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Agenda Item 5: MSSD 2016-2025 implementation and monitoring - Good practices and challenges faced

Green entrepreneurship as a key leverage point for implementing the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 (MSSD 2016-2025)

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UN Environment/MAP
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I. Introduction

1. This document provides: (1) an overview of the references to green entrepreneurship and related concepts in the Mediterranean policy framework for sustainable development; (2) examples of how the actions of the UN Environment Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) through its Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP/RAC) are contributing to achievement of the objectives in this policy framework related to green entrepreneurship; and (3) early findings of a series of national stakeholder consultations on green entrepreneurship and eco-innovative grassroots initiatives being undertaken by SCP/RAC in eight Mediterranean countries, including the expressed need of countries for support to step up efforts in this domain.
2. References from the regional policy framework are taken from the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 (MSSD), the Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (the SCP Action Plan for the Mediterranean), and UN Environment/MAP's Mid-term Strategy.
3. SCP/RAC's actions in support of green entrepreneurship and related initiatives are being undertaken in the context of the SwitchMed Programme. SwitchMed is financed by the European Union (EU) in partnership with Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, Palestine and Tunisia.
4. The findings about the need to step up efforts related to green entrepreneurship come from four national stakeholder consultations organised by SCP/RAC in Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia between 2016 and 2017 in the context of the SwitchMed Programme.

II. Green entrepreneurship in the regional policy framework for sustainable development

5. Green entrepreneurship and green jobs, as well as the related concepts of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and eco-innovation are identified as priorities in several strategic regional policy documents, including the MSSD, the SCP Action Plan for the Mediterranean, and UN Environment's Mid-term Strategy.

MSSD

6. The MSSD cites green entrepreneurship, eco-innovation and green incubators and training programmes in Strategic Directions 5.1 and 5.4 and their related national and regional actions under the MSSD Objective 5 "Transition towards a green and blue economy" (Annex 1).
7. Strategic Direction 5.1 is devoted to creating green and decent jobs for all, particularly youth and women, to eradicating poverty and enhancing social inclusion. Its related Action 5.1.4 calls on regional institutions, national governments and specialised agencies to "compile and disseminate best practice guidelines, including harmonised regional definitions, to promote the growth in green jobs and green and social entrepreneurship."
8. Strategic Direction 5.4 aims at encouraging environmentally-friendly and social innovation. Two related actions at the national level are foreseen. Action 5.4.1 calls on national governments, civil society, academia and the private sector to "increase capacity for eco-innovation in the industry and service sectors, through regulatory measures and economic incentives, including to promote market uptake." At the same time, Action 5.4.2. calls on national governments, local authorities, civil society and the private sector to "support networks of eco-incubators and clusters for green and social businesses and entrepreneurs." One related action is also foreseen at the regional level, namely Action 5.4.4 which calls on regional institutions, national governments, local authorities, civil society and the private sector to "create a Mediterranean network of green and social incubators and training programmes."

SCP Action Plan for the Mediterranean

9. The SCP Action Plan for the Mediterranean adopted at the last Conference of the Parties identifies 46 actions in four priority areas of consumption and production (food; fisheries and agriculture; goods manufacturing; tourism; and housing and construction) as well as five actions applicable to all priority areas. The concepts associated with green entrepreneurship are transversal to all areas but are referenced most notably in the actions in support of goods manufacturing (Actions 16 and 24) and are also cited in one of the actions applicable to all areas (Action 50) (Annex 2).

UN Environment/MAP's Mid-Term Strategy

10. UN Environment/MAP's Mid-Term Strategy (2016-2021) includes sustainable consumption and production as one of its three Cross-Cutting Themes, and sets forth a number of strategic objectives, including "to strengthen technical capacities of businesses, entrepreneurs, financing agents, and civil society implement to SCP solutions". The principles of green entrepreneurship and eco-innovation form the basis on which these kinds of technical capacities must be built.

III. UN Environment/MAP activities for building capacity of green entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean and their contributions to the implementation of the MSSD

11. As mentioned above, the UN Environment/MAP Mid-Term Strategy provides for strengthening "technical capacities of businesses, entrepreneurs, financing agents, and civil society implement to SCP solutions". Accordingly, UN Environment/MAP – through SCP/RAC – has developed tools and built capacities at the country level for green entrepreneurship and eco-innovation while creating green jobs and networks for green entrepreneurs through the activities funded by EU-funded SwitchMed Programme.

12. The SwitchMed Green Entrepreneurship Programme implemented by SCP/RAC provides individuals in the eight SwitchMed beneficiary countries with business development services that support the creation of new green businesses and green jobs, as well as the uptake of eco-design principles. SCP/RAC has developed a set of innovative training tools, including a Handbook for Green Entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean¹ and its companion Workbook²; as well as a capacity building programme which includes a five-day training module delivered in-person over three months, an individualized 50-hour coaching programme and finally a full-fledged incubation programme for individuals with the most promising green business ideas.

13. In terms of results, by the first quarter of 2017, 1500 individuals have been trained on how to create a green business by 120 local training partners capacitated by the SwitchMed Programme. These efforts have contributed to the launch of 150 new green businesses, 25 of which are currently being incubated through one-on-one mentorship. More than 70% of the green businesses supported and incubated by the Programme target three main areas, namely circular economy, sustainable food and renewable energies.

14. SCP/RAC has furthermore established a community of inspiring green entrepreneurs and change makers in the Mediterranean region called "The Switchers". Switchers are individuals, enterprises or civil society organizations implementing innovative environmental and social solutions that contribute to a switch to sustainable and fair consumption and production. They are active in a

¹ Available at: https://www.switchmed.eu/en/documents/ge-green-entrepreneurship-corner/handbook_en.pdf

² Available at: https://www.switchmed.eu/en/documents/ge-green-entrepreneurship-corner/wb_eng_digital_single.pdf

variety of fields, including organic farming, sustainable tourism, waste management, organic textiles, recycling of electronic waste, sustainable building, and organic cosmetics production, among others.

15. The results that SCP/RAC has achieved under the SwitchMed Programme have contributed directly to the implementation of Strategic Directions 5.1 and 5.4 of the MSSD Objective 5. These include most notably:

- a) Creation of green jobs, especially for youth and women
- b) Development of guidelines to promote growth in green jobs and green and social entrepreneurship
- c) Support for the uptake of eco-innovation principles, which will support future regulatory actions in this area
- d) Support for the creation of a Mediterranean network of green and social incubators and training programmes, through training, incubation and networking opportunities for green entrepreneurs as well as the creation of communities for green entrepreneurs

16. SCP/RAC is developing strategies for scaling up the progress achieved on green entrepreneurship for the SwitchMed Programme. These strategies include strengthening support to green entrepreneurs through an increased focus on business model development, coaching and assistance, access to finance, network development, access to markets and enabling policies. These activities, when implemented, will further contribute to implementation of MSSD Objective 5.

IV. Initial findings of national stakeholder consultations on green entrepreneurship and eco-innovative grassroots initiatives

17. In the context of the SwitchMed Programme, SCP/RAC is conducting a series of national stakeholder consultations to identify recommendations about how to further promote green entrepreneurship and grassroots ecological and social innovations at the country level. The stakeholders for these consultations include green entrepreneurs, grassroots eco-innovative initiatives, supporting organisations, the public sector, as well as financial institutions. The results of each consultation are documented in a White Paper that includes a set of recommendations for policy makers to facilitate the setting of priorities. In each of the White Papers, the high level recommendations are supported by more detailed actions aimed at specific actors at the national level. Based on these White Papers, a regional report will be developed that synthesizes the results and identifies regional trends regarding challenges and recommendations. A total of eight national stakeholder consultations will be organized in the Southern Mediterranean countries.

18. To date, SCP/RAC has undertaken four national stakeholder consultations (one each in Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco and Jordan). A number of common recommendations have emerged from these consultations, including:

- a) policy makers must support efforts to create an enabling legal framework for green entrepreneurship and eco-innovative grassroots initiatives;
- b) financial actors can support expansion of green entrepreneurship by improving access to affordable financing;
- c) additional technical support services – in the form of incubators, accelerators and innovation hubs – are needed to help people transform their green business ideas into actions;
- d) efforts are required to raise awareness in the region about the environmental and social benefits associated with green products and services, so that the public is better informed about their value and consequently more likely to invest in them.

19. Results of the national stakeholder consultations indicate that countries recognize the contributions green entrepreneurship and eco-innovative grassroots initiatives are making to sustainable development objectives in the region, and that additional technical, financial and policy support is needed to realise the full environmental and social potential of these emerging activities.

Annex 1 - Strategic Directions 5.1 and 5.4 of the MSSD

Strategic direction 5.1: Create green and decent jobs for all, particularly youth and women, to eradicate poverty and enhance social inclusion			
Actions	Owners	Time frame	Indicators
Regional			
5.1.4. Compile and disseminate best practice guidelines, including harmonised regional definitions, to promote the growth in green jobs and green and social entrepreneurship.	Regional institutions, national, governments, specialised agencies	2016-2020	Status of guidelines and number of related dissemination activities carried out

Strategic direction 5.4: Encourage environmentally-friendly and social innovation			
Actions	Owners	Time frame	Indicators
National			
5.4.1. Increase capacity for eco-innovation in the industry and service sectors, through regulatory measures and economic incentives, including to promote market uptake.	National governments, civil society, academia, private sector	Ongoing	Number of countries with regulatory measures and financial incentives supporting eco-innovation in the industry and service sectors Number of countries with programmes to support the market share of green products
5.4.2. Support networks of eco-incubators and clusters for green and social businesses and entrepreneurs.	National governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector	2016-2020	Number of countries with networks of ecoincubators and clusters for green and social businesses and entrepreneurs
Regional			
5.4.4 Create a Mediterranean network of green and social incubators and training programmes.	Regional institutions, national governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector	2018-2020	Status of Mediterranean network of green and social incubators and training programmes

Annex 2 - Selected actions related to green entrepreneurship from the SCP Action Plan for the Mediterranean

Goods Manufacturing

Action 16: Create green businesses and jobs in sustainable goods manufacturing and recycling/refurbishment and alternative services such as switching from a product ownership to a Service Systems and lease based economy ("servicizing"), social businesses and other innovative business approaches.

Action 24: Demonstrate and publicize the economic, environmental and social benefits of sustainably manufactured goods and alternative services using appropriate media outlets. Particular emphasis should be given to promoting the economic and business case for individual categories of manufactured goods (or alternative service provision), emphasizing the benefits to consumers, the private sector and the environment.

Actions applicable to all priority areas

Action 50: Create and develop new business models integrating SCP approach as business strategy

The full document is available at: http://www.cprac.org/docs2/decision_scp_ap_cop19.pdf