integrated Meetings of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on IMAAP Implementation (CORMONS) 1-3 December 2020 (UNEP/MED WG.482/Inf.10).

Following upon the successful organization of the Regional Workshop in Venice, the Science We Need for the Mediterranean Sea We Want (SciNMeet) Programme, as the first regional programme within implementation of the Decade’s Implementation Plan, was prepared under the leadership of the Italian Oceanographic Commission and the important contribution of UNEP/MAP. In October 2021 it was approved by UNESCO within the implementation of the UN Decade on Ocean Science.

The SciNMeet Programme will address major Mediterranean challenges and gaps in scientific knowledge with the aim to better understand and manage impacts of climate change, pollution, overexploitation of resources, and marine hazards on the marine environment, to contribute to maintenance of ecosystems’ functioning and the sustainability of relevant economic operations as well as preventing biodiversity loss. Increasing education, awareness, and international collaboration by mobilizing the scientific community, policymakers, private sector, and society at large, the Programme will address the Ocean Decade’s outcomes and contribute to the implementation of the UN Agenda 2030, through seven Task Teams (TT).

Recognizing that the region is still not on track to achieve and fully implement the commonly agreed SDGs, SciNMeet will contribute to the UN Ocean Decade challenges as well as the implementation of relevant R&I framework programmes for the region, namely the Horizon Europe Mission ‘Restore our ocean and waters by 2030’ and its Mediterranean lighthouse on pollution.

Following the endorsement by the UNESCO/IOC, the SciNMeet UN-Decade Mediterranean Programme is ready to fly. The launch event (12-13 July 2022), run in a hybrid modality in Rome (Italy) at CNR headquarters, will mark a substantial milestone to start-up the activities. Supported by a dedicated governance system, seven technical TTs will work together to address Climate Change, Marine Pollution, Marine Hazard, Ocean Literacy & Education, Ocean Observing & Prediction, Data Sharing, and Knowledge Transfer/Capacity Building, by engaging the broad community of stakeholders, according to the principle of co-design and in line with the principles outlined in the UN-Decade Implementation Plan. In doing so, the SciNMeet system will constantly bring its outputs and contribution to major R&I and science-to-policy frameworks.

In that respect UNEP/MAP continues to support implementation of UN Decade on Ocean Science through implementation of SciNMeet Programme. On 3 May 2022 a bilateral meeting of Ms. Tatjana Hema, UNEP/MAP Coordinator and Dr Rosalia Santoleri, President of the Italian Oceanographic Commission was held. It was agreed for UNEP/MAP to undertake leadership over the policy component of the SciNMeet Secretariat; support the organization of the SciNMeet launch event on 12-13 July; and to contribute to the work of the six Tasks Teams that are presently focused on proposing the activities for implementation of SciNMeet objectives. UNEP/MAP Coordinator will take part in the opening segment of the SciNMeet launch event by addressing science-policy needs towards setting the vision of the UN-Decade Med Collaborative Centre. The Secretariat and MAP Components will contribute to the work of the Tasks Teams. The Agenda of the launch event is provided in Annex I.

2. Operational Plan of SciNMeet Programme

The SciNMeet Programme as submitted to the first Call for Decade Action encompasses broad scope and high ambition to tackle all major environmental and social challenges of the basin. Building on the results of the regional consultations carried out in 2020 to draft the proposal for a Decade Programme targeting the Mediterranean region (i.e., SciNMeet), a gaps' analysis on the scientific and capacity development issues related to the seven Decade Outcomes (Table 1 of the Operational Plan attached in Annex II) was conducted by the promoting organizations after the submission of the Programme. It should also be mentioned that the White Paper "The Mediterranean Sea we want" was accepted for the Special Issue of Ocean Decade Community White Papers (CWPs) on the Global South at Ocean and Coastal Research Journal. The White Paper can be considered as the inception step towards an elaboration on the actions to be carried out in the Mediterranean region during the Decade. It presents major gaps and challenges for implementing the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) in the Mediterranean region. The authors make recommendations on the scientific knowledge-needs and co-design actions framing them in the Mediterranean Sea's unique environmental and socio-economic perspectives. UNEP/MAP also contributed to preparation of this paper.

A preliminary list of initiatives and projects were identified during the Mediterranean regional consultations and suitable to contribute to the first priority lines of SciNMeet actions from the very beginning, also in order to identify further gaps. As follow-up the mapping will be refined, i.e., enriching the categories as well as highlighting the scope, geographical level and the specific contribution to the SciNMeet implementation. The upcoming SciNMeet launch event will further elaborate the activities within implementation of the Decade's Objectives.

There are nine SciNMeet operational objectives (more information can be found in the Annex II):

1. Enhancing cooperation opportunities towards optimal partnerships by elaborating a shared regional strategic roadmap for the Mediterranean Decade and beyond.
2. Promoting the co-design and co-production of solutions to the problems caused by climate change, pollution and marine hazard faced by the basin.
3. Keeping the marine space under permanent review and ensuring reliable data on the state of marine environment and the use of the sea.
4. Providing an integrated, long-term, *in situ* and satellite observations systems, modelling reanalysis and predictions.
5. Promoting regional and national initiative(s) to fill the gap of sustained *in situ* observations of Essential Ocean Variables (EOVs).
6. Fostering the generation of dedicated research and innovation also to contribute to marine pollution/hazards (including harmful algal blooms) alert and management and to improve preparedness to emergencies, supporting plans for prevention, adaptation and mitigation to pollution, extreme events (such as tsunamis, or storm surges) and climate change in the Region thus reducing the coastal risks, safeguarding population and activities at Sea.
7. Facilitating access to data and equipment, know-how transfer, and unlocking potentials for blue capacity-development including the promotion of equal opportunities.
8. Increasing Mediterranean society's awareness and knowledge about the crucial importance of a healthy Mediterranean Sea by enhancing regional capacity building and ocean literacy.
9. Narrowing the gaps between the North and South Mediterranean shores reinforcing partnerships and transboundary cooperation and contributing to reduce inequalities.

SciNMeet Governance Structure

SciNMeet partners recognize the importance of a light, transparent and effective coordination, which is also gender balanced and duly considers youth participation. To avoid duplications and value the

expected cumulative impact, the structure might rely on facilities of the promoting organizations, including existing Mediterranean regional organizations and networks, and national Decade structures. An updated scheme of the governance is reported in Figure 1.

According to the Programme proposal, in the initial phase the steering group will be composed of the promoting organizations co-sharing the leadership represented by contact points reported in the proposal. The Steering Committee expresses two Co-chairs from one European and one non-European country on a 3-year rotational basis the same member can be appointed for a second round.

The SciNMeet programme will establish a flexible and functional governance system which fits the purpose of the expected impacts of the Programme and supports its values. The governance system will guarantee shared decision making, exploration of/awareness on funding opportunities, and reporting by the various parts of the Programme. It will enable collaborative and co-design activities among various components and with a broad range of users and stakeholders. Furthermore, SciNMeet governance will ensure the application of ethics principles and values, with particular regard to open science, gender and diversity equality.

Following a preliminary assessment of the available capacities, the objective is to turn the Mediterranean area into a “model region” where the challenge of strengthening the science-policy-society interface towards reversing the cycle of decline of the Mediterranean marine environment is fully tackled. This effort will explicitly point to the interconnections of pollution, climate and hazard risk issues with the sustainability of the blue economy proving the effectiveness of long-term synergies and cooperation.

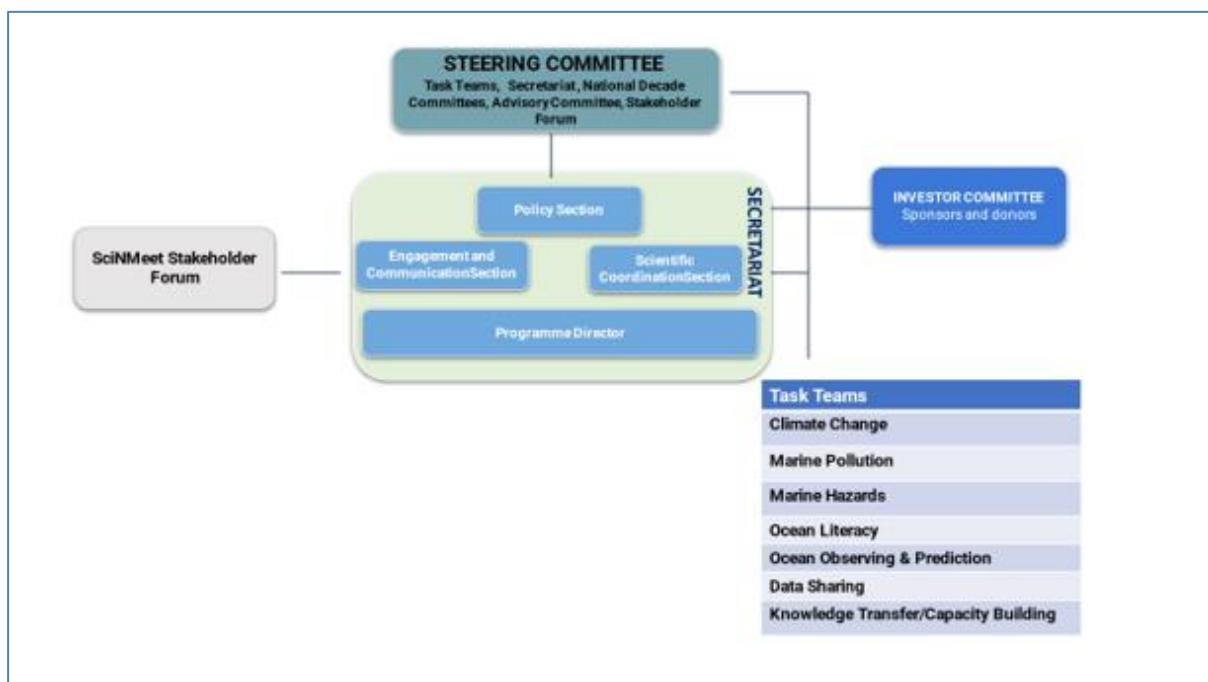


Figure 1: scheme of the governing structure and bodies

Seven Task Teams (TT) are established to support the implementation of the Programme, as follows:

TTs = Climate Change

TT2 = Marine Pollution

TT3 = Marine Hazard

TT4 = Ocean Literacy & Education

TT5 = Ocean Observing & Prediction

TT6 = Data Sharing

TT7 = Knowledge Transfer/Capacity Building

They are intended as thematic and cross-cutting lines of action to be addressed by the Programme in its initial phase, i.e., first 3-yrs. The two key documents of reference will be considered for the operationalization of the Task Teams: the SciNMeet 3-yrs Operational Plan and the White Paper “The Mediterranean Sea we want” accepted for the Special Issue of Ocean Decade Community White Papers (CWPs) on the Global South at Ocean and Coastal Research Journal.

The interrelation of the TTs and expected SciNMeet outcomes is shown in the below Table 1.

Table 1: Interrelation of the TTs and expected SciNMeet outcomes

Outcome	Task Team
Definition of a long-lasting science-to-policy Regional Cooperation framework for the integrated management of the Mediterranean Sea and its resources	All
Regular delivery of a comprehensive periodic report co-designed with policy and decision makers on the status of the Mediterranean Sea space, marine ecosystems and biodiversity	TT1, TT2, TT3, TT4, TT6
Harmonized Integrated Open Monitoring and Assessment as contribution to International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange/Ocean Best Practices System	TT6
Extended range of observables, data, and products by exploiting the synergy of in situ and space observation	TT5
EOVs long term observations, reanalysis and prediction as Mediterranean contribution to the GOOS	TT5
Reliable quantitative set of indicators and analysis tools to contribute to the Ocean State Report, the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Indicators (IMAP), and the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard datasets, informing the UN Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment	TT1, TT2, TT3, TT5, TT6
Improved models and related prediction capacities of the Mediterranean Sea	TT1, TT5, TT7
Integrated design of a Mediterranean tailored multi-hazard early warning system	TT3
Portfolio of solution-oriented demo actions	TT1, TT2, TT3, TT4, TT5, TT6
Constellation of Educational and Ocean Literacy Regional Platforms	TT4
Accelerate uptake of digital opportunities and accessibility to reduce the gaps in data, information and science knowledge between and among the Mediterranean, across gender and generations	TT6

Detailed elaboration of the SciNMeet Governance Structure and its TTs is underway, including specific tasks of UNEP/MAP in the context of its intention to undertake the leadership over policy component of the SciNMeet programme. The Italian Oceanographic Commission will continue to provide scientific leadership in implementation of the SciNMeet.

Annex I: SciNMeet launch event. The Science we need for the Mediterranean Sea we want, Rome, CNR Headquarters - Aula Convegni and online 12-13 July 2022

Day 1, 12:30 - Welcome Coffee	
Moderator: Alison Clausen, Programme Specialist, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO	
13:30-13:45 - <i>Welcome and introduction</i> Maria Chiara Carrozza, President, National Research Council of Italy (CNR) Raffaella Di Fabio, Counselor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAECI) Oliviero Montanaro, Director General, Ministry of Ecological Transition (MiTE) Gianluigi Consoli, Director General, Ministry of University and Research (MUR)	
Opening and launch of the SciNMeet Programme	
13:45-14:00	UN-Decade and regional dimension Vladimir Ryabinin, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental; Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO
14:00-14:15	Ensuring the contribution to the Horizon Europe Mission ‘Restore our ocean and waters by 2030’ Elisabetta Balzi, Head of Healthy Ocean and Seas Unit, European Commission, DG Research and Innovation and Co-Chair BlueMed Initiative
14:15-14:30	Towards a UN-Decade Med Collaborative Centre. The vision: science-policy in the Mediterranean by UNEP-MAP. Contributions to Ocean Decade and the Ecosystem Approach Tatjana Hema, Mediterranean Action Plan Coordinator, United Nations Environment Programme, Barcelona Convention Secretariat
14:30-14:45	Introduction to SciNMeet Rosalia Santoleri, President, Italian Oceanographic Commission COI
14:45 - 15:00	Aligning the Strategy of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean for healthy environment and resources Manuel Barange, Interim Executive Director, General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean GFCM-FAO
15:00 - 15:10	Mediterranean Region, years of cooperation opportunities INTERREG-MED managing authority (TBD)
15:10-15:20	The role of Ocean Literacy, launching the SciNMeet website Francesca Santoro, Programme Specialist, IOC UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe
15:20-15:30	Introduction to the Task Teams and objectives of the parallel sessions, Margherita Cappelletto, Italian Oceanographic Commission Secretariat
5:30 - 16:15 - Coffee break and Virtual poster session	
16:15-19:00 - Task Teams Parallel sessions	
TT1 = Climate Change > Room TBC TT2 = Marine Pollution > Room TBC TT3 = Marine Hazard > Room TBC TT4 = Ocean Literacy & Education > Room TBC TT5 = Ocean Observing & Prediction > Room TBC TT6 = Data Sharing > Room TBC TT7 = Knowledge Transfer / Capacity Building > Room TBC	
Social dinner (The Apartment)	

Day 2nd, h 08:30-13:30	
Moderator: Hany Fathy Abdelmageed Heiba, Med Early Career Ocean P	
Morning keynote Fabio Trincardi, Director, CNR Department of Earth System Science and Environmental Technologies	
09:00-09:40	Task Teams stage setting towards the Implementation Plan

	Spokesperson of the Task Teams
09:40-10:00	Q&As Audience and speakers 10:00-10:05
10:00-10:05	The Global Stakeholders' Forum Ashli Akins, Community Manager, Global Stakeholder Forum, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, UNESCO
10:05-10:10	Unveiling the SciNMeet Logo Winner of the competition
10:10-10:50	Mediterranean National Decade Committees contribution to SciNMeet Introduction by Olivier Duforneaud, Ocean Decade Community Coordinator, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO - Best practice sharing by Italy (NDC, TBC), Spain (Rafael González-Quirós, TBC), Slovenia (Vesna Flander-Putrlje, TBC), France (Aurelie Chamiot, TBC), Turkey (Emre TÜKENMEZ, TBC)
10:50-11:30 - Coffee break & Virtual poster session	
11:30-12:05	IOC Commissions, Groups and Programmes alignment with SciNMeet - Kouadio Affian, Chair of IOC's Sub Commission for Africa and the Adjacent Island States (IOCAFRICA) - Marie-Alexandrine Sicre, Chair of IOC Group I - Karim Hilmi, IOC Vice Chair Group V - IOC/Decade Programmes on: - Ocean Literacy With All (OLWA), by Francesca Santoro - Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Tsunami Early Warning and Mitigation System in the North-eastern Atlantic, the Mediterranean and connected seas (ICG/NEAMWTS) and IOC EU ECHO ICG/NEAMTWS, by Denis Chang - International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE), by Peter Pissierssens - Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), by Emma Heslop
12:05-12:30	Pitches by Decade Programmes and other Projects relevant for SciNMeet - Coastpredict and the Decade Collaborative Center, Nadia Pinardi, University of Bologna - Ocean Observation Morocco, National Decade labelled Programme, Karim Hilmi, - PREP4BLUE, Natalia Martin Palenzuela, IFREMER - SHAREMED, Aldo Drago, University of Malta
12:30-12:50	Q&As Audience and speakers
12:50-13:00	Conclusions and next steps Rosalia Santoleri, President, Italian Oceanographic Commission COI

Annex II: Operational Plan

Specific scientific and capacity development gaps of the Mediterranean region declined for the seven Decade Outcomes (grey square with white cross) and main interrelations (grey circle).

	A clean ocean	A healthy and resilient ocean	A predicted ocean	A safe ocean	A productive ocean	A transparent and accessible ocean	A inspiring and engaging ocean
GAPS							
Understanding of primary sources and pathways for the transport of pollutants, including the mapping of pollution hot-spots and their impacts on ecosystem and human health, as well as link with social and economic activities	☒	●	●		●		
Linking pollutant fluxes with economic sectors, identifying monitoring indicators and implementing the planning/management measures of the entire water cycle for the terrestrial components, based on appropriate science and technology, as well as all available science/policy interaction.	☒		●		●		
Better understanding of physical/biogeochemical/biodiversity dynamics on climate time scales, adopting a comprehensive ocean observing system (protection/monitoring), improving the quantitative knowledge of ecosystems (assessing/modelling) and their functioning (including organismal response to environmental stressors) as the basis for their management (increasing MPAs level, integrating MSP and ICZM) and adaptation.		☒	●				
Ensuring systematic observations and continuity of data records in north and south of the Mediterranean and extending the range of observations to include biological and ecological EOVs also in coastal area and including novel observations on marine ecosystems to higher trophic levels, fisheries, genomics, pollutants.	●	●	☒			●	
Monitoring the coastal-open ocean exchange, mesoscale and sub-mesoscales dynamics on ecosystem functioning and the sea floor morphology in four dimensions in areas characterized by natural (i.e., coastal erosion, deltaic deposition, mass transport) or anthropogenic modification (i.e., infrastructure, dredging).		●	☒	●			
Adopting numerical models which serve to extrapolate observations in both space and time at the resolution required to understand the coastal and nearshore marine areas and which include marine ecosystem processes and components needed to understand the dynamics of coastal and nearshore marine areas, also nested with open sea models.		●	☒				
Better understanding of the interactions and interdependencies of the environmental conditions and processes, the use of resources, the economy function and sustainability at the ecosystem level (rather than at the species level) and of the inter-relationships between species.					☒		
Data availability by exploiting the synergy of in situ and space observation and forecasting to predict Mediterranean coastal areas in support of multi-hazard early warning systems and of modelling the effects of the mutual interaction of various sources of hazards and environmental changes.		●		☒			
Understanding of the seasonal and interannual variations of HABs events and the changes in their intensity and distribution at the local and regional scales.				☒		☒	
Adequate awareness and involvement of decision makers, communities, citizens, teachers, media, to influence behaviours and perceptions of different actors towards effective sea actions (<i>sensu</i> Ocean Literacy).	●			●			☒