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Union for the Mediterranean
الإتحاد من أجل المتوسط

SECRETARIAT OF THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN
ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2023



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INTRODUCTION

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is an intergovernmental Euro-Mediterranean organisation gathering, on equal footing and representation, all 27 countries of the European Union and the 15 countries of the Southern and the Eastern Mediterranean shores. As a direct continuation of the Barcelona Process, the launch of the UfM in July 2008 was a true reflection of the shared political commitment of its 42 Member States to strengthen regional cooperation, dialogue and integration in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

Mandate: *creating an area of peace, stability and shared prosperity in the Euro-Mediterranean*

The UfM Secretariat (hereafter referred to as UfMS), has been established in 2008 as the first permanent structure dedicated to the enhancement of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. The Secretariat was domiciled in Barcelona; a location that signifies the permanent linkage between the institution and the process from which it inherited its acquis. Ever since its creation, the institution has been thriving to effectively achieve, driven by the principles of co-ownership and shared responsibility, the overarching goal of creating a Euro-Mediterranean area of peace, security, stability, and shared prosperity in a manner that corresponds to the legitimate aspirations of its citizens.

Methodology: *putting policies in action*



Beyond its model of governance based on the principle of consensus, the added-value of the UfM also relies on its unique action-driven methodology.

Composed of three dimensions, this methodology aims at creating effective interlinks between decisions taken by Member States at the political level and their operational translation into region-wide cooperation projects, which in return nourish the process of defining relevant policies.

1. *Political Fora:* the political dimension defines the UfM priorities of work through the adoption of common agendas in key strategic areas for the region. The political commitment and ownership of UfM Member States has been growing in the last years, through increasingly ambitious and relevant mandates that give a strong impulse to the institution.

2. *Platforms of dialogue:* the structured policy dialogue dimension of the UfM aims at identifying concrete ways of implementing the common agendas developed by the Member States through facilitating exchange on ministerial mandates, fostering better understanding stakeholders' needs, sharing experiences and best practices, and promoting concrete regional cooperation projects. This process involves an inclusive multi-stakeholder approach that brings together governmental institutions, regional and international organisations, local authorities, civil society organisations, universities and think tanks, as well as the private sector and financial institutions. This, in turn, ultimately enables the creation of a strong and dynamic Euro-Mediterranean community of stakeholders.

3. *Projects with regional impact:* The UfM identifies and supports regional cooperation projects that have a tangible impact on the ground and can contribute to the goals set by Member States in each area of action.



Through the awarding of a label, the UfM Secretariat acts as a catalyst of projects, accompanying promoters throughout the project lifecycle.

Following a major revision of the label adopted by the UfM Senior Officials in 2018, the Secretariat is working on rendering the UfM label more efficient, clear and useful for the project promoters and potential donors.

2023 Work Programme: boosting the implementation of the UfM post-2020 agenda

In November 2020, on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Barcelona Process, the 42 UfM Member States recognised the need to prioritise, in the years to come, five areas of action where the UfM can play a crucial role and provide for comparative advantages towards a sustainable post-pandemic recovery, paving the way for the creation of more resilient societies and economies in the region.

In that sense, starting in 2021, the UfM has further focused its work on the following five areas of action identified as priority by the Member States: environmental and climate action, sustainable and inclusive economic and human development, social inclusiveness and equality, digital transformation, and civil protection.

In this context, the UfM Secretariat will continue in 2023 to promote these renewed priorities throughout its work programme, always in line with the 2017 Roadmap, the policy guidelines validated by the UfM Member States at sectoral level, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the EU new Agenda for the Mediterranean. A strong emphasis will be given to further interlinking the areas of action described below, to increase efficiency and impact, as well as relevance of its action. Indeed, the five areas are closely linked, and no single action can meet the ambitious objectives set by the member states (for example, actions on gender and climate finance will be examined synergies between the green transition and job creation will be explored; water and youth...). The specific interlinkages are developed under each chapter.

- 1. Environmental and climate action:** Since no country can reverse the dangerous trends of the climate emergency on its own, achieving the objectives set by the Paris Agreement on climate change, the SDGs, and the recently adopted regional UfM mandates on Environment and Climate Change, needs to be the priority for all.

In this regard, in 2023, the UfMS will continue promoting the scientific assessment of risks and challenges related to environment and climate change through three new reports of the Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC) network. Furthermore, it will support the implementation of the Paris Agreement at regional level, notably through the enhancement of climate finance. The UfMS will also advance work on its 2030 GreenerMed Agenda, as well as of its Blue Economy Roadmap for Action, both adopted in 2021.

Complementary to that, in view of achieving effective and long-lasting results, the UfM adopted a comprehensive sustainable development strategy that also addresses key challenges such as water, energy, urban development and the blue economy. In 2023, the UfMS will pursue the implementation of its Water Agenda and its Financial Strategy at regional and national levels; will start operationalizing on the ground its recently developed Energy and Blue Economy roadmaps; and will hold its third Ministerial Meeting on Sustainable Urban Development in Croatia, while kick-starting the implementation of its 2040 Strategic Urban Development Action Plan.

Finally, research and innovation will be promoted in the fields of renewable energy and climate change (as well as health) as per the recently adopted Ministerial mandate (France, 2022), to tackle the environmental and climate crisis in the medium and long-term, and work on food security will be also enhanced, especially in the current context of lack of access to sufficient and safe food due to the war in Ukraine.



2. **Sustainable and inclusive economic and human development:** in view of unleashing socio-economic development in the Euro-Mediterranean region the UfM will continue advancing the levels of regional integration, notably to face the disruptions in the supply chains experienced worldwide with the recent crises. In 2023 the UfMS will hold a Ministerial meeting on Trade and will put into action the recently adopted mandate on transport and connectivity through the new Regional Transport Action Plan (RTAP).

As per its core mandate, the UfM will continue to give a special focus on decent job creation at different levels: it will notably set-up a community of practice on youth employment, launch a second grant scheme on employment under the UfM Hub for Jobs, Trade and Investment, in alignment with the TEI “Jobs through Trade and Investment” and in close **coordination with the EU**, as well as explore employment opportunities of growing fields such as green economy, blue economy, social economy and others.

In 2023, the UfMS will also pave the way towards a first UfM Ministerial Meeting on Higher Education, to ensure a transformative impact on the higher education systems and institutions in the context of a global trend towards a new generation of universities. Furthermore, it will start advancing on a new mandate for the organisation, namely health, through the recently adopted research and innovation roadmaps.

Social inclusiveness and equality: Building on the renewed shared Euro-Mediterranean agenda on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society (Madrid, 2022), the agenda aims to increase women’s leadership and political participation, enhance women’s economic empowerment, combat all forms of violence against women and girls, and end gender stereotypes. **A focus on women's economic participation will be given to actions in 2023, while launching the next phase of the UfM follow-up mechanism on gender equality.**

A UfM gender mainstreaming strategy will be developed to better ensure that the gender perspective is adopted in the design, implementation, and monitoring of all relevant UfM activities. In 2023, the UfMS will also start implementing the monitoring exercise foreseen by the ‘No Women, No Panel’ Campaign, in line with the MoU signed in January 2022.

Building on the outcomes of youth-related activities, organised since 2017, the UfM Secretariat has been working on the development of a structured and coordinated action on youth in the Euro-Mediterranean area, in close consultations not only with youth of the region but also national governments, international organisations and civil society actors working in the field. Following the adoption of the **2030 UfM Youth Strategy**, a working group on youth will be set up in 2023, to put in action its objectives and allow full participation of young people in each priority action of the UfM.

Furthermore, to ensure true and effective social inclusiveness, work on social economy, on rural development, with school dropouts as well as with informal workers will be enhanced, to ensure vulnerable populations are protected and included throughout the region. Finally, the UfMS will also develop a new line of action with persons with disabilities, building on the first conference related to this sector held in 2022.

3. **Digital transformation:** The UfMS will seek to convene a meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Digital Economy (formerly the DEWoG) in order to set strategic guidelines, and will hold, in 2023, a Conference on Digital Transformation, with a focus on digital solutions for a greener transition, as well as activities to bridge the digital gap. Following the proposal of Spain at the 6th UfM Regional Forum in 2021, the UfMS will also explore the possibility of promoting a UfM Strategy for the digitalization of sectors of society that are particularly vulnerable, pending availability of funds.
4. **Civil Protection:** With an increasing number of forest fires, floods, earthquakes, marine pollution, pandemics and other natural and man-made catastrophes across the Euro-Mediterranean area, civil protection is at the heart of the UfM mandate. In 2023, the UfMS will boost cooperation in this area by setting a regional dialogue platform to develop a comprehensive regional strategy, horizon 2030, as well as pave the way to a Directors-



General meeting. The launch of the new EU-funded PPRD programme will also be promoted through the UfMS.

Highlights from the UfM action in 2023 also comprise the celebration of the 8th UfM Regional Forum, to continue deepening political dialogue among UfM member states and increasing their co-ownership, as well as the third Day of the Mediterranean, to celebrate cooperation and shared culture, strengthen ties between the two shores, embrace diversity and deepen understanding between the citizens of the region. In view of the significance of these objectives for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, a new initiative will also be developed, upon the member states approval and in close cooperation with the Anna Lindh Foundation, namely the label “Capital of the Mediterranean”.

Finally, the institution will also continue reinforcing its capacities through the development of institutional and financial partnerships that leverage joint efforts and effective interaction between regional cooperation actors and increase the impact of UfM activities in the region.

As a platform for dialogue and cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region, the UfM depends on the partnerships and cooperation that it can establish and develop with other institutions. This intertwined network of stakeholders allows for a small and agile structure such as the UfM Secretariat to actively work on a wide range of fields, promoting a deeper dialogue on a regional scale and supporting the implementation of projects of cooperation to the benefit of the peoples of the region. The UfM Secretariat will reinforce synergies among global, regional, national and local levels to implement its agenda efficiently, and in line with the UN 2030 Agenda methodology of action. On the other hand, the Secretariat further consolidates its capacities through the enhancement of the working tools of the Secretariat, by further implementing the label update, improving internal management and monitoring processes, as well as increasing the visibility of the UfM and raising awareness on its mission and action through its communication tools.



FIRST PART:

UfM CONTRIBUTION TO STABILITY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION



1.1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Promoting trade and investments

Taking into account the impact of the successive socio-economic disruptions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine crisis on the trade flows and investment landscape, and drawing on the latest Ministerial Declarations and Joint Statements on Trade (Brussels 2018 and Online 2020), on Industrial Cooperation (Brussels, 2014) and on Digital Economy (Brussels, 2014), as well as following the first UfM Business Forum (2019) and UfM Trade and Investment Forum (2020, 2021 and 2022), the UfM Secretariat's work in the area of Economic Development focuses on further supporting regional and sub-regional initiatives to:

- improve trade and investment flows and strengthen value chains, in alignment with the TEI "Jobs through Trade and Investment" and in close coordination with the EU,
- consolidating the ongoing efforts to promote private sector development with a focus on MSMEs and their access to finance,
- engaging further with Social and Solidarity Economy actors and players,
- and building on the momentum started in the field of Green Economy, Digital Economy, Digital Transformation and Creative Industries.

The UfM Secretariat will notably contribute in the area of Economic Development to the implementation of SDGs 1, 8, 10 and 17, and more particularly SDG 9: building resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation and SDG 12 to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. Questions related to gender equality and women empowerment (SDG 5), the environment (SDG 15) and climate action (SDG 13) will be mainstreamed throughout the UfM Secretariat action in this priority area.

2023 specific objectives

1. Encouraging new initiatives and strengthening the implementation of on-going initiatives for sustainable trade and investment promotion and facilitation;
2. Promoting inclusive economic regional integration and sustainable value chains in the Euro-Mediterranean area;
3. Engaging further in the fields of Industrial Cooperation, Digital Economy, Green Economy, Creative Economy and Social and Solidarity Economy, and promoting digital transformation in the region.

Objective one: Encouraging new initiatives and strengthening the implementation of on-going initiatives for trade and investment promotion and facilitation

➤ Promoting Regional Dialogue

UfM Ministerial Conference on Trade

- Guided by the Ministerial Statement of the UfM Ministerial Conference on Trade held online in 2020 and the recommendations emanating from the UfM Trade and Investment Forum held online in 2021 and 2022, the UfM Secretariat will engage actively in the UfM Regional Platform on Trade and Investment in



preparation for the envisaged UfM Ministerial Conference on Trade taking place in 2023.

UfM Trade and Investment Forum

- Following the fourth edition of the UfM Trade and Investment Forum that was held in Turkey in 2022, the UfM Secretariat will follow up on the deliverables that the Forum has yielded, conceiving concrete actions to tackle the trade barriers and improve the investment landscape in the UfM Region. The fifth edition will take place in 2023, hosted by one of the UfM Member States.

UfM Conference on Impact Investment and Competitiveness

- The UfM Secretariat, together with ANIMA Investment Network, will organise a conference in France (TBC) dedicated to impact investment promotion. It will be the occasion to promote the new tool impact rating, spin-off of the UfM labeled project EDILE, which will allow to identify investments with positive on social and environmental aspects in addition to economic benefits. On the same occasion, an Award will be launched for the best performing projects.

Active Participation: Public Forum WTO 2023 or 2024

- The UfM Secretariat will explore the possibility of joining and arranging a session on regional integration, TiS, e-commerce, RVC, or Investment promotion and facilitation.

➤ Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives

Technical trainings on trade and investment related issues

- As announced during the UfM Business Forum held on 18 June 2019 in Cairo, Egypt, technical trainings and capacity-building activities directed to ministries, customs authorities and businesses alike have been offered to the Agadir Agreement Signatory Countries in the area of trade policy, under the partnership between the UfM Secretariat and GIZ.
- More technical trainings on trade and investment facilitation will be designed and delivered during 2023, targeting stakeholders in the MENA Region and the Balkans.
- The trainings might include RoO trainings on PEM convention for Morocco and Tunisia and/or Technical trainings on Investment promotion and facilitation for IPAs. They will also include Digitalization of public employment services.

Objective two: Promoting inclusive economic regional integration and sustainable value chains in the Euro Mediterranean area

➤ Promoting Regional Dialogue

- The UfM Secretariat will continue to work closely with its partners and its Member States to further promote economic integration in the region. Following the two events that were held in 2022 (Seminar on “Integration in Times of Crisis” in Alicante and Conference on Economic Integration and Value Chains Reconfiguration in Malta), the UfM Secretariat will join other partners to organize workshops on economic integration and global value chains and will start the preparatory work for the second edition of the UfM Progress Report on Regional Integration.



Objective three: Engaging further in the fields of Industrial Cooperation, Digital Economy, Green Economy, Creative Economy and Social and Solidarity Economy, and promoting digital transformation in the region

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

UfM Regional Platform on Industrial Cooperation

- The UfM Secretariat will actively engage in the UfM Regional Platform on Industrial Cooperation to promote the regional cooperation in this important field in implementation of the 2021-2024 Work program.
- The UfM Secretariat advocates for the organization of a Ministerial on industrial cooperation to devise a common agenda on private sector development through improving the business climate.
- A Community of Practice on SMEs and entrepreneurship is being prepared by the MED SMEs project to accompany the work of the UfM Industrial Cooperation platform.

UfM Conference on Digital Transformation

- Following the identification of digital transformation as one of the specific areas of priority outlined by the Statement of the UfM Co-Presidency emanating from the V UfM Regional Forum held in 2020, the UfM Secretariat will seek to convene a meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Digital Economy (formerly the DEWoG) in order to set strategic guidelines and will organize a Conference on Digital Transformation in Fez, Morocco, in 2023, together with the Euro-Mediterranean University of Fez (UEMF).
- The Conference will tackle, inter alia, the transition from research to industrial production using digital technology, with a focus on the Fez Smart Factory (FSF) as a case study.

UfM Conference on Social Economy

- The UfM Secretariat will organise an international conference on Social Economy in Spain in 2023, with an emphasis on social entrepreneurship and the role of women in this Sector. This will coincide with the plan of Spain to prioritize social economy during its 2023 Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

UfM Workshop on Agri-food industries & Food Security in the context of Green Transition

- The UfM Secretariat will partner with the FAO and/or CIHEAM to co-organise a conference in Italy dedicated to Food Security and the economics of Agri-business in the UfM Region, seen through the lens of a green and just transition.
- This event will examine the necessary conditions to promote this industrial branch within the spirit of regional integration to ensure a sustainable food security despite the existing and potential future disruptions.

UfM Trainings on Digitalization

- As follow-up to a series of national Workshops on e-governance organized in 2021 with the support of GIZ for the benefit of 3 UfM Member Countries, the UfM



Secretariat is discussing the possibility of holding a new round of trainings during 2023 targeting other beneficiaries with the support of GIZ.

- In addition to the digitalization of public services, the upcoming trainings might focus on how to make digital solutions enable green transition ranging from the positive environmental impact of paperless administration to the use of AI to mitigate climate change.
- As with the previous trainings, these potential activities would be implemented by the Estonian ICT Cluster.

UfM Workshop on New Economic Sectors and Trends

- The UfM Secretariat will co-organize a workshop with the European Training Foundation and other partners on new economic sectors and trends in the UfM region, as well as the corresponding opportunities, challenges, and required skills.

The work carried out in this area of cooperation will be strengthened and complemented by the actions that will be implemented in the framework of the cooperation established with BMZ within the initiative 'UfM Hub for Jobs, Trade and Investment', and to which Spain is also contributing.



1.2. EMPLOYMENT: Fostering job creation and inclusive growth

With the labour market fragility provoked by the current disruptions and crises in mind, and drawing on the latest Ministerial Declarations on Employment and Labour (Cascais, 2019 and Marrakech, 2022) and anchored to the mandate tasked to it by the UfM Roadmaps for Employment and Labour (2019-2022 and 2022-2025), the UfM Secretariat's work in the field of employment will focus on further investing in the Med4Jobs flagship initiative, as well as covering the four priorities for action identified by the UfM Member States, namely:

- a. Supporting decent job creation and entrepreneurship, in alignment with the TEI "Jobs through Trade and Investment" and in close coordination with the EU;
- b. Mobilizing public and private stakeholders to create partnerships and synergies;
- c. Building inclusive Labour markets to integrate potentially vulnerable and disadvantaged groups;
- d. Investing in quality education systems and training, skills and employability in a changing world of work.

The activities of the UfM Secretariat in the area of Employment will contribute to the implementation of SDG 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all, Notably SDG 8.6: Reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training (NEETs). Furthermore, questions related to gender equality and women empowerment (SDG 5), reducing inequalities in the region (SDG 10) and environment and climate action (SDG 13) will be mainstreamed throughout this priority area.

2023 specific objectives

1. Broadening and intensifying action on employment and labour with a focus on vulnerable groups, especially among youth and women;
2. Fostering entrepreneurship and skills development.

Objective one: Broadening and intensifying action on employment and labour

- **Promoting Regional Dialogue**
 - **UfM Regional Platform on Employment and Labour**

The UfM Secretariat will contribute to the regular meetings of the UfM Regional Platform on Employment and Labour in order to follow up on the Ministerial Declaration mandates and implement the recommendations developed by relevant UfM events and fora As the Declaration specifically focuses on youth and women, the follow-up exercise will embed a relevant gender perspective.
- **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**
 - The UfM will continue to promote the projects labelled under the umbrella of the **UfM Med4Jobs Initiative**, being the flagship initiative for job creation, MSMEs support and job matching in the region.



- The UfM Secretariat will also continue working on the **Community of Practice on Youth Employment** in 2023. For reasons of effectiveness, the component Community of Practice (CoP) on Youth Employment will be closely coordinated with EC DGs EMPL and NEAR. The Community of Practice on Youth Employment will be linked with EC programmes on ‘Youth Not in Education, Employment or Training’, the pilot ‘Youth Guarantee in the Western Balkans’ and the upcoming ‘Team Europe Initiative on Jobs through trade and investment’ for what concerns the Pillar 2 (vocational training/technical skills), as they are all complementary.
- Digitalization of public employment services. Technical trainings on digitalization of public employment services will be undertaken on a national level.

Objective two: Fostering entrepreneurship and skills development.

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

Promoting economic diplomacy in the UfM region

- Following the first edition that was organised in Morocco in 2022, the UfM Secretariat will hold trainings in 2023 for young diplomats on key economic issues in the region in collaboration with specialized schools and institutes, with the aim of promoting economic literacy and economic diplomacy as a driver of co-creation of value in the region.

Youth Entrepreneurship and Future of Work Workshop

- The UfM Secretariat will co-organise with the Young Professionals Association (YPA) a Workshop in Albania dedicated to discussing the opportunities and challenges related to entrepreneurship among young people on both shore of the Mediterranean, as well as the necessary skills needed for the anticipated future jobs.
- **Study trips to support entrepreneurial ecosystems and the Creative Economy** will be organized to connect entrepreneurs from the Southern Mediterranean with peers, accelerators, incubators, business associations and similar entrepreneurial ecosystem actors in Europe.

A particular focus on women leadership in economic diplomacy and female entrepreneurship will be given through the activities of this sector.

The work carried out in this area cooperation will be strengthened and complemented by the actions that will be implemented in the framework of the cooperation established with Germany and Spain within the initiative ‘UfM Hub for Jobs, Trade and Investment’.



1.3. HIGHER EDUCATION: Improving youth employability and academic mobility

Regional cooperation efforts in the fields of higher education, as well as technical and vocational education and training (TVET), play an essential role in achieving the UfM overall objectives related to human development, intercultural dialogue, prevention of extremism, migration, sustainable development and the promotion of a Mediterranean youth positive agenda.

Drawing on the UfM Roadmap for Action (Barcelona, 2017), and the Ministerial Declarations on Research and Innovation (Valletta, 2017; France, 2022), Employment and Labour (Cascais, 2019; Marrakech, 2022), and Higher Education and Scientific Research (Cairo, 2007), the UfM Secretariat puts Higher Education and TVET at the core of its agenda. The Secretariat will also actively seek synergies with relevant dialogues such as with the follow-up of the 5+5 Declarations on Research, Innovation and Higher Education (Rome 2019; Nouakchott, 2022).

The activities of the UfM Secretariat in the area of Higher Education aim at contributing to the implementation of SDG 4 “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”, but also SDG 8.6 “Reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training (NEETs)”. Furthermore, questions related to gender equality and women empowerment (SDG 5), reducing inequalities (SDG 10), environment (SDG 15) and climate action (SDG 13) will be mainstreamed throughout the UfM Secretariat action in this area. Gender equality will be highlighted in all the events and studies fostered by the UfM Secretariat and bridging the gender gap on the STEM careers (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), for example, will be a constant concern.

The main highlight for 2023 will be a UfM Ministerial Meeting on Higher Education to be convened in the last quarter of the year, subject to prior approval of the UfM Senior Officials. This meeting is intended to establish a regional strategic agenda for cooperation on higher education and research as a tool giving guidance to both policymakers and institutions. The Ministerial process is an opportunity for acknowledging the achievements and developments since the Cairo Declaration, 15 years ago, and affirming new commitments on the strategic importance of education, research and innovation for the development of human capital in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Indeed, in the context of a global trend towards a new generation of universities, an ambitious higher education initiative covering the whole UfM region is necessary. The Meeting could prove to be an essential opportunity for the UfM to receive clear political guidance on Higher Education, being the only sector to date without a UfM Ministerial Conference.

Considering the special relevance of the Ministerial Meeting, the UfM Secretariat will focus its efforts on this sector on a single objective: establishing a renewed strategic agenda for cooperation on higher education and research in the Mediterranean – advancing



internationalization of higher education, improving governance, and addressing youth employability. In particular, this agenda should give visibility to the efforts in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation through EU programmes, especially Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe, as well as the TEI “Jobs through Trade and Investment”.

Objective: Establishing a renewed strategic agenda for cooperation on higher education and research in the Mediterranean - advancing internationalization, improving governance, and addressing youth employability.

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- Preparing and organizing the First UfM Ministerial Meeting on Higher Education, which should be held on the last quarter of 2023, provided the approval of the UfM Senior Officials. Other events related to this meeting are the following:
 - Two Ad Hoc Senior Officials’ Meetings, aimed at drafting the Ministerial Declaration.
 - A Higher Education Stakeholders’ Meeting with the goal of deepening the reflection initiated with the Regional Dialogue Meeting organized as a side event of the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference, in May 2022.
 - A Policy Conference as side event of the Ministerial, to showcase successful regional projects in the field of higher education.
- In line with the conclusions of the study carried out by BUSINESSMED in 2022, the UfM Secretary will consult the Member States on the relevance and feasibility of establishing a Working Group on Vocational pathways in Higher Education. As mentioned in the study, the gender perspective will be taken on board in the development of the future Strategy on VET and HE.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- Assisting EMUNI University in its mission of contributing to academic dialogue in the region and training citizens open to cultural diversity, namely through the institution’s annual conference.
- Supporting the intercultural dimension of the EuroMed University of Fes (UEMF) through a technical assistance aimed at training trainers on debate skills. This action was initially planned for 2022, but then postponed, as the focus shifted towards a UEMF-EMUNI jointly organized conference, in September 2022.
- Promoting the Fez Smart Factory (FSF) as an integrated industrial platform oriented towards Industry 4.0. In this regard, the UfM Secretariat will support the organization of an event at UEMF, which will bring together representatives from the private sector, industry, development agencies and academia (see “Economic Development” section).
- Supporting high-achieving students finding jobs matching their skills and qualifications, the UfM Secretariat will assist the HOMERe network, namely



through the co-organization of an event aimed at attracting new companies to the internship programme.

- Fostering the socio-professional integration of young people, particularly of those who are not in education, employment, or training, through the Mediterranean New Chance network (MedNC).
- Helping EMIS international school promoting peace and sustainability in the Middle East, through an event such as YOCOPAS, the annual conference aimed at inspiring youth to act and change the reality of the region.
- Enhancing regional cooperation aimed at implementing response mechanisms for higher education in emergencies, through the Euromed-RRM project, which supports students in emergency situations, especially refugees.
- Preparing jointly organized activities with institutions with whom the UfM Secretariat signed collaboration agreements: with UNIMED (Mediterranean Universities Union), the Annual Assembly, the Week in Brussels and a Students Event; with AUF (Agence Française de la Francophonie), activities enhancing the graduates' employability and promoting Science Diplomacy.
- Studying the feasibility of implementing a pilot project promoting green skills through post-secondary vocational pathways, according to the recommendations of the study carried out by BUSINESSMED in 2022.



1.4. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION: Harnessing regional knowledge to address common challenges

In 2023, the UfM Secretariat will continue fostering regional cooperation on Research and innovation within its existing political mandate, as updated by the first UfM Ministerial Declaration in Research and Innovation (France, 27 June 2022).

During the course of the year, the UfMS will continue supporting the UfM Regional Platform on Research and Innovation, and structuring dialogue and capacity building on the nexus between innovation and employability, with particular regards on its ability to support a double green and digital shift.

Research and Innovation are central in tackling common challenges requiring innovative solutions, which could enable a more inclusive and just economic development in Mediterranean societies, where youth and women may find appropriate spaces for developing new knowledge-based careers.

Aware of the need to join a drive for a disruptive economic growth, youth employment and environmental sustainability on the face of rapidly shifting climate (and its repercussions on regional food security and migration), the UfM Regional Platform on Research and Innovation has approved three new priorities on Climate Change, Renewable Energy and Health, and eight associated roadmaps, in July 2021 and a related Implementation Plan, as a living document, in June 2022.

The potential of the new R&I Roadmaps in promoting regional Science Diplomacy will be explored in 2023, building on a growing path of awareness of this field for creating a common basis for peace and dialogue based on a scientific knowledge and facts.

In continuity with its support for the objectives highlighted by the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Research and Innovation (2022) and in synergy with 5+5 Dialogue inputs on Research, Innovation and Higher Education (Nouakchott, 2022), the UfM Secretariat will be strengthening regional sectorial dialogue on research, innovation and employability, in connection with an envisaged UfM Ministerial Declaration on Higher Education (second half of 2023, TBC), under the guidance of its Co-Presidency. In addition to Higher Education, coordination will be ensured with thematic dialogues where Research and Innovation play a significant role, including Environment and Climate Action, Employment and Labour, Blue Economy, Water, and Energy.

In line with the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Employment and Labour (2022), the UfM Secretariat will also facilitate the switch towards green innovation and employability, in order to foster an environment conducive towards employability, careers and entrepreneurship that may support to general goals of the three UfM R&I Roadmaps, which are anchored on sustainable development. This through a special focus, including in partnership with GIZ, on the academia-business interconnection, and on the inclusion of



green competences and skills of researchers and graduates, promoting a hybrid competences between different education and research pathways, including TVET.

The activities of the UfM Secretariat in the area of Research and Innovation aim to contribute to SDGs 9 “Fostering innovation” and 4 “Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all”, as well as to all SDGs where the Research and Innovation dimension plays a crucial role in their successful achievement. Furthermore, questions related to gender equality and women empowerment (SDG 5), reducing inequalities in the region (SDG 10) and environment and climate action (SDG 13) will be mainstreamed throughout the UfM Secretariat action in this priority area.

In 2023, the UfM Secretariat will focus on two main objectives:

- **Implementing the Ministerial Mandate on Research and Innovation: R&I Roadmaps, and Science Diplomacy**
- **Greener innovation and employability: Sustainability as a tool for supporting academia’s role in job creation**

Objective 1: Implementing the Ministerial Mandate on Research and Innovation: R&I Roadmaps, and Science Diplomacy

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- **Meetings of the UfM Regional Platform in Research and Innovation.** Following up on the Ministerial Conference in Research and Innovation, a meeting of the UfM RP in R&I can be envisioned to be organised in physical format, either as a standalone event, or back-to-back with activities supporting the execution of the adopted Implementation Plan of the UfM R&I Roadmaps and promotion of the guidelines set forth in the Ministerial text.
- **Policy Conference on Research and Innovation.** Following up to the UfM Ministerial Conference on Research and Innovation, it can be envisioned the organization of an event in partnership with DG RTD promoting the UfM R&I Roadmaps, presenting existing opportunities and bringing together stakeholders and the main R&I initiatives (such as PRIMA and the Mediterranean Lighthouse) in order to discuss together necessary policies and upcoming opportunities for operationalising the Roadmaps and their Implementation Plan. UfM will seek to leverage this event in order to ensure coordination between funders and funding instruments in the region as well as engagement of national funders, in line to the coordination mandate maintained by the UfM Secretariat.
- **Euro-Mediterranean Conference. Scientific Diplomacy in the Mediterranean: Advancing multilateral cooperation through knowledge, research, and dialogue.** Different R&I and scientific initiatives are active in the region, with many actors already spreading the positive values of Science Diplomacy in the Mediterranean. In order to achieve critical mass with a growing number of stakeholders operating in this field, and to highlight the potential for peaceful regional cooperation at a time of global disruptions, the UfMS, under the leadership of its Co-Presidency, will strive to convey a Conference on Scientific Cooperation in the Mediterranean in the first half of 2023.



The goal of the event will be to showcase the many different actions under implementation in the field, and call for the establishment of North/South Med networks (e.g. possibly a Science Diplomacy Mediterranean Hub or Network). The activity may also be organized in cooperation with the UfM Regional Platform on Research and Innovation. The gender dimension (role of women in STEM and AI, and women leadership in science diplomacy among others) will be tackled in the development of the concept notes of the policy conferences as well as in the Implementation Plan for the Ministerial.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- **Supporting the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area.** In 2023, UfMS will continue supporting the PRIMA initiative in line with the recognition given in the UfM Ministerial Declaration on R&I. Particularly, it will support the initiative in finding synergies with the Implementation Plan of the UfM R&I Roadmaps and for the extended life of PRIMA-funded projects in creating new innovation and economic development.
- **Working on Research and Blue Economy: BLUEMED and the Mediterranean Lighthouse.** In line with UfM R&I Ministerial, UfMS will support the BLUEMED Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda, aimed at designing a shared pattern to foster blue growth and the sustainable use of marine resources in the Mediterranean Sea and the BlueMed Pilot action for a Healthy Plastic Free Mediterranean. Additionally, it will envisage ways to participate in the implementation and deployment of Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030” and its Mediterranean zero pollution lighthouse for climate neutral, sustainable and productive Blue Economy through research and innovation, complementary to the Horizon Europe different work programmes and the Horizon Europe Missions. (See also: Blue Economy section)
- **SFS-Med.** UfMS will continue working within the interinstitutional platform for Sustainable Food System in the Mediterranean with FAO and CIHEAM, and in partnership with PRIMA. Particularly, it will focus on promoting Science Diplomacy in the field of food systems, and how to include them in promoting green competences and skills in education curricula. (See also: Environment section)
- **Higher Education on Food Security and Rural Development.** UfMS will continue to support this project promoted by the CIHEAM, promoting a reflection on its continuation and next activities.
- **Boosting women entrepreneurship through Science.** In partnership with the Euromed University of Fès, meetings and trainings could be promoted in the field of Women entrepreneurship in STEM/AI. (See also Women Empowerment Section)
- **Ponza Prima-Med/Pontine Medi-Jer initiative.** In its drive to support dialogue aimed at creating a Science Diplomacy Center in the Mediterranean, UfMS will support the organization of the 5th edition of the Annual Euro-Med inter-institutional Ponza Prima-Med/Pontine Medi-Jer initiative.

Objective 2: Greener innovation and employability: Sustainability as a tool for supporting academia’s role in job creation



➤ Promoting Regional Dialogue

With the support of GIZ, UfMS will be working on the below activities aimed at following up to a GIZ-financed UfMS initiative “Reinforcing the Innovation-Employability Nexus in the Mediterranean” (2020-2022). These activities will strive to address the needs highlighted by stakeholders and beneficiaries of past publications and trainings on closing the gaps between innovation and employability, promoting dialogue between academia and private sector, and devising common paths between vocational education and training, and higher education. It also includes sustainability as a driver for growth through green innovation and skills.

- **Study on Green Innovation and employability through the triple helix lens.** In 2022, it has been started a mapping and assessment exercise of the ecosystem of existing policies and instruments that facilitate access to employment of graduates and researchers in the Mediterranean, highlighting how they could support the development of a sustainable economy through innovation and employability. The study is assessing and comparing different country frameworks from three pilot examples. Furthermore, the study will propose recommendations and options for follow-up at regional and national levels on how to exploit the economic and employment potential of sustainability.

This will feed on the outcomes of a regional conference on Green innovation and careers through the triple helix that will be organised in the second half of 2022 (Jordan, TBC). In 2023, the Study will be finalised, with a digital presentation event being organised.

- **Supporting the implementation of a VET-HE strategy by innovating curricula through green skills/competences.** This action follows up on a GIZ-supported UfM report “Towards a Union for the Mediterranean Strategy on Developing New Vocational Pathways in Higher Education”, which was published in 2022, assisted by a Steering Committee composed by the European Training Foundation, the Center for Mediterranean Integration, UNIMED and the UfM Secretariat.

During the course of 2023, a Technical Assistance will be launched and two pilot training activities on green skills/competences will be organised as concrete examples to proof this concept. Particularly, they could explore how to include these concepts in the education sector, including it in curricula.

Possible topics will be aligned with the UfM R&I Roadmaps on topics related to innovation and sustainability, such as Sustainable Food Systems (in synergy with the UfM-FAO-CIHEAM-PRIMA interinstitutional platform on SFS-MED Platform), renewable energy and Blue Economy (possibly in partnership with the BlueSkills projects). ETF, JRC and other partners will be invited to join a Steering Committee.

➤ Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives

- **BlueSkills.** UfMS will be supporting the UfM-labelled project BlueSkills with a focus on the development of actions connected to internships, entrepreneurship, and science diplomacy. UfM will continue providing knowledge during classes through



lessons held by UfM experts and promoting the project through UfM networks. For 2023, UfM Secretariat will promote the project as a positive example of academia-business connection and applied science diplomacy.

- **Startup Europe MED.** UfMS will strive to support this labelled project within its mandate, by promoting it among its network as required.
- **UfM-EIB University Trainings.** In 2023, UfM Secretariat will continue its partnership with the EIB Institute on providing trainings to Southern Mediterranean Universities under the general headline “The EIB and its role in the EU development cooperation”. The trainings are tailored to the needs of receiving universities and are based on the Memorandum of Understanding between UfM and the European Investment Bank.



1.5. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: REINFORCING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETIES

2023 specific objectives

In line with the UfM Ministerial meetings on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society (Cairo 2017 and Madrid 2022) as well as the Ministerial meetings on Employment and Labour (Marrakech 2022) and Environment and Climate Change (Cairo 2021) the UfM Secretariat strives to promote women's empowerment and gender equality, in terms of rights and opportunities, as an essential asset to foster regional stability and socio-economic development.

In the framework of the 5th Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society (Madrid 2022), the four priority areas set-up in the Cairo Declaration (2017) have been confirmed with a strong focus on strengthening the Women's Economic and Political Empowerment and combatting violence against women and girls in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Moreover, in light of the various crises, including those relating to health, climate change, and more recently emerging needs (food, water and energy security), mainstreaming of gender equality in various actions and policies becomes even more of necessity.

Within these priorities areas, and as contribution to the implementation of the Women Peace and Security agenda¹, countries and stakeholders agreed to in particular consider the specific needs of, for example, women and girls migrants, refugees, women in conflict and post-conflict context, as well as women in rural areas and women with disabilities

The activities of the UfM Secretariat and the outcomes of the UfM strategy on women's empowerment aim to contribute to the implementation of SDG 5: *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*, as well as of SDG 3: *Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages*; SDG 4: *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*; SDG 8: *Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*; SDG 10: *Reduce inequalities and ensure that no one is left behind*; and SDG 16 and 16.1: *Peace justice and strong institutions and reduce all forms of violence*.

¹ The Women, Peace and Security agenda was launched on 31 October 2000 with the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and now includes nine additional Resolutions (1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, 2422, 2467 and 2493). 103 countries have adopted a National Action Plan on WPS (as of August 2022). In 2004 the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) encouraged national-level implementation of UNSCR 1325, the landmark resolution of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, including through National Action Plans (NAP) to implement the four pillars of the resolution. National Action Plans for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 are national-level strategy documents that outline a government's approach and course of action for localizing action on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement>



In 2023, the UfM Secretariat will focus on promoting regional dialogue as well as on concrete projects and initiatives in the field of women empowerment and gender equality through:

Objective: Implementing the priorities set by the Ministerial Declaration 2022

The UfM strategy on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment has been progressively built and structured over the past years in close coordination with the UfM countries and the key stakeholders active in this field in the Euro-Mediterranean region, including international and regional organisations, local authorities, civil society, academia, think tanks, international financial institutions and donors, as well as the private sector. The strategy is implemented through an integrated approach articulated around three pillars, in line with the UfM Methodology of work. (SDG 5)

This objective entails more concretely the support of the UfM to the Regional Dialogue Platform on Women Empowerment for the follow-up of the data gathering and monitoring exercise launched in 2021 in a first set of six out of 20 indicators which led to the publication in 2022 of the 2nd UfM Progress Report on Gender Equality . The monitoring exercise will allow assessing the gaps between law and practices in the thematic areas identified by the Ministerial Declaration 2022 and proposing concrete and corrective measures as well as recommendations to improve the implementation of the Ministerial' s priorities .

In 2023 the UfM Secretariat aims to:

• Implement the Ministerial Follow-up mechanism on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society

- Setting up and coordination of the UfM Regional dialogue meetings (2 meetings) and preparatory Working Groups meetings (4) in charge of the follow-up of monitoring exercise launched in 2021;
- Drafting a coordinated programme on capacity building (CB) in close cooperation with the EU Programme MEDSTAT V.
- Drafting and monitoring the implementation of the Road Map for Action 2023-2025 foreseen by the Ministerial Declaration 2022

• Fostering women's economic participation:

- Organising the 2023 Women Business Forum edition to promote women entrepreneurship and business development., The Women Business Forum has the objective to provide a platform for dialogue, exchange of experience and



networking around business and investment opportunities for women-owned and women-led-businesses from both shores of the Mediterranean. (SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 8 and SDG 10). The specific focus of the event will be identified as a result of a needs' analysis to be launched in the first quarter of 2023. Possible synergies with the DG NEAR Programme on Women economic empowerment focused on access to finance will be further assessed.

- Setting up a regional structured network with the main goal to capitalize on the current initiatives on women entrepreneurship: *an UfM Community of Practices (CoPs) specifically focused on the challenges of the Women entrepreneurship;*
- Releasing one Comparative analysis of tools and constraints to access to innovative finance solutions for women entrepreneurs in the MENA region. The analysis will be carried out in close cooperation with the Economic Development Division in order to embed also the trade and investment areas.
- Supporting training activities with a specific focus on Women entrepreneurs in Technology
- Developing and delivering 2 training initiatives on digitalization (e-commerce, digital platforms, fintech);
- Organising and promoting one thematic webinar on Gender perspective in the social entrepreneurship and one on Gender budgeting for labour market in the MENA Region;

• **Combating violence against women and girls (VAWG)**

- Organising networking and one capacity building activity with the support of projects' promoters such as the Euromed Feminist Initiative (EFI), WHO as well as experts from other networks such as the WAVE Network (Women Against Violence Europe) in the UfM regional dialogue platform on women empowerment. (SDGs 3 and 16).

- Follow-up of the Action plan of the MoU with **WHO**, on women's access to health, and on preventing VAWG. The Action plan will include the possibility to use WHO gender data, and the development of joint regional projects (among other actions). (SDG 3). By implementing the joint UfM-WHO Action plan, this will support UfM countries to develop national strategies to strengthen women access to health and to prevent violence against women and girls. (SDGs 3 and 16). The implementation of the Action Plan will foresee for the relevant complementarities with the European Commission policy framework and more in particular with the current legislative proposal on Violence against women.²

• **Women, Peace and Security Agenda**

² Proposal for a DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on combating violence against women and domestic violence COM/2022/105 final



- Support the implementation and the monitoring of Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan (NAP) as stipulated by the UfM Cairo Declaration 2017. As Focal Point of the WPS network, the UfM will join the exchange of practices among the MENA countries to overcome the challenges of the NAP implementation (SG 5 and 16).

Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives

- Setting up and coordinating, with an external support, the UfM Women Community of Practices on the nexus Gender Environment and Climate Change (identifying relevant items, mobilizing actors, coordination meeting, reporting, follow-up actions) which will work as a based knowledge regional platform to exchange of good practices, share data analysis, provide operational recommendations to the policy makers and implementing actors on gender-responsive environmental policies (gender budgeting, access to sustainable finance, impact investment among others).
- Delivering capacity building workshops to support women economic empowerment for a sustainable growth will be outlined (e.g., tackling the mismatching between skills and labour market for women in the green sector, potential for blue-entrepreneurship, gender, and rural transformation). The outlining and delivery of the CB workshops will be coordinated with DG NEAR in order to ensure the synergies with the new Programme on Women economic empowerment expected to be launched in 2023 focusing on financial inclusion and access to finance including for underserved women.
- Releasing one thematic publication (e.g., how to improve data collection on the gender-differentiated impacts of climate change and environmental degradation to inform gender-responsive policies and action)
- Monitoring the implementation of the labelled projects and other initiatives supported by the UfM Secretariat. In line with the recently updated labelling guidelines, periodic reviews of each of the labelled projects will be undertaken to assess their progress.
- Continue working with the promoters whose project activities have been completed in order to work on their sustainability and explore the possibilities of their scaling-up and/or extension to other UfM Member States. Funding availabilities will constitute a key element in this exercise.
- Building on the work that has already been conducted in 2021-2022 in promoting the relevance of the UfMS work on women's empowerment among key regional stakeholders, based on the partnership opportunities explored in the last years, while scaling-up the scope and impact of UfM actions in gender equality and women empowerment through the development of new operational partnerships. In particular:



- Ensuring the follow-up of the exchanges with UNDP, UN Women, European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), League of Arab States, CIHEAM, Anna Lindh Foundation, Euro Med Feminist Initiative, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), European Training Foundation (ETF) and DG ESTAT on their possible support to the UfM reporting exercise on gender data both in terms of data providers as well as technical assistance for the capacity building at country level.
- Working on the possible development of specific initiatives focusing on women in rural areas and food security in the context of post- Covid-19 pandemic in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and CIHEAM
- Ensuring the follow-up of the technical exchanges with the “UfM Regional Platform on Employment and Labour” to check and explore the possible synergies between the two monitoring mechanisms currently in place on Gender and Employment.
- Boosting women entrepreneurship through science. In partnership with the Euromed University of Fès, meetings and trainings could be promoted in the field of Women entrepreneurship in STEM/Artificial Intelligence. (See also Higher Education and Research Section)
- Ensuring the follow-up of the technical exchanges with the UfM Blue Economy and the Med Sustainable Food System Platforms on gender dimension.
- Ensuring the follow up of the drafting work carried out in the framework of the UfM report on Towards a UfM Strategy on VET and High Education (2022) in order to ensure the gender perspective will be taken on board. (See the Higher Education and Research Chapter)
- Monitoring the implementation of the partnership agreement with SIDA in the field of gender equality and women’s empowerment (SDG 5) and the preparation of the Work Programme 2024.
- Cooperation with UNIDO to launch a phase III of the UNIDO’s pilot project "Promoting Women Empowerment for Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development in the MENA region – which will close its Phase II in December 2022. The future programme will envisage the launching of regional incubation online programme for early stage Start-up in several value chains included the green and blue economies. The programme will be based on the experience of UNIDO IDEA APP programme launched already in 9 countries included Jordan and Tunisia. The phase III will be implemented in close cooperation with DG NEAR in order to create synergies with the new Programme on Women economic empowerment expected to be launched in 2023.
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- Monitoring the implementation of the ONCE pilot project in Morocco on promoting employment for women and youth with disabilities, funded by AECID. The project



aims at supporting skills' development and job integration for women and youth with disabilities and to overcome social inequalities. In the agreement with AECID, following the implementation of this pilot project it is foreseen to extend the project to other UfM countries provided that funds are available. (SDGs 8 and 10).

- Coordinating the fundraising phase and monitoring the implementation of WHO project on preventing violence against women labelled in 2020. This regional project aims to support countries in improving their strategies of response against violence against women and girls. (SDGs 3 and 16).

The monitoring of the labelled projects could also foresee project visits if the Covid-19 pandemic situation permits.

- Technical Expertise

A. Setting up technical assistance to support the UfM Secretariat in the following main areas of activities:

- 1) collecting and analyzing country and partners' data as outcomes of the follow-up of the reporting exercise launched in 2021;
- 2) monitoring the implementation of the Rod Map foreseen by the Ministerial Declaration 2022;
co-ordinating with all the stakeholders for the Regional Dialogue platform and Ad-Working group Meetings
- 4) developing capacity building actions for the UfM Member states in specific areas related to the implementation of the Ministerial follow-up mechanism (reporting, gender data production, statistics analysis, using indicators...).



1.6. YOUTH: EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE AS ACTORS FOR CHANGE

The UfM Roadmap, centered on youth's potential for stability and development, mandates the UfM to launch "A Positive Agenda for Youth". Bearing in mind that the future of the Mediterranean region relies on the inclusion of its youth, the UfM has placed young people at the heart of its action, focusing on empowering and engaging them as full partners in its activities and, more generally, in areas of regional priority, with a view to unleash their potential as agents for change.

Indeed, the UfM considers Youth as a transversal, cross-cutting and ubiquitous component of every Mediterranean framework, be it in terms of challenges or opportunities.

In addition to the fact that Youth-related targets fall under several UN SDGs, the action of the UfM emanates from two seminar reference documents (*UfM 2017 roadmap & the UfM Youth Strategy 2030*) that define its mandate on Youth and the high importance it gives to their full integration, empowerment, and effective social and economic participation.

"The Secretariat will also ensure that the youth dimension is effectively mainstreamed in the main UfM activities. Given the variety of potential actions in favour of youth, the Secretariat will facilitate exchange of best practices, leadership, and capacity-building. It will contribute to the preparation of regional and international youth processes related to the Mediterranean Region"

(UfM Roadmap: An action-driven organization with a common ambition – Barcelona, 23 January 2017).

"The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) recognizes that young people are a source of creativity, innovation, and positive change. If an enabling environment is provided to facilitate their full participation in all aspects of society, young people can play an important role in stimulating development, growth, societal wellbeing, as well as in fostering regional cooperation and integration."

(UfM Youth Strategy 2030).

- The UfM activities will aim to support the power to act and mobilize of youth people, considering that in addition to bringing fresh perspectives, they have direct knowledge of and insights into issues and a better understanding to the problems they face and can, then, offer new ideas and alternative solutions.
- The UfM considers that young people should not only be mere beneficiaries of the 2030 UfM Youth Strategy, but rather be active architects in its implementation through a concrete involvement in its processes and frameworks. Thus, the Strategy will closely work with Youth-led organizations and networks that contribute to the development of skills and leadership.

In 2023, the UfM will continue focusing on regional integration, bearing in mind that the future of the Mediterranean region will be shaped through the inclusion of its youth.



With respect to the youth dimension, the UfM underscores its complementarity with the European Commission in its overall support for the MENA region. In this context, reference is made to the upcoming new programme 'Young Mediterranean Voices'. Led by the Anna Lindt Foundation (ALF), this programme seeks to support the cooperative engagement of citizens of the two shores of the Mediterranean in public affairs, political participation as well as local and regional transformative initiatives, targeting young women and men, whilst empowering them to assume an active and visible role in addressing social challenges with intercultural values and principles. Synergies and potential complementarities will be sought between the programme and the UfMS youth activities for 2023, notably the launch of the working group on Youth following the adoption of the UfM Youth Strategy 2030.

2023 specific objectives

Objective: Translating the UfM Youth Strategy 2030 into a targeted Action Plan

➤ Promoting Regional Dialogue

UfM Youth Strategy

- The UfM Youth Strategy 2030: Euro-Mediterranean Youth towards a Common Goal', is a combination of a clear vision, concrete actions, realistic ambitions and good practices. This Strategy has achieved the great objective of bringing together 42 Member States with different horizons to agree on a common Strategy that reflects the emergency to act in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
- The strategy a concrete response to urgent Youth-Mediterranean needs and obstacles that prevent them from gaining full access to their inherent potential as agents of positive change towards securing a human and sustainable development, hence towards their empowerment.
- Focusing on priorities that fall under the UfM Mandate, the Strategy provides a vision to support the power to act and mobilize of youth, through proposing "Solutions for youth, by youth".
- This strategy aims to contribute to and support the achievement of the objectives of all international and regional strategies of the UfM Partners (*the United Nations' Youth Strategy, the European Union Youth Strategy, the Council of Europe's Youth Sector Strategy, Cairo's Ministerial Declaration on*



Strengthening the role of Women in Society and Anna Lindh Foundation's strategy Working Together Towards 2025...)

- More concretely, the 2030 UfM Youth strategy identifies human development and sustainable development as the two necessary dimensions for the inclusion of Youth and their full participation in the region.
- Based on the Strategy adopted by the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) in 2021, the UfM Secretariat will establish the very first Youth Working Group on Youth with the National Focal Points Network.
- The Working Group on Youth will cover the six following priority areas identified by the Strategy:
 1. Climate and Energy: Actions will focus on raising awareness among young people about climate change and energy issues and by involving them in the promotion and adoption of sustainable behaviours.
 2. Environment and Water: Actions will focus on effective local solutions that provide the necessary skills to integrate the green and circular economy and to water management where the role of women is crucial.
 3. Urban and rural development: Actions will focus on providing the necessary support to existing platforms working to reduce the negative impact of urban and rural displacement on young people.
 4. Economic development: Actions will focus on promoting innovative youth and female entrepreneurship, facilitating access to financial support for project leaders and raising awareness of the importance of the jobs of the future.
 5. Education and training: Actions will focus on supporting the development of skills, access to information, the reduction of inequalities and the introduction to communication and digital technologies. Education and training adapted to young girls' needs will be equally analysed.
 6. Social inclusion and participation: Actions will focus on enhancing youth participation in gender equality initiatives, on reducing cultural gaps, actions to fight racism and extremist discourses.
- Once set-up, the Working Group on Youth will gather, to discuss and draft the Youth Action Plan to start implementing the Youth Strategy on a regional level. The WG will set an annual calendar for the organization of its meetings. It is foreseen that the WG meets quarterly (once every 3 months). On the 4 WG meetings, two will be physical, and two will be virtual. The gender-balanced composition of the WG will be ensured.



- Within these six (6) priorities areas discussed within one Working Group on Youth, the UfM will engage and advocate for expanded and meaningful youth participation in intergovernmental fora at the regional level, particularly those related to the SDGs, including through extensive and streamlined support to youth delegates and representatives.
- The conception as well as the implementation of the Youth Action Plan calls for a stronger implication. To this end, the Division will need to be strengthened by means of technical assistance.
- The Action Plan will be presented to the UfM Member States as a Policy Document recommendations.

➤ **Regional Activities:**

- Organizing during the second half of 2023, the 3rd UfM Youth Forum, during which the UfM Action Plan on Youth will be presented.
- Participating in the Youth World Forum, organized annually in Egypt.
- Identifying new partners from the Euro Mediterranean civil society (DELTA Association) and reinforcing cooperation with our current partners (*ALF, North South Centre of the Council of Europe, CMI, OECD, UNFPA, UNDP, UNIDO, Injuve, FEMISE, NTA Egypt etc.*), by co-organizing events targeting youth, one physical, and another virtual.
- Promoting UfM activities in the Youth sector by participating in, and contributing to, partners' or potential partners' events on youth, by co-organizing with them, planned side-events or sessions in the context of major events.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- Ensuring the mainstreaming of the Youth perspective in UfM activities, as well as the internal collaboration between the UfM Secretariat's divisions on youth-related issues.
- Organizing UfM Youth Model(s) with the UfM labelled Universities: The Euro-Med University of Fes of Morocco and The Euro-Mediterranean University of Slovenia. The event is supposed to be a simulation of UfM Ministerial Conferences.
- Identifying and promoting strategic projects/initiatives focused on enabling youth empowerment in the region, including youth labs on youth policies as well as other youth related issues.



1.7. SOCIAL INCLUSION: PREPARATORY PHASE TOWARDS A EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PLATFORM FOR THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Context and policy framework

Persons with disabilities represent an estimated 1 billion people, or 15% of the world's total population, and a majority lives in low- and middle-income countries. Persons with disabilities face pervasive **inequalities and discriminations in the enjoyment of all their economic and social rights**, such as their right to education, employment, social protection or health. Persons with disabilities are 30% less likely to complete primary education as compared to persons without disabilities, even in countries where primary completion is low; children with disabilities are largely excluded from education, or access subpar education in segregated settings, which deprive them of opportunities to be included in society and acquire employable skills. There is disproportionately low representation of persons with disabilities in the global labour market. Moreover, it is more difficult for persons with disabilities to access health care, including rehabilitation and sexual and reproductive health services. This exclusion has a significant cost for individuals and households as well as for societies: economic losses related to the exclusion of persons with disabilities from the labour force range from 3 to 7% of gross domestic product (GDP)³. The **COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these conditions**, amplifying inequalities and with a devastating impact on persons with disabilities, particularly on women with disabilities and other underrepresented groups.

At the level of the European Union, the 2021-2030 Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities⁴ is the backbone of the Union's action for disability rights in internal and external action, in line with the provisions of the UN CRPD. In addition, recent EU-funded initiatives such as "Bridging the Gap – Inclusive Policies and Services for Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities" (implemented by a consortium of MS lead by Spain) have shed lights on the potential for developing a comprehensive EU policy for inclusion in external action, as also reinforced in the EU's commitments at the recent 2022 GDS and in the mapping and planning exercises of the EU Delegations.

³ Backup, S. 2009. [The price of exclusion: The economic consequences of excluding people with disabilities from the world of work](#), (ILO)

⁴ *The Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 adopted on 03 March 2021 intends to tackle the diverse challenges that persons with disabilities face. It aims to progress on all areas of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, both at EU and Member State level. The goal is to ensure that persons with disabilities in Europe, regardless of their sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age or sexual orientation: enjoy their human rights, have equal opportunities, have equal access to participate in society and economy, are able to decide where, how and with whom they live, can move freely in the EU regardless of their support needs, no longer experience discrimination.*



In the Euro-Med region, Mediterranean Europe UfM's MS possess a diverse range of experience and challenges in the implementation of disability rights, oftentimes in line with those of other EU countries. On the contrary, according to a 2014 study commissioned by the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)⁵, there are no reliable, up-to-date statistics on disability across the MENA region. Existing data are based on projections, for example using the WHO/World Bank average prevalence rates, on country census figures or on sample surveys. And although the majority of MENA countries have included articles on disability in their constitutions and oftentimes in legislations, segregation and violations of the human rights of persons with disabilities still evidently persist. According to UN ESCWA, persons with disabilities in the Arab world “are one of the most marginalized and excluded population groups. They are often not visible in public life, as the social and physical environments remain inaccessible, and they are disproportionately affected by crises and disasters. Reporting on the ongoing violent conflicts across the region is largely silent on the plight of persons with disabilities, who are unable to run away from destruction, unaware of dangers facing them, or even left behind by their families”⁶.

Despite an overall dire scenario, significant initiatives have recently seen the light, including advancements in the League of Arab States' policies for inclusion (having as well proposed to host a Conference on disability in the Euro-Mediterranean in 2023), and the recent announcement of Jordan's co-chair of the **2025 Global Disability Summit**, the world's largest and most important event on disability matters. Last but not least, the main regional umbrella federations of organization of persons with disabilities, the European Disability Forum and the Arab Organization of Persons with Disabilities, are working hand in hand for the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Network of Persons with Disabilities.

As described in the previous paragraphs, a need for conceptualising a Euro-Mediterranean Platform for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities building on the current momentum for disability inclusion in international cooperation and on existing initiatives has clearly emerged in the region. **During the “1st Conference on Disability and Social Inclusion in the Mediterranean”**, co-organised by the UfM and Spain's ONCE Social Group on 26-27 January 2022, the UfM was expressly requested by the participant institutions and organisations “to set-up a regional dialogue platform between the national governments and relevant organizations of persons with disabilities in order to agree on a regional agenda on disability”.

⁵ Disability Rights in the Middle East and Northern Africa, SIDA, 2014 - <https://cdn.sida.se/app/uploads/2021/05/10142325/rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-mena.pdf>

⁶ Social Protection for Persons with Disabilities in Arab Countries, ESCWA, 2017 - <https://socialprotection.org/discover/publications/social-protection-persons-disabilities-arab-countries>



At the same time, the willingness to advance towards an initiative of such kind is counterbalanced by the lack of initial knowledge, baseline, and dataset by the UfM Secretariat, as well as by other regional and national organizations. In turn, the viability of such Programme shall be assessed following an initial scoping phase to be supported by an expert in disability-inclusive programming of an estimated duration of 12 months. The results of this exercise will be presented in the framework of a dedicated online event. The activities foreseen are the following one:

- *One preliminary report on disability data and evidence gaps in the Mediterranean region to inform the future baselines (desk research, official publications, grey literature, UN/EU/national reports, etc.)*
- *Consultation with experts and key stakeholders*
- *One preliminary report analysing the main priorities of UfM MS and regional/national OPDs to be possibly addressed by the future Euro-Mediterranean Platform for social inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities*
- *Comparison/matching with the identified data and gap mapping*
- *Participation of the UfM in at least 3 major regional/ global events to present and discuss the preliminary findings of the initiative*

The analysis here-above mentioned will devote a specific focus on the nexus between gender and disability, and its outcome will contribute to a Roadmap for the Implementation of the Ministerial when it refers to social inclusion of women with disabilities.

The data gathering exercise will also be presented in the framework of the next EuroMed Conference on Disability that the League of Arab States will be organise in the first semester 2023 in Cairo. The MoU with the LAS signed in 2022 foresee a specific area of Cooperation on Disability.

This 12-month initiative combines **three streams of work** (data and gap mapping, prioritization, sensitisation and awareness raising) **across three levels of action** (national, regional, global) to generate the necessary knowledge and interest around a possible future programme for the rights of persons with disabilities in the Euro-Mediterranean region.



SECOND PART: STRENGTHENING REGIONAL INTEGRATION THROUGH CONNECTIVITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



2.1. TRANSPORT: Facilitating transport connectivity and mobility

At the 2nd UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport held in Cairo on 3rd October 2022, Ministers renewed the UfM objectives in the sector, building on the progress achieved since 2013, and reaffirmed the continued collective political support to developing a safe, secure, sustainable, efficient and connected transport system based on harmonized transport rules and standards, as well as an integrated multimodal connectivity network in the Mediterranean.

The UfM Roadmap for Action of 2017, recalled by UfM Ministers at their declaration in Cairo, acknowledges that the development of infrastructure networks acts as a multiplier effect on regional integration and has a direct impact on economic growth and trade and reiterates the UfM's commitment to trans-Mediterranean infrastructure connectivity, as well as to continue developing structuring projects with a long-term impact, strengthening regulatory reform and convergence between Member States.

UfM Ministers also stressed the importance of the mobilisation of all the available funds, including EU instruments and support by the European Investment Bank as well as other European and international financial institutions, in a coordinated manner to support the implementation of the connectivity network in the Mediterranean. To this aim, Ministers supported the launch of a reflection on how to involve all relevant IFIs in the implementation stage of the new Regional Transport Action Plan (RTAP) for the Mediterranean region for the 2021-2027 period. Additionally, Ministers jointly decided to mandate the UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity to monitor the implementation of RTAP 2021-2027.

In tandem with the UN Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs by 2030, the UfM Secretariat will continue contributing to the achievement of SDG 9 *“Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”*, SDG 13 *“Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”*, as well as SDGs 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12 and 14, in view of the cross-cutting role this field has in human and sustainable development. Issues related to gender equality and women empowerment (SDG 5), environment and blue economy (SDGs 3, 14 and 15), energy efficiency (SDG 7) and climate action (SDG 13), in particular, are being integrated and mainstreamed in all the activities of the UfM Secretariat in the transport sector.

2023 specific objectives

More concretely, in 2023, the UfM Secretariat will focus on:

1. Implementing the mandate set out in the 2022 UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport, under the guidance of the UfM Co-presidency, and in close consultation and cooperation with the European Commission, while ensuring follow up, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of RTAP 2021-2027, at the level of the UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity and its Thematic Working Groups.



2. Co-organizing joint activities with relevant IGOs and NGOs, building on established and consolidated UfM partnerships, also participating in and contributing to significant events at regional and global level.
3. Building strategic partnerships with other key international stakeholders with a view to engaging with them in joint activities including, among others, through their participation in the UfM regional policy dialogue on transport and the preparation of regional projects.
4. Reinforcing women's leadership as well the need for dedicated investments in women's skills in the transport sector, which will be integrated as relevant dimension in the joint initiatives to ensure that women have access to transport professions and that they can participate effectively in the planning and implementation of strategies and policies as well as in the management and operation of transport networks and services.

Objective one: Implementing the mandate set out in the 2022 UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport.

➤ Promoting Regional Dialogue

- Organizing, in coordination with the UfM Co-presidency, one or two rounds of meetings of the UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity and its Thematic Working Groups (WGs) on Land, Air and Maritime Transport and Logistics to implement the mandate set out in the 2022 UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport, in particular by following up, taking stock and monitoring the implementation of RTAP 2021-2027.

Activities under the UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity and its thematic WGs should continue to promote mutual cooperation, reforms, harmonisation, and approximation of regulations with European and international standards in all transport sectors (**maritime, civil aviation, road, railway and urban transport**) as regards efficiency, safety, security, and environmental protection as well as simplification and digitalisation. This work should feed into all **national transport strategies**. The UfM Regional Platform meetings will aim also at **sharing best practices and cross-border cooperation** among all UfM Member States and steering current **transport-related contemporary transitions** (energy transition, digitalisation, climate resilience, environmental protection, social inclusion, etc.). Work will also focus on the establishment of an integrated, multimodal **Euro-Mediterranean transport network** with a view to facilitating trade and the movement of people, as a condition for economic growth and integration in the region.

- Convening one or two meetings of the UfM-IFIs Transport Finance Committee to discuss the UfM pipeline of projects emerging in relation to the new regional action plan (RTAP 2021-2027). The meetings will provide an opportunity for involving International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and donors within the framework of the UfM governance structure. Additionally, in view of the implementation phase of the RTAP 2021-2017 the meetings will allow to present the RTAP to IFIs and, conversely, will allow UfM Members States to know about the funding programmes put in place by IFIs in relation to the different actions of RTAP 2021-2027 and their financing needs.



- Organizing two or three workshops addressing specific action of RTAP 2021-2027.

Workshops will also be open to the participation of IGOs, NGOs and other key stakeholders, including academia and private sector, and will aim to discuss and develop recommendations related to the implementation of specific action within the new regional transport action plan, in particular those addressing Motorways of the Sea, ports as energy hubs, regulatory reform and convergence, sustainable urban transport and road safety. Some workshops might eventually be co-organised with partner organisations.

Meetings and workshops are foreseen to be held in-person, or in hybrid format as the second option, but could eventually be organized online, depending on the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Contributing, in technical capacity, to the Steering Committee meetings of the ongoing regional Technical Assistance (TA) projects financed by the European Commission in the fields of maritime transport (SAFEMED), road and urban transport (Euromed Transport Support Project – ETSP), and air transport (Euromed Aviation), as well as any new initiative including space-based cooperation in order to ensure that the Projects contribute to the implementation of the new RTAP.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

The UfM Secretariat will continue monitoring and supporting, on a regional level, the implementation of the UfM-labelled projects, while updating and developing the overall project pipeline, in consultation and cooperation with UfM Member States and IFIs, to enhance regional Transport connectivity under the new regional transport action plan, *inter alia*, by:

- Monitoring and following up on the developments regarding the implementation of the below-mentioned UfM-labelled transport projects, while encouraging key and relevant IFIs, as well as international development cooperation agencies, to consider supporting those projects within the UfM governance set-up.
 - ✓ Completion of the Central Section of the Trans-Maghreb Motorway Axis Project
 - ✓ Jordan National Railway Project (JNRP)
 - ✓ TransLogMED Project

The UfM-IFIs Transport Finance Committee will continue monitoring the progress made in the implementation of the UfM-labelled regional projects with a view to updating and developing the project pipeline.

Objective two: Co-organizing joint activities with relevant IGOs and NGOs, building on established and consolidated UfM partnerships, as well as participating in and contributing to significant events at regional and global level towards this end.

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- Contributing to the 2023 Summit of the International Transport Forum (ITF/OECD) on “Transport Enabling Sustainable Economies” (24-26 May 2023, Leipzig, Germany), as well as in the ITF Consultation Day with International Organizations (January 2023,



Paris, France), for the preparation of the Summit. Known as the “Davos of Transport”, the Annual ITF Summit is the premier global transport policy event. It gathers transport ministers from around the world, key international organizations, IFIs, and the private sector, as well as parliamentarians and academics.

- Co-organizing with ITF-OECD a side event back-to-back with the Summit to present the new RTAP to key international stakeholders and explore collaboration opportunities in view of its implementation.
- Co-organizing the 12th edition of the MARLOG International Conference on Maritime Transport and Logistics titled “Sustainable and Innovative Technologies: Towards a Resilient Future”, which will take place on 12-14 March 2023 in Alexandria, Egypt.
- Participating in the UITP⁷ Global Public Transport Summit, which will be taking place from 4-7 June 2023 in Barcelona, Spain, and co-organizing a side event focusing on best practices and success stories on sustainable urban mobility in the Mediterranean region. The UITP Global Public Transport Summit is the world’s leading event dedicated to sustainable urban mobility. It brings together public transport operators and authorities from all transport modes, policy decision makers, research institutes and the public transport supply and service industry, as well as exhibitors from across the globe.
- Encouraging UfM Countries participation in CIVITAS network and promotion of the measures of the EU Action Plan on urban mobility as well as at the events organized by the Urban Mobility Observatory (ELTIS), notably in events to be held in 2023 (dates to be confirmed) similar to the Urban Mobility Days 2022 Conference, which took place in Brno, Czech Republic, between 20-22 September 2022, that facilitate the exchange of information, knowledge and experience in the field of sustainable urban mobility in Europe and addresses individuals working in transport as well as in related disciplines, including urban and regional development, health, energy and environmental sciences.
- Participating in the 2023 World Ports Conference – WPC (*date TBC*, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates), organized by the International Association of Ports and Harbours (IAPH). WPC is the premier world-class event assessing the indispensable role of ports in global maritime trade, and bringing together key international stakeholders in the sector for learning, information sharing, networking and collaboration. The 2023 edition of WPC will cover topics such as hinterland connectivity & multimodal logistics, greenfield port project and the effect of special economic zones on the port growth, maritime transport networks and port innovation, evolution of global shipping industry & shipping routes, local maritime transformation and opportunities to strengthen cooperation and sustainability among ports. The conference will bring together government officials, operators and associations involved or interested in the field of ports, logistics, and maritime.

⁷ The UITP is the International Association of Public Transport.



- Encouraging UfM Countries participation in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Transport Intergovernmental bodies, in Geneva, Switzerland, and where appropriate, the participation of the UfM Secretariat.
- Contributing to the 36th Session of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe – UNECE (*date TBC in September 2023, Geneva, Switzerland*), under the agenda point “Development of transport networks and/or links: (e) Transport in the Mediterranean Region”.
- Participating, with observer status, in the Expert Group meetings of the GTMO 5+5 Policy Dialogue on Transport (*dates and venues TBC*), as well as, in the next GTMO 5+5 Ministerial Conference which will be held in Libya (*location and date tbc*).
- Participating in the 2023 edition of the Plan for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) Week (*date and venue TBC*). The PIDA Week is the flagship advocacy event for the PIDA programme. It provides an opportunity for taking stock of progress in PIDA’s implementation, and particularly, for joining efforts to mobilize finance needed for key PIDA projects. The event brings together delegates from a wide range of stakeholders involved in the implementation of PIDA, including the African Union Commission (AUC), the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NEPAD Agency), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Regional Economic Communities, Member States, development partners, financial Institutions, private sector actors and financiers, consulting firms, banks, civil society, academia and members of the media.
- Continuing to liaise with and participate in the Africa-Europe Transport and Connectivity Task Force, to follow up work on the Task Force’s Final Report “Towards an enhanced Africa-EU Cooperation on Transport and Connectivity” and contribute to the discussions on a future EU-Africa Action Plan on Transport Connectivity, building upon the recommendations of the report.

Objective three: Building strategic partnerships with other key international stakeholders with a view to engaging with them in joint activities including, among others, through participation in major events, the UfM regional policy dialogue on Transport and the preparation of regional projects.

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- Consolidating/building strategic partnerships with other key international stakeholders in the transport sector with a view to engaging with them in:
 - ✓ The UfM policy dialogue structure on transport connectivity and mobility; and in
 - ✓ The development of joint activities connected either directly to the transport field, or to cross-cutting issues, such as gender mainstreaming, climate change and environment, disaster risk prevention and management etc., particularly to help mobilize investment in sustainable transport infrastructure and services.

Coordination meetings will be held with key stakeholders to better structure joint activities and to agree on common action plans, particularly with ITF/OECD, the *Union Internationale des Transports Publics* (UITP), the International Association of Ports and



Harbors (IAPH) and the MEDports Association, UNCTAD, IMO, UNECE, the African Union Commission (AUC), *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ), *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD) and the Centre for Mediterranean Integration (CMI), building on the exchanges made with these entities in previous years.

Participation in / co-organization of other possible activities (dates and venues TBC) with relevant IGOs, NGOs, IFIs, international donors and the private sector, including UNCTAD, UN DESA, UNECE, UITP, MEDports Association, EIB, GIZ, etc., particularly to help ensure that gender mainstreaming, energy efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster risk prevention and management, as well as sustainable financing of transport infrastructure and services, are promoted in the preparation, design and implementation of projects of common interest in the Transport sector.

Participation in and contribution to possible major events to be organized by key IGOs and NGOs to pave the way for the upcoming in-depth reviews, amongst others, of SDG 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals) in the run-up to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) to be held in July 2023 under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).



2.2. URBAN DEVELOPMENT: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable through integrated, science-led and evidence-based, and participatory urban planning and implementation

Rapid urbanization and climate threats to our ecosystem are among the top challenges faced by the world today. These problems create daily stress for our cities and human settlements. At the same time, cities provide opportunities to deliver the 2030 Global Agenda commitments and achieve national climate targets.

If managed and planned sustainably and equitably, cities offer solutions to address social and environmental issues. The UfM Urban Agenda translates into the UfM region the New Urban Agenda, adopted at Habitat III in Quito in 2016, a global framework to help governments manage rapid urbanization and develop sustainable solutions to address environmental and social problems and deliver targets set in the 2030 Global Agenda.

Drawing on the Second UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Urban Development (2017) and the UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040 and its Housing Action Plan, the UfM Secretariat's work in the area of Urban Development focuses on further supporting regional and sub-regional initiatives to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable through integrated, science-led and evidence-based, and participatory urban planning and implementation.

The UfM Secretariat will notably contribute in the area of Urban Development to the implementation of SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Questions related to gender equality and women empowerment (SDG 5), the environment (SDG 15) and climate action (SDG 13) will be mainstreamed throughout the UfM Secretariat action in this priority area.

2023 specific objectives

In 2023, the UfM Secretariat will focus on:

- Preparing the Third UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development
- Consolidating the implementation process of the actions in the UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040 and its Housing Action Plan
- Developing and consolidating strategic partnerships with global and regional organizations and institutions
- The gender perspective will be embedded in the development of the action plans as well as in the outlining of the joint initiatives described below: gender perspective when designing housing units and safe and adapted public urban spaces for women are key priorities for a sustainable urban development in UfM countries and an increased participation and leadership of women in urban planning will be also targeted by the different initiatives.

Objective one: Preparing the Third UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development

➤ Promote Regional Dialogue

The following regional dialogue activities are planned to be organized in the run-up to and during the Ministerial Conference:



Third Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development to be held in Zadar (Croatia) in May 2023

- The UfM Secretariat will engage actively in supporting the UfM Co-Presidencies in the preparation for the envisaged Third UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development taking place in 2023, including for the drafting and consultation of the declaration, as well as for organising the content and logistics of the meeting itself.
- Ad hoc Senior Officials’ Meetings on Sustainable Urban Development will be organized online to finalize the draft Declaration of the upcoming Ministerial Conference if need be.

A high-level policy conference, back-to-back with the Ministerial Conference

- It will be explored the possibility of organizing a UfM Policy Conference as part of the Third UfM Ministerial Sustainable Urban Development, , open to participation from the UfM ecosystem (civil society, Academia, international organizations, think tanks, etc) to make more value of the presence of the Ministers who would join the Ministerial not only for the official closed Ministerial Meeting, but also to interact with UfM stakeholders .
- Such an event (Policy Conference) allows direct interaction between the participants (including media representatives and press) and the panelists (who also include Ministers), a matter which creates a high-level dialogue and adds value to the visibility of the Ministerial in general.

Objective two: Kick-starting the implementation process of the actions in the UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040 and its Housing Action Plan

➤ Promote Regional Dialogue

- The UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Urban Development will be convened to follow up on the mandate of the last Ministerial Conference and review the tasks of the UfM Working Groups (WGs) accordingly.
- The UfM Thematic Working Groups on “Urban Transformation” and “Affordable and Sustainable Housing”, the UfM Permanent Working Group on “Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting Systems on Sustainable Urban Development”, as well as the UfM-IFIs Urban Project Committee, will be reconvened in the form of thematic meetings .
- In addition, events, workshops, and capacity-building activities will be organized to support the implementation process of the UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040 and its Housing Action Plan.
- The activities under the different actions framing the action plans are detailed here below:

To promote the design, regional coordination, and cohesion of national urban policies (NUPs), integrated city development strategies (ICDSs), as well as national housing strategies, across the Euro-Mediterranean region

Land Management Instruments for Regulating Coastal Zones



- In order to structure part of the work of the UfM Thematic Working Group on “Urban Transformation” around improving the sustainable management of coastal zones of UfM countries initial contacts have been held with the National Urban Policy Programme, run by the OECD and UN-Habitat, UNEP-MAP, and IUCN, all of them expressing their interest.
- Activities will aim at improving the understanding and the capacity of key stakeholders on how to develop effective policy and legal frameworks for integrated coastal zone management to promote the adoption of more effective urban policy and urban legal-regulatory instruments are necessary to meet the challenges of coastal sustainability and resilience in the face of climate emergency.
- The final aim is to produce one comparative analysis that will highlight different approaches used by the countries to deal with coastal management.

Role of the National Housing Agencies

- As a response to the expressed interest shown by Montenegro and Albania, one meeting of the UfM Thematic Working Group on Affordable and Sustainable Housing will be structured about the setup and different roles that National Housing Agencies can play. The working group meeting could eventually take place in one of the two countries.

To promote and support planning and design education, and to build capacity in line with the principles and objectives of the UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040 and its Housing Action Plan

2nd gathering of Schools of Architecture and Urban Planning of UfM Member States

- Following the launching of the annual gathering of Schools of Architecture and Urban Planning of UfM Member States held in May 2022 at the UfM Secretariat premises, and following also the follow-up / preparatory meeting expected to take place in Ankara by the end of 2022, the second gathering of Schools of Architecture and Urban Planning of UfM Member States is expected to take place in 2023 to foster cooperation among them. As was the case in 2022, the meeting will be organized with the support of UNESCO, EC DG EAC, and EC DG RESEARCH.

Summer school

- As a result of the discussions launched during the first physical gathering of UfM Schools of Architecture and Urban Planning, a joint summer school will be co-organized, by several of them, targeting one of the priorities highlighted in the UfM Action Plan 2014.

To promote community and stakeholder engagement and co-creation of shared visions for the region. To promote cross-border cooperation and coordination, and exchange of knowledge between local and national planning authorities.

2nd Shiraka Study Visit Citizen Engagement in Urban Development

- Following the first Shiraka Study Visit on Citizen Engagement in Urban Development organized by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a second one will be organized with the same aim, to inspire the participants with innovative projects



in good governance, spatial justice, and resilient and inclusive cities from The Netherlands. Practical examples from The Netherlands will serve as inspiration and motivation for new initiatives on citizen engagement in urban development in the target (UfM Arab) countries.

Traditional building skills in the South Mediterranean region

- The UfM Secretariat will hold a meeting in Tunisia and/or Algeria to raise awareness of traditional building skills in the South Mediterranean region. The Mediterranean area being one of the main touristic destinations, the meeting will propose an approach to cultural heritage based on dialogue and stakeholder cooperation where planning for tourism and heritage management is integrated at a destination level, with cultural assets being valued and protected, with a view to developing sustainable tourism and its consequent jobs opportunities. The meeting will be organized in cooperation with UNESCO.

To promote the conception and implementation of urban and peri-urban infrastructures that support cross-border integration around the region. To improve the region's interoperability for better connectivity, and for better resilience in case of natural disasters or conflict.

2nd meeting of the WG on Urban Transformation on Sustainable Urbanisation through Port City Transformation

- Targeting UfM Focal Points for Urban Transformation participation at the relevant ministries, regional and local governments, port authorities, and representatives of regional stakeholders, the aim of the meetings of the port cities is the enhancement of the dialogue and collaboration between public authorities and port authorities in general and on the co-creation of port cities regeneration projects, the dissemination of best practices in the region, and the identification of concrete urban regeneration and port development project ideas to be replicable and developed into bankable projects. The meeting will be co-organised with MedCities, RETE, AIVP, IAPH and MedPorts.

2nd TAIEX Multi-Regional Workshop on Energy Efficiency in Buildings

- The workshop will be organized seeking the maximum synergy with the MeetMED and the PEEB-MED EC-funded regional projects. Following the first Multi-Regional Workshop hosted by the Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda of Spain in July 2022, this second workshop is expected to be hosted by one of the other two EU countries that were part of the first one (either France or Croatia).
- The aim of the multi-regional Workshop is to present the experience of 3 EU Mediterranean countries (Spain, France, Croatia) on energy renovation in the building sector, and to exchange information with the beneficiary countries about lessons learned and challenges for the future.

Urban Health

- Sustainable solutions will be explored and promoted to rise up to environmental and health challenges of air, soil, noise, and water pollution in human settlements,



in particular, those caused by elevated levels of greenhouse gas emissions in seaport cities. To this end, best practices will be encouraged and showcased.

To establish a results-based, systematic evaluation, monitoring and reporting system in the Euro-Mediterranean region. To establish a system for peer review and monitoring of project design and implementation, through the constitution of a network of partner cities and universities.

UfM Permanent Working Group on Evaluation, Monitoring, and Reporting of Sustainable Urban Development

- The UfM Permanent WG will continue elaborating on available cooperation frameworks, facilitating capacity development for better SDG monitoring, promoting the adoption of common definitions and methodology, and coordination of national statistical systems, with the support of the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) and Joint Research Centre (JRC), as well as EU agencies, such as the Eurostat and ESA (with regard to Earth observation data, tools, and toolboxes).
- Healthy city indicators for human settlements, especially for seaport cities, will be promoted, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) or ISGlobal, for incorporation of those indicators into NUPs and ICDSs, as well as policies applied by seaport authorities with the aim to continue exploring sustainable solutions and environmental and health challenges of air, soil, noise, and water pollution in human settlements.

➤ Promote Regional Projects and Initiatives

To promote the design of integrative strategic projects for cities in the Euro-Mediterranean region in a set of thematic axes of intervention. To implement common frameworks for project management.

- Sustainable, resilient, and integrative urban development initiatives or projects underway in the region, in particular those with the UfM label, will be identified, recognized, and promoted, as appropriate, as examples of tools to reach the agreed objectives of the UfM action plans.
- Efforts will be made towards identifying, recognizing and promoting exemplary regional initiatives or projects underway in the region. Key IFIs, as well as international development cooperation agencies, will be kept abreast of the emerging project ideas and proposals in the UfM project pipeline and encouraged to support bankable projects within the UfM governance set-up.
- Training on funding opportunities for public officials could also be organized under the aegis of the UfM-IFIs Urban Project Committee., .

Objective three: Developing and consolidating strategic partnerships with global and regional organizations and institutions

➤ Promote Regional Dialogue



- The UfM Secretariat will aim to implement this objective as an essential vehicle for mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources, and to engage key regional stakeholders in the implementation of the UfM action plans.
- In this context, the UfM Secretariat will participate in relevant activities of key stakeholders, including, in particular those concerning the European Commission, UN-Habitat, Housing Europe, UCLG, Medcities, OECD, or UNECE among others.
- In addition events will be organized on the margins of the International Social Housing Festival (Barcelona, May 2023) and the Smart city Expo World Congress (Barcelona, Nov 2023)



2.3. ENERGY: Enhancing energy connectivity and sustainable energy supply

The UfM energy-related activities are in line with the global agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), they contribute particularly to the achievement in the Mediterranean region of SDG 7 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all; as well as to SDG 9 Industry Innovation and Infrastructure, SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities and SDG 13 Climate Action. The UfM energy agenda is also aligned with the European Union energy and climate objectives and priorities, namely the European Green Deal. It is as well in line with the promotion of a just energy transition and an inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, taking into consideration the dire consequences of the war in Ukraine on energy aspects in the region. In this framework, the UfMS will pursue:

- **Training and capacitation** of concerned professionals in areas ranging from technical and industrial to financial and regulatory, in cooperation with accredited actors; this is synergically intended also to foster job market access and job creation for the purposes of post-pandemic recovery, regional economic rebalancing, forced migration prevention, with a priority outlook on bridging gender gaps;
- Sustain the **development of renewable sources (RES)** in the Euro-Med Region and promote the green energy transition;
- Fostering **South-South and North-South interconnection** of energy networks, especially but not only electrical networks, with an outlook to the development of clean hydrogen regional network infrastructure and cooperation; noting that
 - a) South-South electric interconnection is intended to provide enough traditional grid back-up to ensure energy security in the transition between fossil to fully deployed renewable sources and entails a complex dialogue and regulatory harmonization involving both public sector and private actors. Lacking such interconnection renewable sources will not reach local market viability and therefore advance at reduced pace with notable losses in economic, technological and labor development,
 - b) North-South interconnection is vital to provide market output for the renewable generation potential of the Euro-Med Region, while enabling several targets of the EU Green Deal; an expected long term co-benefit, given the participatory integration of markets and cascade effect of energy enhanced access on economies, is a multiplier effect on development in the Euro-Med region.
- Fostering of **energy efficiency** both as a form of energy security and as a contribution to enhanced climate ambitions of MENA States to be reflected in NDCs;



- In addition and building up on the actions on energy efficiency on buildings lead by the Urban Development Division (see section 2.2).
- Implementation of **synergies** with UfM lines of action concerning other SDGs, including but not exclusively gender balance, economic recovery, water, food security, employment, urban development

2023 specific objectives

Following the adoption of the UfM Energy Roadmap for Action on February 2022 (and in line with the climate objectives set by the 2021 UfM Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Action), the UfM Secretariat will focus its efforts to implement the mandate of the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Energy.

The main energy related objectives for 2023 will focus on:

1. The implementation and following-up of the Roadmap for Action on energy.
2. Supporting local authorities in their energy transition as well as the promotion of capacity building and a stronger involvement of the private sector.
3. The promotion of flagship initiatives and projects as well as institutional partnerships.

Objective one: The implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Energy and the Roadmap for Action on energy

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

– **Implementation of the UfM Roadmap for Action on Energy**

The Energy Roadmap for Action is to be executed by the UfM Energy Platforms (UfM Regional Electricity Markets (REM) Platform; UfM Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (REEE) Platform; UfM Gas Platform). It is derived from the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Energy, which gave the mandate to work/implement a roadmap for action to implement the recommendations mentioned in it and agreed upon by the member countries. It consists of 17 elements, each with several components and events co-organized by the UfM Secretariat and stakeholders, as well as UfM member states.

The 17 elements are:

1. Envisage to jointly promote the transition to a post Covid-19 sustainable recovery pathway in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement objectives and the ambitions of the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Change;
2. Intend to further develop national integrated energy and climate modelling and scenarios, collaborate on the Mediterranean energy scenarios with the Observatoire Méditerranéen de l'Énergie, and take into consideration the nexus energy-water-food in their outlooks;



3. Intend to review, re-design and implement ambitious roadmaps and targets for energy efficiency in all sectors and policies, including the enforcement of existing legislation, and accounting for national conditions, the development of possible shared incentivizing frameworks for innovative technologies, the removal of regulatory and financial bottlenecks, and support the phasing-out of environmentally and economically harmful subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption;
4. Intend to improve the business environment and the investment climate for sustainable energy supply and demand;
5. Intend to step up public funds and take appropriate actions to attract private investments in sustainable renewables (renewable hydrogen) and in energy efficiency, including through public private partnerships and notably by ensuring sound, stable and predictable regulatory frameworks;
6. Intend to involve local stakeholders, where appropriate and in accordance to relevant national laws, in the development, implementation and monitoring of policies and actions to address energy and climate challenges, and in line with the Global Covenant of Mayors ambitions for the entities who are signatory parties;
7. Express the political intention to further support regulatory and policy measures necessary to achieve regional integration of energy systems and markets in the Euro Mediterranean region, to increase flexibility for accommodating a higher rate of sustainable renewables, to achieve significant economies of scale and to increase security of supply and demand, also by promoting the reinforcement of electricity interconnections at regional and EuroMed level promoting adequate support schemes and streamlining administrative procedures in EuroMediterranean region;
8. Envisage to jointly work to strengthen the regional electricity interconnections, smart grids and digitalization (for which cyber security requirements are an important element), increase electricity exchange, when necessary, and interoperability, harmonize technical operating rules, regulation and electricity pricing methodologies for transmission network taking into account national considerations/concerns;
9. Invite the UfM Member States in collaboration with the Platforms' Secretariats to assess the opportunity of the establishment of sub-regional electricity exchange zones;
10. Envisage to work with national education and research institutions to increase public awareness about energy, climate, mobility and environmental issues, especially with younger generations in their future role as energy prosumers, raise research and education efforts for enterprises, public authorities and citizens and accelerate the behavioral and lifestyle changes required for zero pollution, sustainable, energy and resources-efficient economies and societies;
11. Envisage to foster an exchange of knowledge and capacity building addressed to public institutions and energy agencies;
12. Envisage to collaborate on research and development, innovation and



exchange knowledge on digitalization, due to its fundamental role in supporting the transition towards circular, low emissions, fair, inclusive and resilient and to energy- and resources efficient economies and societies, for instance through improved follow up of the energy production and transformation, transport, distribution and storage;

13. Envisage to promote investments in marine areas for the sustainable exploitation of offshore renewable energies and for the potential multi-use of those areas with other activities at sea, notably with nature protection and fisheries;
14. Intend to support the efforts to reduce fugitive methane emissions linked to fossil fuel production, transport and use, and enhance CO2 emissions' reduction;
15. Envisage to examine the opportunity of a EuroMed Digital Energy Forum, as a collaborative platform to support projects' information exchange and accelerate investments related to sustainable renewable energy projects as well as electricity transmission and distribution infrastructures in the region;
16. Invite the UfM co-Presidency in collaboration with the Platforms' Secretariats to continue coordinating the work of the three UfM Energy Platforms, including also where relevant other platforms of the UfM such as Research and Innovation, involving the relevant actors in the manner set out in the working guidelines;
17. Express their strong support for the UfM Energy Platforms, and invite the UfM Energy Platforms to elaborate a draft Roadmap for Action in line with the objectives of this Declaration and after adoption, support its implementation.

A specific focus will be given to the gender perspective in Energy , and in particular the identification of challenges and opportunities of gender empowerment in the energy transition, the role of renewable energy technologies in addressing the existing gaps, the policy recommendations to integrate gender mainstreaming into renewable energy strategies, plans, and programs and employment opportunities for women in the energy sector.

- **Organization of Workshops on:**

- 1) Implementation of Roadmap for Action on Energy
- 2) Capacity building on Energy modelling tools, methodologies and best practices
- 3) Collaboration and exchange between spacial agencies on methane and flaring emissions

- **Annual meeting of the UfM Energy Platforms**

Under the framework of the 2021 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Energy, the annual meeting of the UfM Energy Platforms will follow up on the Roadmap for Action and the activities in order to implement it. The annual work program of each of the 3 UfM Energy



Platforms (UfM Regional Electricity Markets (REM) Platform; UfM Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (REEE) Platform; UfM Gas Platform), in line with the mandate of the Declaration and the Roadmap for Action, will be presented and discussed. Taking into account the new phase established by the 2021 Ministerial, if other gatherings of the platforms are needed, they will be organized (either physical or online).

- **Management of the UfM REM and REEE Platforms' websites**

The websites dedicated to the UfM REM and REEE Platforms (and managed by the UfM Secretariat in liaison with the main stakeholders of the platforms) have the purpose to gather all the most relevant information regarding the reports, activities and achievements made to keep the members of the UfM Energy Platforms punctually informed.

The two-dedicated websites for the UfM REM Platform and the UfM REEE Platform will be kept updated in line with the advancements and achievements implemented.

Objective two: To support local authorities in their energy transition as well as the promotion of capacity building and a stronger involvement of the private sector

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- **Peer-to-peer dialogues with local authorities**

Within the framework of the UfM Energy Transition @Local Initiative, the UfM Secretariat will continue to work with local authorities in order to strengthen regional cooperation at the local level and to support their efforts on the implementation and development of renewable energies, energy efficiency and climate mitigation and adaptation actions.

Peer-to-peer dialogue session(s) will be foreseen in 2023 back to back with capacity building/ad hoc training(s) for local authorities' representatives, mainly on governance and financing aspects to support their efforts on the implementation and development of renewable energy projects, energy efficiency, and climate mitigation and adaptation actions; as well as on housing/public buildings energy efficiency solutions. If the situation prevents physical meetings to take place and if technical means allow it, the peer-to-peer dialogue session(s) and the capacity building training(s) might be organized online. These activities are foreseen for municipalities and local governments' officials who are in charge of implementing local actions and measures in the fields of renewable energies, energy efficiency and climate action; their profiles might be technical as well as political.

- **Efficient Street Lighting Exercise**

Within the framework of the UfM Energy Transition @Local Initiative, the UfM launched together with the Copenhagen Centre on Energy Efficiency in 2020 an exercise to support local authorities to analyze the energy efficiency of their street lighting systems in order to evaluate their potential improvement. The "Efficient Street Lighting Exercise" is conducted by the Copenhagen Centre which has developed an online tool for self-rapid assessment of the potential to accelerate energy efficient street lighting implementation, therefore the exercise is expected to help municipalities to identify measures to be implemented to improve energy efficiency in street lighting and contribute to their energy transition.



Currently, the exercise is ongoing with several municipalities from four UfM members: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Palestine.

The UfM and the Copenhagen Centre on Energy Efficiency will continue exploring potential partnerships with IFIs and other potential funding institutions in order to implement a second phase of this exercise that would allow putting in place the identified energy efficiency measures for the participating municipalities. This activity will be coordinated with others of the Climate Action's portfolio, in particular with the operationalization of the Climate Finance strategy.

The Copenhagen Centre on Energy Efficiency will be invited to the annual meeting of the UfM Energy Platforms to present the results of the ongoing exercise.

The UfM and the Copenhagen Centre on Energy Efficiency might also explore the possibility to replicate and open the exercise to municipalities from the already participating or other interested UfM members.

Both institutions will also explore to broaden their partnership and launch similar exercises to analyse the potential improvement of energy efficiency in other fields (such as buildings for instance).

– **3rd UfM Energy and Climate Business Forum**

In 2023 (depending on the evolution of the pandemic situation and taking into account that the essence of the Business Fora is to allow the networking among participants), the UfM will organize the 3rd UfM Energy and Climate Business Forum.

The UfM Business Fora bring together policy makers, private sector and industry representatives, business associations and financial institutions with the ultimate objective to further involve private sector actors in the deployment of renewable energy (including all sources: wind, solar, hydropower, bioenergy, marine energy and others) as well as of energy efficiency and climate change actions in order to contribute to the energy transition in the Mediterranean region. The UfM pays special attention to mainstream gender equality and youth involvement in this activity, by involving and highlighting projects and initiatives led by women and youth.

The thematic of the 3rd UfM Energy and Climate Business Forum, yet to be defined, will take into account the 2021 UfM Ministerial Declarations on Energy and on Environment and Climate Action as well as upcoming opportunities in the energy sector in the region. A possible subject, giving the increasing interest of UfM countries, might be hydrogen and its potential to be developed in the Mediterranean region as well as its role in the energy transition.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects**

Objective three: The promotion of flagship initiatives and projects as well as institutional partnerships

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**



– **Explore new partnerships**

In line with the Roadmap for Action on Energy, the UfM will explore new constructive partnerships with key energy actors (at the regional and global levels) that can provide support to the UfM energy activities such as IRENA (International Renewable Energy Agency).

The UfM will also take advantage of existing partnerships to explore ways of cooperation that could bring an added value to the UfM energy activities, such as with the International Energy Agency (IEA).

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects**

– **South-South and North-South interconnection facilitation**

Building on the comprehensive reconnaissance of interconnection potentials and obstacles recently finalized by MED – TSO, in operational cooperation with the EU Commission and joint engagement of the Jordanian Ministry of Energy, convene at least two annual multistakeholder meetings to identify viable projects as well as technical and policy obstacles and solution patterns for interconnection and regulation harmonization; further sponsoring and/or labeling of interconnection projects.

– **Follow-up of labelled projects**

The UfM Secretariat will follow up on the identification of new and the implementation of the UfM energy related labelled projects.

UfM Energy University by Schneider Electric offers free online courses for engineers and professionals in the energy sector from UfM member states. It offers more than 200 courses, in accordance with the priorities identified by the UfM Energy Platforms, which are endorsed by 23 global professional associations.

The project aims to develop expertise in energy efficiency and renewable energy through free online courses, alongside enhanced networking opportunities among regional experts in those fields.

The UfM Secretariat will continue following up on the implementation of the SEMed Private Renewable Energy Framework “SPREF” project and the projects developed under its frame. Due to the pandemic situation, EBRD and UfM Secretariat decided to postpone the planned co-organized side-event to shed the light on the accomplishments of SPREF and to showcase the different projects developed under its framework, highlighting the lessons learnt and the positive impacts in different UfM countries. If the pandemic situation allows, this meeting could be foreseen to take place in 2023. The UfM Secretariat will continue to support the communication actions to give visibility to the projects under SPREF (and update accordingly the promotional leaflet prepared in 2021, if needed).



2.4. CLIMATE ACTION: Addressing the challenges of climate change

Introduction missing, good if reference to SDG5 too.

The UfM climate action activities are in line with the global agenda and the United Nations SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) namely SDG 13 Climate Action; SDG 7 Affordable and Clean energy; SDG 17 Partnership for the Goals; SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities. The UfM climate agenda is also aligned with the European Union climate objectives and priorities, namely the European Green Deal. Questions related to gender equality and women empowerment (SDG 5) will be mainstreamed throughout the UfM Secretariat action in this priority area, as follow-up of the member states' commitment taken in the framework of the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Change adopted in 2021, where capacity-building and training targeting youth and women has been foreseen

In 2023, in line with the mandate issued from the 2nd UfM ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Action (4 October 2021, Cairo), the UfM Secretariat will work following this new Ministerial mandate and will further develop the UfM Climate Action Roadmap (2021 -2025).

2023 specific objectives

Objective one: The support to the continuous scientific assessment of the impacts of climate change in the Mediterranean basin

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

– **Preparation and dissemination of the first 3 thematic reports of MedECC**

The UfMS will continue its collaboration Plan Bleu and UNEP MAP to support the MedECC network, which will issue three Thematic Reports during 2023, namely on (i) on coastal risks, on (ii) the climate-water-energy-food (WEFE) nexus, and on (iii) environmental change, conflicts and human migration respectively.

The thematic reports will deepen the scientific knowledge on environmental change in the Mediterranean basin, following the publication of the First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) and its Summary for Policymakers on November 2020.

The reports should be ready for dissemination by the end of 2023 and UfMS will also contribute to the dissemination of the reports after their publication, namely through dedicated events, side events at COP28 or Regional Climate Weeks as well as circulation among the CCEG meetings .

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects**

– **Partnership with Copernicus**



In full alignment with WPII of the MoU with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO,) and the Work Plans implemented in 2020-2021, the UfMS developed a cooperation agreement with the EU Programme Copernicus, on the basis of an internal consultation with all interested divisions.

During the first semester of 2022, the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) and UfMS have been working together in the development of a data portal, with indicators and information for the benefit of users in the Mediterranean region. The focus was on the development of two Apps, on two sectors: i) Vulnerability to sea level rise of coastal cultural heritage sites in the Mediterranean, and ii) Forecasts on how climate change impacts the spread of vector borne diseases. The Apps are scheduled to be ready by the end of the summer of 2022 and to showcase its first demo at COP27 in Egypt.

While they are still on production phase, the Apps were presented to external stakeholders in two different occasions: (i) on 2 February 2022, in the context of the 2022 Annual Meeting of UfM Energy Platforms, the UfM Secretariat and ECMWF presented the Apps being developed this year and asked for input from Member States and Stakeholders regarding a similar App for Energy data that is scheduled for development in 2023; (ii) on 16 June 2022, in the context of the Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the Euro-Mediterranean region, the UfM Secretariat and ECMWF presented the App on Culture Heritage sites being developed to include historical, current and predictive information, based on satellite and on climate model data, useful for the management and protection of coastal cultural heritage against threats posed by climate change within the collection of web and handset application services developed by both Organisations to enhance regional preparedness and offered the possibility to include in the list of monitored coastal heritage sites selected locations designated by interested Mediterranean States.

During 2023, the UFMS together with Copernicus aims to finalize the two Apps from demo to full roll out phase and will continue explore the possibility to develop additional Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) based applications on other relevant topics such as the extension of energy dataset, transboundary dust storms and air quality issues in the region. These topics are selected through consultations with the Energy Platforms members. In parallel, capacity building, training sessions and stakeholder workshops will be organized in the region. The identification of training and capacity building needs at the UfMS and linked expert groups as well as domain specialists in the UfMS Member States will be done via a survey and interview.

Objective two: The Support of the implementation of the Paris Agreement in the Mediterranean

➤ Promoting Regional Dialogue

- The UfM Climate Change Expert Group (CEEG) and the UfM Climate Week**



As in previous years, the UfM CCEG will continue to act as a regional policy dialogue platform that gathers representatives from UfM Member countries and relevant stakeholders, in order to identify initiatives and projects that support the implementation of regional and national strategies related to low carbon development and climate resilience, in full consistency with the country commitments adopted within the framework of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.

The meetings of the UfM CCEG are centred on the mandate adopted at the 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Action for the UfM in the field of climate action and take stock of the first development of the UfM Climate Action Plan 2021-2025. The topics to cover range from (i) Science Policy Interface, (ii) Climate Finance for both Adaptation and Mitigation and (iii) Run up to the COP with countries giving updates on country priorities and NDCs. The meetings also explore the links with the energy transition in the Euro-Mediterranean Region and the work of the UfM Energy Platforms.

– **Study on the Nationally Determined Contributions / NDCs and SDGs**

Following the publication (shared with UNDP), of the Report “2021 Regional Analysis on NDCs”, that analyses how SEMed countries enhance their ambitions included in their NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions) as well as in their NAPs (National Adaptation Plans), some specific activities for developing supporting actions will be developed also taking into account the recommendations issued in the Climate Action Strategies developed for each country under Clima-MED. As for the previous Technical Assistance, these activities will be interconnected with the development of the Regional Climate Hub (see below). Through the later potential to build capacity essential for the concrete achievement of goals encompassed in national NDCs. UfM being a member of the NDC Partnership, this channel will be also used, as well as further interactions with Clima Med for the concerned countries of this UfM labelled project.

Objective three: Cooperation on Climate Finance Promoting Regional Dialogue

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

– **Regional Climate Finance Committee**

The RCFC main meeting will be organized back-to-back with the UfM CCEG meetings. Other ad hoc RCFC meetings will be organized in relation with Climate finance activities (see below). Representatives from MDBs presenting their financing and priorities for the region (for both public and private sector) such as AFDB, EBRD, EIB, WB, among other will be invited. In addition, the role of global climate funds and concessional finance to unlock investments will also be covered, namely accessing the Adaptation Fund, Climate Investment Funds or the Green Climate Fund. Furthermore, the role of the Network for Greening the Financial System will also be explored with representatives from North rim members such as the European Central Bank (ECB); Banque de France; or the European Banking Authority (EBA) as well as south rim members such Central Banks from the region.



– **UfM Climate Finance Study Technical Assistance**

The new technical assistance will be developed for a period of two years, on the basis of the three 2021 reports (on Climate Finance Flows, Economic opportunities and Adaptation). It will include a Climate finance flows report, which will be updated in close cooperation with IFIs and other financial institutions, as well as thematic reports. Potential topics will be discussed in the framework of the CCEG meetings.

Furthermore, the “one-stop shop” on climate finance which has been developed on the UfM website, will continue to be updated, aiming at strengthening the information on climate finance information and opportunities. This activity is planned to facilitate a regional dialogue among stakeholders active in the Euro-Mediterranean region to address climate change and access to climate finance.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects**

– **Development of a Regional Climate Hub**

The Secretariat continues to support and follow-up on the establishment of a Regional Climate Hub in order to support countries in their decision-making processes, the facilitation of access to climate finance and the engagement of private sector, local authorities’ efforts towards the energy transition. Another core priority is the support to youth-driven actions, to disseminate pragmatic know how on mitigation and adaptation within concerned sectors and professions, responding to a need in this sense repeatedly expressed by member States and stakeholders.

The Regional Climate Hub will also strive to give visibility to UFM labelled projects such as Clima MED, as well as to promote the exchange of best practices throughout the region.

The UfM Secretariat supports the creation and the activities of a Hub with a main siege in the South and a secondary operational siege in the North, on the basis of:

- expressed engagement to host and incorporate the facility by the Foreign Minister of Morocco;
- expressed engagement to host activities by the Government of Italy
- expressed interest in partnership by crucial international actors
- the recommendations included in the Summary for Policy Makers of the 1st Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) of the MedECC network, as well as the other related activities (on NDCs and Climate finance): in this perspective, the Hub will also serve as one of the main common base for Science-Policy dialogue orientated towards implementation of the recommendations of the MedECC report.

Objective four: The support of youth and gender engagement climate action

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

– **Mediterranean Youth Climate Forum**



The UfMS continues its support to the Mediterranean Youth Climate Network (MYCN), in line with the UfM support to youth engagement in climate action in the Mediterranean region. Specifically, the UfM continues to follow the advancements of the Mediterranean Youth Climate Network (MYCN) and host, if the situation due to the COVID19 pandemic allows, MYCN representatives will be invited to participate at UfM CCEG Meetings in the 2023. As well, the UfM and MYCN will assess the organisation of a Mediterranean Youth Climate Forum.

– **Support Gender Equality and Climate Action Nexus**

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change given that in many countries women’s livelihoods are dependent on climate-sensitive sectors such as subsistence agriculture, and access to water. In addition, women also typically have less capacity and resources than men to prepare for and adapt to climate change due lack of financial capital, access to education and training or due to restrictions on women’s land ownership rights.

To ensure equitable results, all aspects of climate action must promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in climate responses. This requires integrating gender into the design, implementation and monitoring of climate projects and programmes and taking women’s differentiated needs into account, ensuring women’s participation and access to decision-making.

The UFMS proposes to further develop on our mandate to work on gender in climate action as approved by the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Action (October 4, 2021).

Objective five: Bringing the Mediterranean agenda to the global level / The promotion of flagship initiatives and projects as well as institutional partnerships

- **Development of new partnerships**
- **Promotion of the Mediterranean region in the UNFCCC agenda**

The 22nd Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) granted the Observer status to the UfM in 2016. This enables the UfM to participate in meetings and to make contributions to the work of the UNFCCC Secretariat. In 2023, the UfMS will continue to participate at UNFCCC COPs, Subsidiary Body Meetings and Regional Climate Weeks and to make contributions to the work of the UNFCCC Secretariat, raising the attention of specific issues as well as to continue the promotion of the Mediterranean region.

Depending on the outcomes and “lessons learned” from the Mediterranean Pavilion at COP27, the UFMS will plan an outreach to the next COP presidency (UAE), member states and stakeholders in order to foster a dialogue and/or initiative linking up the two COPs.



Given its position, the UfM will try to position itself as one of the relevant players to feed the discussions at MENA level.

In terms of concrete actions to showcase, one of the core priorities of the UfMS for COP28 will be the promotion of MedECC's three Thematic Reports that are expected to be released in 2023, namely on (i) on coastal risks, on (ii) the climate-water-energy-food (WEFE) nexus, and on (iii) environmental change, conflicts and human migration respectively. The UfMS will contribute to the dissemination of the reports through dedicated side events at COP28.

Another core priority will be to continue to showcase the Apps developed with Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), namely the App for Energy data that is scheduled for development in 2023, also to be showcased at dedicated side events at COP28.

- Mediterranean alliance (public-private-CSO) following the Mediterranean Pavilion at COP27

Following the participation at the COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on November 2022, in which the UfMS aims at setting up the Mediterranean Pavilion, the UfMS will continue to explore future avenues for cooperation with its partners with the goal of bringing the Mediterranean climate agenda to the global stage.

Concrete actions will be decided at the end of 2022, together with partners and stakeholders when making a balance of main outcomes and "lessons learned" from the COP27.



2.5. ENVIRONMENT: Preserving natural resources and boosting green and blue growth

Following up on the adoption of the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Change in Cairo in October 2021 and its environment agenda (the so called “2030 Agenda for a Greener Med”), the elaboration, release and approval by countries and stakeholders in 2022 of the “GreenerMed Baseline Assessment” in 2022 marked a crucial milestone at regional level: the kick-start of operational coordination of existing and future initiatives, programmes and projects. This aims to create political and operational convergence to accelerate the transition of the Mediterranean region towards a greener/more circular economy and sustainable model of development, generating a virtuous socio-economic cycle while taking due care of the environment and its precious resources.

The GreenerMed Baseline Assessment report provides a reference point based on which advancements towards the achievement of the agenda’s objectives by 2030 can be tracked over time according to the agreed modalities, namely a regular monitoring mechanism and a mid-term evaluation. The report presents:

- The results of the 2030 GreenerMed mapping of relevant supporting initiatives, programmes and projects;
- A baseline analysis of 2030GreenerMed indicators, with information received from a majority of the mapped programmes and projects for outputs and outcomes, including long term outcomes wherever possible;
- An analysis of the contribution of 2030GreenerMed to the SDGs, based on information from official external sources for the impact indicators.

It needs to be highlighted that the baseline data collection was the first practical application of the monitoring framework. The process as such has been a learning journey through which the operationalization of the approach will be further improved.

The full GreenerMed Baseline Report is available at https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/20220510_Baseline-Report-2030GreenerMed_designed.pdf.

From the overall 82 projects considered in the mapping, 72 (88%) shared information on project implementation and results for the 2020 baseline collection. This serves as an indication for the general endorsement and support of the 2030GreenerMed agenda as a framework for regional collaboration and partnership building. The volume of financial resources leveraged by all 82 projects amounts to almost EUR 300 mio. The size of initiatives in terms of overall budget varies considerably, as some are individual projects while others represent large-scale programmes with a multitude of projects.

Between 2020 and 2030, two external evaluations are planned for 2030GreenerMed – in 2025 and 2030. Doing so will allow to also independently assess advancements towards the achievement of the agenda’s objectives. Both the monitoring and evaluations of 2030GreenerMed shall contribute to a clearer understanding of the advancements in the region towards the achievement of the SDGs.



GreenerMed results-based monitoring, evaluation and the related analysis provide inputs to strategic decision-making of countries, donors and stakeholders in the Euro-Mediterranean region to jointly work towards the achievement of the 2030 GreenerMed goals.

The more detailed activities for 2023 development are illustrated under the objectives here below.

At international level, the GreenerMed agenda reflects the set of decisions taken in 2021 and 2022 in the context of international for a and related engagements and decisions, among others the launch of the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration, the UN Food Systems Summit, Stockholm+50, COP 15th to the Convention on Biological Diversity, COP 27th on Climate Change, COP 15th of the UN Convention on Desertification, COP 22th of the Barcelona Convention, UNEA 5, UNECE Conference on Circular Economy, Sustainable Tourism and Education for Sustainable Development.

As part of its programmatic approach and in line with the 2021 and previous UfM Ministerial/s, the UfM Secretariat maintains, as guiding principles for its activities and agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals relevant to its mandate on environment, in particular SDG 12, 13, 14, and 15 and it will as well strongly contribute to SDGs in other areas, such as SDG 8, 9 and 11. Similarly, the UfM Secretariat gives paramount importance to the specific socio-economic needs and challenges of the region related to the promotion of green jobs, environmental related migration, increased opportunities for women and youth.

2023 specific objectives

The specific objective of 2023 will consist in supporting actions around the GreenerMed axes of work and related monitoring and evaluation, as agreed by countries and stakeholders within the UfM Environment Task Force (as part of the UfM Working Group on ENV and CC) with the political blessing of the 2021 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Action.

The specific objectives of the UfM Secretariat will be structured as follows:

1. *Regional dialogue*: with the UfM Co-Presidency, ensure the continuation of a regular and dynamic dialogue around environmental and green economy matters and progressively put in motion, in line with the UfM Ministerial on Environment and Climate Action, the GreenerMed Agenda and its *Framework for project monitoring, reporting and evaluation*, which - through its Theory of Change and indicators - tracks progress towards the above mentioned key priorities and SDGs over time, using as reference basis the *2021 GreenerMed baseline assessment*, just released and approved; The possibility to have gender disaggregated data for the monitoring and evaluation exercise will be also assessed.
2. *Regional portfolio of projects, programs, initiatives associated to GreenerMed*: Compile, coordinate, promote integration and upscaling of projects/actions identified/associated to the GreenerMed portfolio, compiled by thematic Axes and related key actions;



3. *Communication, dissemination and partnership*: Update, feed and dynamize the [UfM Environment Community and website](#) and social media to ensure they reflect ongoing activities, foster networking and ensure access to updated information; consolidate the existing - and promote new partnerships - in the region to maximize new opportunities for collaboration within the “2030 Greener Med Agenda”.

Objective 1 – Regional Dialogue around the UfM Environment/GreenerMed Agenda

➤ Regional Dialogue

- Organization of possibly two annual meetings of the UfM ENV Task Force - one as ENV Task Force and possibly one as part of the UfM Working Group on ENV and CC - involving UfM member countries and relevant stakeholders, including regional partners and local authorities.
- Progressive update of the GreenerMed Agenda and Framework, as living documents, in particular:
 - *GreenerMed Theory of Change*, regularly finetuning of qualitatively and thematically relevant indicators, if available for the region; and
 - *GreenerMed ‘Framework for project monitoring, reporting and evaluation’*: compilation of project information over time and related analysis; Assess the feasibility of an online/IT mechanism/database for the compilation of information on projects supporting GreenerMed, to be able to track progress in the implementation of actions at latest every two years
 - *GreenerMed Annual analysis of the state of the art for countries and stakeholders*: amount of resource by priority axis; indication of which countries are involved in which projects; etc); regular, possibly annual, monitoring brief of GreenerMed at the UfM Environment Task Force Meeting;
- Take stock, absorb, link as far as possible the critical elements of the new global and regional agreements (COPs Biodiversity, Climate Change, Desertification, Food Systems, UNEA, Barcelona Convention etc) to the GreenMed Agenda;
- Contribute to promote nature-based solutions in the region, including:
 - *Wetlands* - Co-organise with MedWet the 3rd Wetland Online Conference, building on the 2021 policy paper and the 2022 Ramsar COP Conclusions; together with CPRM and MedWet, promote the engagement of local authorities on the wetlands related challenges;
 - *Landscape Restoration and Forestry*: support upscaling at regional level of the activities on landscape restoration and forestry, promoting among others biodiversity, run with FAO and EFIMED;
 - *Protected Areas*: support the political leveraging and decision-uptake of the recommendations emerging from the policy papers produced by the Marine Protected Areas Med community; promote more initiatives/projects/coverage of biodiversity on land;
- Keep on contributing and supporting directly and through a dedicated technical assistance the Sustainable Food Systems – Med platform partnership, with FAO,



CIHEAM, UfM, PRIMA and One Planet; support the series of SFS thematic webinars running since 2022; contribute to the joint 2023 events, including the UN post Food System Summit gathering. The nexus Gender and SFS/ Food security will be worked out.

- Participate in the Advisory Board of the newly established PRIMA Community of Practice;
- Collaborate, promote, participate in the implementation of the Mission Restore Our Oceans/Mediterranean Lighthouse, in particular with its initial focus on plastics and marine litter, linking with the UfM labelled Plastic Busters initiative; progressive collaboration on nutrient losses, use and risks of chemical pesticides; link and participate in the to-be-established Coordinated Support Action
- Keep on ensuring the solid collaboration with InterregMed EuroMed and Interreg NEXT MED (previous ENI CBC) under the existing Roadmap and MoU, following closely the activities of key projects such as Plastic Busters CAP (Capitalization) and Med4Waste, among others;
- Participation to relevant UN Summits and COPs, as well as regional conventions and frameworks meetings (Post UN Food Summit gathering; COP 23th Barcelona Convention; etc) and co-organisation, if feasible, of Mediterranean focused side events or sessions.
- Keep on ensuring, integrating and fostering operational links of the GreenerMed Agenda and its implementation plan with other related UfM agendas, in particular with: sustainable blue economy; climate adaptation; water; transport; urban development (see respective sections);
- Maintain active the multiannual assistance to UfM Environment dossier to support the GreenerMed Agenda and its implementation;
- Dedicated ad hoc missions to countries of the region, as appropriate.
- Prepare other thematic policy/action/information and communication papers, as part of the UfM environmental series of thematic papers; organize or co-organize thematic meetings/conferences in person or online as per sanitary conditions and partners' agreement; activate other technical assistance, as deem necessary.

Objective 2: Coordinate, integrate the GreenerMed implementation made of a portfolio of projects, programs, initiatives

➤ Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives

- Promotion and matchmaking of programs/activities supporting the GreenerMed priorities; update regularly the GreenerMed list of supporting projects according to the above mentioned priorities (green, circular economy; pollution and pollution prevention; biodiversity/ecosystem restoration); promoting transfer and capitalization of results;
- Based on the Greenemed Baseline Assessment, identify gaps, needs and possible ways to mobilize either the UfM Secretariat technical assistance (facilitating the development of programs, projects or activities to fill gaps; leveraging funds and financial engineering needed by thematic axes; integration of regional activities; policy papers, studies and reports;



communication and dissemination activities; etc) and/or other actors/donors to cover such gaps/needs through direct support and/or integration in future programming or technical assistance for fund raising;

- Follow up and support the Governance Axis and Thematic projects of Interreg EuroMed, labelled by the UfM, making use of ongoing technical assistance to promote the participation of Southern Med countries as associates; jointly run webinars; support the capitalization and amplification of results; communication and dissemination activities.
- Actively participate and promote the activities of GreenerMed projects, including the newly launched ENI CBC financed Plastic Busters CAP, Med4Waste and SIRCLES (focusing on green jobs for youth and women); the Paris Agreement in Action (landscape restoration and forestry), promote its continuation and upscaling; the Mediterranean Wetlands project. Ensure targeted support to other GreenerMed supporting projects, as appropriate;
- Revamp the collaboration on drought and desertification projects with FAO, CIHEAM, PRIMA, possibly linking more operationally with UNCCD;
- Kick off a close partnership with the Coordinated Support Action of Bluemed/Mission/Lighthouse and define operational collaboration;
- Promoting the UfM labelling of projects tackling the 2020 Ministerial priorities, linking with SDGs as well as international and regional frameworks and conventions;
- Detail the annual EU funded WES support (Water and Environment Support) to the UfM GreenerMed Agenda, including on waste management, marine litter and green economy;
- Organize or co-organise a max of six thematic online (if possible, in person) workshop/s or webinars around priority topics and regional actions;
- Continue collecting information for the intermediary evaluation of the UfM Agenda 2030 for a GreenerMed, set for 2025 (and 2030).
- Dedicated in-house support (consultant through technical assistance) for the ENV dossier;
- Lead and supervise the preparation of the report/publication on 'Green, Circular Economy at Mediterranean level', supported by GIZ;
- Keep a close coordination with IFIs to facilitate investment opportunities, integrating ecosystem restoration as new essential approach and maintaining climate change and environmental pollution as drivers.

Objective 3: Promote communication, dissemination, and partnership

- Promote access and ensure maintenance of the [UfM Environment webpage](#); Consider the reinforcement of the information and communication strategy, either through a regular UfM environment bulletin or online update to be posted on the UfM ENV page;
- Disseminate UfM-related and UfM partners-related relevant information on environmental activities via the UfM Environment Community and social media; consider the possibility to produce more regular flash news;



- Periodic reviews and presentation in a catchy/synthetic modality to the WG on ENV and CC/ENV Task Force Group of the status of advancement of new projects and particularly relevant deliverables;
- Distil key messages and activities through targeted communication and dissemination support via the UFM communication channels;
- Participation to key initiatives/project events and gatherings.
- Continue the plan of joint activities and events with the existing donors/partners (EU, including PRIMA Interreg EuroMed and Interreg NEXT MED; GIZ; SIDA; FAO/CIHEAM; UNCCD; UNIDO; UNDP, UNEP MAP, MEDWET; etc); promote a closer partnership with the European Forestry Institute;
- Maximize the existing, successful partnership with Interreg Med Joint Secretariat; CBC; PRIMA; FAO and CIHEAM based on MoUs and on concrete projects (InterregMed Communities, Governance Axis, projects; CBC new programming projects; PRIMA calls and WEF Community of Practice; etc); and explore new opportunities for collaboration with other international and regional actors;
- Reinforce strategic partnership with IFIs, emphasizing the aspects related to pollution prevention, ecosystem restoration, sustainable consumption and production and resource efficiency, to make the best use of the opportunity offered by the investment package launched by the EU for the Southern Neighbourhood – ESFD+;
- Following up on the Cyprus UNECE Conference on education for sustainable development, in order to streamline environment and climate in education programmes to accelerate the behavioural change and further promote consumer awareness and citizen’s engagement in lifestyle change within the wider shift to green, circular economy.
- Valorise at maximum the partnership with BLUEMED within the wider Restore our Oceans Mission, set up within the 2022-27 EU Programming;
- Carry out the publication on green, circular economy, with a focus on blue skills and jobs, and nature-based solutions, among others.



2.6. BLUE ECONOMY: Promoting blue economy

The UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy adopted in February 2021 has widely been welcomed as an ambitious Declaration on shared goals and priorities with an expanded scope in terms of areas of cooperation, principles, and common actions. As agreed by the UfM Co-Presidency, the UfM Secretariat and countries of the UfM, in order to be fully operational, the UfM Ministerial Declaration must be backed by a clear prioritization of the actions called by the Ministries in the form of a clear and concrete implementation Roadmap.

In line with the Ministerial Declaration of 2021, the Roadmap builds around priorities of a sectoral nature i.e. fisheries and aquaculture; marine renewable energies; maritime transport and ports; coastal and maritime tourism; marine litter; and maritime safety and security as well as cross-cutting ones such as governance and sea basin strategies; research and innovation; skills, careers and employment; maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management; sustainable investments.

The Roadmap is based on a large database of over 300 relevant initiatives. As the result from the analytical groundwork of the database, the main potential avenues for future cooperation (pathways, processes, and actions) for the implementation the UfM Ministerial Declaration have been sketched, discussed and endorsed by the UfM Working Group on the Blue Economy, thus providing the basis for a number of concrete actions/initiatives that can be launched, scaled-up and promoted in the short, medium and longer term by the UfM CoPresidency, Secretariat and member countries, in partnership with relevant regional actors across the Mediterranean Sea basin.

While the 10 Ministerial priorities remain, it is also important to note that the UfM Working Group on Blue Economy has endorsed three areas of action (supported by a cross-cutting axis) on which to already concretely cooperate and advance in the *short-term*. Namely:

- Small ports and diversification of marinas beyond transport, linking to (for example), aquaculture, tourism, energy, and marine litter facilities. This could encompass transformative innovation for small-scale ports and fostering ports as ‘hubs’ of clean and renewable energy, as well as the ability of ports to adopt fully circular models.
- Innovation ecosystems for sustainable blue economy value-chains, including (i.e.) the scaling-up of good practices on sustainable food value-chains; financing tourism diversification/digitalization; or scaling-up innovation practices across the sea basin.
- MSP as an overall sector enabler, i.e. encompassing MSP for a proper planning of marine renewables zones/licensing; Principal Areas (fisheries); or Allocated Zones (aquaculture).

Cross cutting axis in support of the three areas of action in the short-term: Blue skills, careers and jobs, including Technical Assistance and Information Exchange; TAIEX and Twinning; and capacity-building.



Based on the above, a simple and straight-forward reporting system will be set out to monitor the implementation of the Roadmap towards the fulfilment of the UfM Ministerial Declaration. The result-based monitoring system will involve the following:

- The monitoring of the process of implementation to ensure that the activities outlined in the Roadmap are being accomplished and that resources are being allocated and used effectively.
- Monitoring the concrete outputs directly associated to the activities supported through the actions, sets of activities or projects carried out to implement the Roadmap.
- Assessment of the progress towards the achievement of the short, medium and long term objectives, assessing if the result indicators evolve in the expected/desired direction.
- Make use of the information collected to periodically review the overall strategy and to inform decision makers and stakeholders at different levels.

As part of its programmatic approach and in line with the 2021 and previous UfM Ministerial/s, the UfM blue economy related activities contribute directly to SDG 14 «Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development» as well as to SDG 12 «Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns». Issues related to gender equality and women empowerment (SDG 5) and reducing inequalities in the region (SDG 10) are regularly taken into account throughout the UfM Secretariat action in this priority area. Specific training webinars on ‘Women in Blue Economy’ were run at the end of 2021 with the specific objective of integrating more and more the issue in the overall dossier. The follow-up activity will include specific training and potential support to early-stage/start-up led by women (see Section 1.5).

2023 specific objectives

During 2023, the UfM Secretariat will focus on the following areas of action:

1. *Regional Dialogue*: in close collaboration with the UfM CoPresidency, foster the dynamic exchanges and dialogue on blue economy and the progressive finetuning of the Roadmap for implementation, adopted as a living document and associated to the 2nd UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy;
2. *Regional portfolio of projects, programs, initiatives associated to the Blue Economy Roadmap*: Together with countries and relevant stakeholders, support the actions identified for immediate implementation under the “Roadmap for Implementation of the 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Sustainable Blue Economy”; support the implementation of the easy-to-handle monitoring and evaluation system, once agreed;
3. *Communication, dissemination and partnership*: Ensure wide communication and dissemination of blue economy information at widest Mediterranean level and beyond; consolidate the existing - and promote new partnerships - in the region to maximize new opportunities for collaboration.



Objective one: 1. Support the regional dialogue and the selected actions for immediate implementation, together with countries and relevant stakeholders, of the 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Sustainable Blue Economy;

- Holding one, possibly two, meetings of the UfM Working Group on Blue Economy as main channel of regional dialogue, covering the policy and technical aspects;
- Preparations for a stakeholder conference to take place in 2024, based on availability of related funding;
- Implement the basic, easy-to-handle-and-to-understand monitoring system, according to the indicators agreed with the countries to oversight the overall progress of the ministerial declaration by thematic priority.
- Supporting the follow-up implementation of the BLUEMED Initiative, within the new Mission 'Restore our oceans' (and the Mediterranean Lighthouse on tackling pollution), thus linking Sustainable Blue Economy with the Environment/H2030 Greener Med Agenda and the Research Agendas;
- Supporting WestMed and EUSAIR (European Strategy of Adriatic Ionian Region) advancements and WestMED Technical Groups (on Green Shipping and Sustainable Aquaculture), which developments are relevant for the entire region;
- Follow up on the very fruitful collaboration with EU Programs to identify possible areas of funding/financing, including InterregMed, its Communities and Governance Axis, and Cross Border Cooperation (CBC), in particular through the Governance projects and the Thematic ones;
- Promote the alliance on sustainable blue finance/investments and support IFIs in shaping new investment programs/initiatives (including a Blue Economy Regional Fund/Partnership), also through EFSD+ and new upcoming initiatives such as the DG MARE interregional platform where also non-EU countries can be involved; the UNDP Private sector Facility; etc.
- Integrate in the blue economy agenda the main recommendations and outcomes of the 2022 relevant international Gatherings, including the One Ocean Summit in Brest and the UN Ocean Summit in Lisbon;
- Prepare thematic policy papers/reports/information material; organize or co-organize thematic meetings/conferences in person or online as per sanitary conditions and partners' agreement; activate other technical assistance, as deemed necessary; the gender dimension will be embedded in the elaboration of the thematic policy papers as well as in the outline of the conferences (e.g blue skills, female entrepreneurship, women leadership).
- Ad hoc missions to the countries of the region, as appropriate.

Objective two: 2. Regional portfolio of projects, programs, initiatives associated to the Blue Economy Roadmap

- Assist the Co-Presidency and countries with the implementation of the activities of the Roadmap identified for immediate action (platform, expert assistance, webinar, fund raising, etc); Start preparing the medium-term ones, possibly through a dedicated technical assistance;
- Actively mobilize either the UfM Secretariat technical assistance (*facilitating the development of programs, projects or activities to fill gaps; leveraging funds and*



financial engineering needed by thematic axes; upscaling to other countries; studies and reports; etc) and/or other actors/donors to cover the identified gaps/needs;

- Carry on the capacity building activities linked to the released Operational Handbook on 'Social and economic regeneration of the Mediterranean after the crisis: shared methods and tools for relaunching a sustainable post COVID-19 tourism model', in close coordination with CPRM as main partner;
- Ensure close collaboration and involvement of local authorities through CPRM and ARLEM;
- Ensure close coordination with WESTMED and UfM participation in the WestMed Steering Committee meetings, events and activities;
- Participation in the BlueMed GSO/Mission Restore our Oceans meetings, events and activities, linking with the UfM environment and research dossiers;
- Following up and participating in the Interreg EuroMed and CBC Governance meetings, events and projects of relevance to blue economy;
- Further promote maritime clusters and accelerators as lever for public-private partnership, research and innovation; support blue skills careers and jobs throughout the blue economy sectors;
- Assessing relevant regional blue economy projects and/or initiatives for potential labelling and any other relevant initiative for future cooperation;
- Activate the MoU with the World Tourism Organisation and define the joint activities for implementation;
- Attending/co-organizing other relevant Blue economy fora and event/s.

Objective three: Ensure wide communication and dissemination of blue economy information at widest Mediterranean level and beyond; Consolidate the existing - and promote new partnerships - in the region to maximize opportunities for collaboration

- Maintaining operational and active the Med Blue Economy Platform as support tool for information sharing and networking; further disseminating information through the UfM web tools, namely social media, the UfM website, the Blue Economy mailing list.
- Keep on managing and maintaining the Platform as a tool for networking and information sharing within the Mediterranean Blue Economy Community; and consolidate its role as a key digital hub on Sustainable Blue Economy;
- Develop further the links between the Med Blue Economy Platform and other blue economy platforms;
- Produce and disseminate through the Med Blue Economy Platform and other UfM channels the six-monthly bulletin/newsletter ;
- Consolidate the plan of joint activities and events with the existing donors/partners (DG MARE, DG RTD; SIDA; GIZ; UNDP; CPRM; WESTMED; Interreg EuroMED and Interreg NEXT MED; WTO; etc), based on their respective implementation plans;
- Identify new strategic partnerships and develop them further; among others, promote closer contact with the newly established World Ocean Council Office/Headquarters in Barcelona.



2.7. WATER: Improving availability, efficient use and sustainable management

The UfM Ministerial Declaration on Water (Valetta, 2017) called for a UfM Water Agenda to enhance regional cooperation towards sustainable and integrated water management in the UfM region, as well as to mainstream efforts towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets, in particular SDG 6 on availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

The UfM Secretariat will thus be working during 2023 on the continued implementation of actions, initiatives and policy dialogue agreed upon by the UfM Member States for the UfM Water Agenda in December 2018, in particular in the four thematic priorities:

- Water-Energy-Food Ecosystem Nexus (WEFE),
- Climate Change adaptation and water Nexus,
- Water-Employment-Migration Nexus (WEM),
- And Water Access and Sanitation (WASH).

As well as the Water financial and investment strategy.

Those four thematic priorities will be associated to the UfM Financial Strategy for Water. It will, thus, seek to promote better conditions for financing water sector activities and projects in the region, as well as better coordination of water with other sectors and build synergies in order to achieve the targeted milestones with the global agenda.

The work of the UfM Secretariat under this area will seek to ensure a better coordination of water management with other sectors, not to mention build synergies in order to achieve the targeted milestones within the 2030 Agenda, particularly those pertaining to SDG 6: *Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all*. Furthermore, questions related to gender equality and women empowerment (SDG 5), reducing inequalities in the region (SDG 10) as well as environment and climate action (SDG 13) will be mainstreamed throughout the UfM Secretariat action in this priority area.

2023 specific objectives

In 2023, the UfM Secretariat will focus on the following areas of action:

1. Supporting the implementation of the UfM Water Agenda
2. Supporting the implementation of the UfM Financial Strategy for Water. Enhancing the Economic value of the water sector by focusing on youth and women employment and entrepreneurial in the water aspects as well as the role of the private sector.
3. Enhancing cooperation and ensure coherence with relevant partners and initiatives in the UfM region with special focus on interlinkage with Renewable energy and climate adaptation water investment.

Objective one: Supporting the implementation of the UfM Water Agenda

The objective during 2023 will be to continue the iteration of the UfM Water Agenda, with special focus on the biannual workplan (2023-2024) of the UfM Water Policy Framework of Actions 2030. In accordance to the recommendations of the 12th Meeting of the Water



Expert Group (12WEG) in May 2022 it became clear that the UfM Water Policy Framework 2030 and its thematic areas' work plans had to be updated for the next two years, as requested by several countries present at the 12WEG. The later stated that the UfM Water Agenda needed to include in its strategy the latest changes that had affected not only the region but also the world. It was then agreed to launch an assessment and progress analysis through a technical assistance. The UfM Water Agenda began in 2018 and continued its development as a living document. This overall agenda, comprising several plans and programs agreed upon for various priority areas, provides the UfM with a framework to mobilize collective efforts in the region to address the challenges of integrated water resources management and advance the implementation of the recommendations agreed upon by the Ministers in the Ministerial Declaration on Water of April 2017.

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- **Organizing a Water Expert Group (WEG) meeting.** The core agenda will necessarily be the follow up to the work in each of the priority work areas of the UfM Water agenda, but a specific focus will also be made during the meeting to ensure links with international initiatives on water and in other relevant sectors, such as climate change, and in developing initiatives to materialize the recommendations from the Financial Strategy.
- **Holding Task Force meetings for the priority work areas of the UfM Water Agenda through physical and virtual means.** The task force meetings will be convened, when necessary (held back-to-back with important events as well as using virtual workspaces), as the main fora for hands-on approach to work on each of the priority work areas and presenting proposals to the WEG. Task Force Meetings will generally be convened ahead of each WEG meeting and continue to be based on a voluntary participation by a limited number of member states and partner organizations.
- Joint endeavor of the UfM and the Water partners in Mediterranean Youth and Water, as a structural and systematic approach for youth engagement in achieving the Agenda 2030 in the water sector, with emphasis on employment opportunities, promoting water youth networks as awareness raising instruments, and disseminating knowledge products –studies, analyses – from the MedYWat (CMI's Mediterranean Youth for Water network), ENTREMED (Entre Mediterranean Entrepreneurial – a Youth Initiative on Water Entrepreneurial) as well as other active networks in the field of water, climate change and youth empowerment towards consolidating a more synergized approach on youth.
- Continue the efforts to institutionalize the water and jobs in the water sector, the called Entremed – a Youth Initiative on Water Entrepreneurial as well as the joint efforts with UNECE and ESCWA to prepare for the UN water conference 2023.
- Creation of the UfM Water Youth Strategy: a 5-year Water and Youth Engagement Strategy to help alleviate youth unemployment and water scarcity
- 5th edition of the Technical Project Preparation Workshop for Transformational Climate Resilience GCF Water Project Concepts in the Mediterranean



- Water, employment, and migration (WEM): organization of WEM labs in association with UNESCO, Global Water partnership- Med (GWP-Med), SUEN and MFA Italy and INWRDAM, IUCN in the framework of WEFE and WEM Task force participants
- Continue the efforts to identify more sustainable WEFE and water and climate projects in the Med region.
- Joint endeavor with the Swedish Institute for dialogue and UNESCO, UNESCO WWAP and other partners in the Gender equality in the water sector and the program on Gender, water and security in the MENA region.
- Continue the Water investment program in the Mediterranean Region in the framework of the implementation of the financial strategy and through the WASH task force.
- Holding the 5th Mediterranean water forum, late 2023 in Tunis to prepare the region for the 10th edition of the World Water Forum (WWF10).

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- In the framework of the UfM – Sida cooperation new agreement, the UfM Secretariat agreed with Sida that INWRDAM will implement, in coordination with the implementation of the UfM Water Agenda, the **Project 'UfMS/GC2022/001 - WEFE Nexus for Sustainable Development in MENA: Proofing the WEFE Nexus concept in related job creation**. The overall objective of this intervention as communicated to UfMS and Sida, is to enhance the management of water, energy and food security within the MENA region ensuring socio-economic and environmental sustainability. Specifically aiming at the following: • Advance climate resilience across MENA through a stakeholder participatory process • Establish a dynamic knowledge hub for aggregation and dissemination of repeatable bankable project ideas aimed at sustainable green job creation. • WEFE Nexus policy development and advocacy. • Build Capacities in the MENA region in WEFE Nexus approach. • Operationalization of the WEFE Nexus approach through market based pilots leading to private-sector led sustainability.
- The UfM Secretariat will respond to several requests to label projects that provide real opportunities for preserving natural resources mainly Water resources both conventional and non-conventional, enhancing job creation and improving the socioeconomic situation in the region. One of them will be the proposal of the Smart Desert Project. It will be put forward for labelling in the end of 2022, beginning of 2023.
- To create opportunities to enhance regional cooperation. Efforts will be undertaken with regards to developing initiatives highlighting the potential of the water sector for employment and active engagement of youth and Women.
- Identification of projects that include the notion of Water Nexus

Objective two: Supporting the implementation of the UfM Financial Strategy for Water

- The UfM will be targeting a series of activities and initiatives during 2023. The UfM Secretariat will also continue its engagement with UN agencies, regional organizations, as well as member states in order to involve in the global efforts of implementation of the monitoring schemes for achieving the regional water



agenda including, a High level panel on Water, a High level panel on development, Water and Peace Initiative with Blue Peace, the Swiss International Agency and the Geneva Water Hub. The indicators of the implementations are based on the national activities' peer-reviews and the regional actions as per the action plan of the financial strategy's last chapter.

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- 5th edition of the EU-UfM Water Investment and Policy Forum (previously called the Business Forum and Water Governance), to be held under the umbrella of the Cairo Water Week.
- “Achieving SDG6 and related SDGs in the Mediterranean Region and SEMED countries” in-depth country analyse. Work can be undertaken in Palestine, Morocco, and Jordan.
- Elaborate and design a capacity building program with GCF (Green Climate Fund) on water and climate finance.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- Technical Assistance: Analysis of potential investment modalities in UfM countries.
- Technical Assistance: Identification of WEF and Entrepreneurial activities and projects in the Med region and Water Digitalisation (to launch a roadmap towards digitalization of the water sector in the Med)
- Technical Planning and Advisory services on the working topic of water and private sector role including WEF, WEM and Climate
- Water investment and financing technical assistant.

Objective three: Enhancing cooperation and ensure coherence with relevant partners and initiatives in the UfM region

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- The UfM will seek to enhance and foster cooperation and ensure coherence with relevant partners and initiatives in the UfM region, including the PRIMA initiative for strategic research, Stockholm Water Week, UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe), CMI (the Centre for Mediterranean Integration), the UNESCO-IHP (UNESCO's Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme) and UNESCO WWAP (UNESCO's World Water Assessment Programme) in relation to the UN high-level panel for Water as well as other international partners, such as the SDG6, or the 2023 UN Water Conference in March 2023 in New York and other related SDGs.
- Water emergency response and planning for selected countries in the region.
- Technical Assistance to support the efforts of Youth engagement in the water sector including the NEXUS and Entrepreneurial.
- Role of Women in water and water sector. The UfM will continue its endeavours to promote the role of women in water diplomacy after a series of successful events held respectively in 2020 and 2021. The UfM will aim to emphasize the critical role of women in the contribution of water development.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- The **Mediterranean Water Knowledge Platform**: This project aims to provide a common basis for the development of National Water Information Systems



(NWIS) in four pilot countries from the Southern Mediterranean region (Tunisia, Jordan, Morocco, and Lebanon).

The project has advanced as follows: Tunisia (implementation), Jordan and Morocco (definition studies and preparatory white papers and forms). Jordan is currently working on the development of the NWIS.

- The **Desalination Facility for the Gaza Strip project**: The project is a flagship project labelled by the UfM where the UfM Secretariat is leading the international coordination committee which is mandated to steer all political and financial engineering aspects with main financial actors as well as political actors including Government of Palestine and Government of Israel. The project has currently matured to the stage that tendering for the design and build stage of the central desalinization plant component is envisaged, at the same time significant investments for associated works have already been launched. The project counts on political support from all parties to the project, as well as a growing base of donors, as demonstrated at the successful Donors Conference convened by the EU, with UfM Secretariat support, on March 20, 2018, and during the Donors session held on April 2019.

Throughout the next period, the UfM Secretariat will continue to exercise its facilitation role among parties, especially in promoting and coordinating efforts at political and financial level through the international coordination committee, as well as developing outreach activities with all international financial institutions and partners, including the Task Force, as well as the Steering Committee managed by the World Bank and the Palestinian Water Authority of the components related to the North-south carrier already under implementation (the water carrier as well as the energy component).

Building on the progress achieved so far and on the current positive momentum, in 2023 the UfM Secretariat will focus its efforts on:

- Continue engaging donors that made pledges, as well as potential ones, in order to materialize pledges and bridge the funding gap.
 - Resume launching the project components during the course of the year with a view to provide a positive milestone signaling the beginning of its implementation phase.
 - Holding the international Coordination committee meeting when necessary as well as supporting the organization of the Task force led by Office of the Quartet.
- The **UfM labelled project LIFE Integrated Project “Optimizing the implementation of the 2nd River basin management program in the Malta River Basin District”**: The UfM Secretariat will support the regional dimension of the project, in cooperation with the Malta Water and Energy agency as well as the LIFE program partners in the region.



2.8. CIVIL PROTECTION

Context

This is in accordance with the Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean of 13 July 2008, in the follow up of the Barcelona Process (1995) and aimed at transforming the Mediterranean into an area of peace, democracy, cooperation and prosperity; that civil protection is part of the objectives of peace, stability and security.

In addition, at the fifth Regional Forum, which gathered the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Euro-Mediterranean area, the topic of civil protection was entrusted as one of the five priorities of the UfM's mandate.

The UfM Annual Work Program 2022 reaffirms to increase cooperation between UfM Member States as necessary to strengthen civil protection and disaster risk management in the region, and as a priority objective, to work on **framing a Roadmap for Mediterranean Civil Protection** in preparation of the Directors-General Meeting.

2023 specific objectives

It is in this sense that the latter would propose to work according two objectives:

Objective one:

- **Technical dimension** through the new PPRD Mediterranean, the onsite technical assistance and risks and hazards assessments analysis programmes (funded by the European Commission)
 - a) **Define priorities based on regional and country assessment, identified needs and lessons learned from ongoing and past programs**
 - b) **Increase the operational cooperation with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) as regional platform CP cooperation and partnership in the South**
 - c) **Establish a bottom-up inclusive approach with Mediterranean countries civil protection authorities (EUMS + South)**
 - d) **Consider cross-border activities and provide on-site technical assistance (high level experts)**
 - e) **Include marine pollution and CECIS (Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea -REMPEC)**

Objective two

- A **political dimension** which could lead to the implementation of a **regional platform dialogue which should aim at:**



- Increasing resilience, including inter-institutional cooperation and dialogue between the policy, operational and scientific communities
- Developing a response preparedness through capacity development
- Enhancing the awareness and participation of citizens in disaster prevention, preparedness, and response by empowering volunteers and/or youth
- Setting-up a framework for cooperation in disaster preparedness, prevention and response at the scale of the Mediterranean region, in conjunction with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism

In order to achieve the here above-mentioned objectives the **following activities** will be started in 2023:

- Develop a Civil Protection Strategy for the Mediterranean region by 2030 by:
 - mapping the many current civil protection initiatives/projects in the Mediterranean region
 - complete national and regional risks assessments and define a UfM-DG ECHO Civil Protection actions priority matrix for the Mediterranean region
- Support the organization of a Director General meeting (funded by DG ECHO) to validate and push forward the proposed actions
- Raise awareness and expand UCPM activities and toolbox (exercises, trainings, etc.) to UfM member states To this end, at least two workshops will be organized during 2023 to achieve the objectives and possible up to five if sufficient financial resources provided
- Lay the foundation of an online "platform" as repository and platform for exchange and a Mediterranean expert pool for advice. The platform could include a Mediterranean volunteerism observatory and database
- Identify and explore opportunities to establish pilot sub-regional ERCC like structure, including pools of experts/modules

The identity of this mechanism must be based on the resources specific to southern countries in terms of prevention, preparation and response to natural or technological disasters, in a context of climate change that can generate complex multi-sectoral crises.

The cross-cutting nature of the themes covered by the Social and Civil Affairs division (women empowerment and youth/disability) and, more broadly, by UfM (urban development, energy, climate action, water, etc.) should contribute to improving the resilience of societies by reducing/mitigating risks within the broader scope of civil protection.



THIRD PART: REINFORCING UfM CAPACITY FOR ACTION



3.1. BUILDING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

i. INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

Given the important role that partnerships have in the promotion of the UfM as a platform for regional dialogue and cooperation, and to increase the visibility and impact of its activities in the region, the UfM Secretariat engages in strategic partnerships with key regional stakeholders.

Specific focus is paid to:

i) institutional relations: with key global, regional and sub-regional stakeholders to establish the UfM as a unique multi-stakeholder platform for regional dialogue and cooperation in the Mediterranean. These partnerships focus mainly on enhancing relations with key actors involved in regional cooperation, coordinating efforts and creating synergies between their respective efforts.

A high-level meeting of international and regional organisations working in the Mediterranean is foreseen to be organized by the UfMS in 2023, in view of reinforcing the above-mentioned partnerships.

ii) reinforcing strategic partnerships with key actors involved in regional cooperation to finance UfM initiatives and projects labelled by its Member-States. A special attention is given to the reinforcement of partnerships with financial institutions and bilateral and multilateral donors, who contribute to the operational budget of the Secretariat as well as to the implementation of labelled projects. Furthermore, the UfMS seeks to build strategic partnerships with projects promoters, as well as to maintain an open dialogue with associated stakeholders.

➤ **Euro-Mediterranean Partnerships**

The UfM ecosystem is not limited to the inter-governmental structure and comprises other institutions and dialogue frameworks bound to the objectives of the Barcelona Process, namely the Anna Lindh Foundation, the Parliamentary-Assembly of the UfM or the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM).

The UfM Secretariat will further focus its efforts in 2023 on strengthening strategic institutional partnerships with a set of keys identified and potential actors involved in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation:

- The European Commission: given the intrinsic nature of the relation between the UfMS and the EC, synergies and complementarities between their respective activities in the region will continue to be enhanced, in close coordination with EC line DGs and in particular DG NEAR through the EU's new Agenda for the Mediterranean.
- The Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF): in light of the new ALF governance and its new 2023-2025 strategy, the UfMS will enhance cooperation with the



ALF to enhance intercultural dialogue and civil society engagement in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Special focus will be given to the follow-up of the *Forum des Mondes Méditerranéens*, where both organisations were highly involved, and notably the establishment of the working group *Plaidoyer Méditerranée 2030* and the celebration of the Capital of the Mediterranean, upon member states approval of the initiative. Cooperation on youth empowerment will be enhanced to assume an active and visible role in addressing social challenges with intercultural values and principles, notably through potential synergies with the “Young Mediterranean Voices” programme. .

- The Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM): The establishment of a new permanent Secretariat in Rome will allow for a new level of interaction of the UfM Secretariat with the PA-UfM and its specialized committees, to whom the UfMS will continue to provide support and substance.
- The European Parliament and national Parliaments of UfM Member States to ensure the visibility of the UfM work, reinforce the synergies with members of Parliaments and allow for their views to also be reflected in the work developed by the UfM.
- The Euro-Mediterranean Assembly of Regional and Local authorities (ARLEM), in areas such as energy, climate change, water and sustainable urban development, to further enhance the local territorial dimension of the UfM. The UfM Secretariat will continue to be involved in the "ARLEM award: Young local entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean" that aims to showcase a successful young entrepreneur supported by the local/ regional authority as an inspiration to others. Cooperation with ARLEM will also be enhanced in the framework of the “Capital of the Mediterranean” initiative.
- The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), as well as with other economic and social councils (ESCs) of the region.
- The Council of Europe (CoE) on important themes, such as gender equality, youth, civil society, and intercultural dialogue. A special attention will be given to the development of joint actions with the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe (NSC-CoE).
- The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), notably through the development of bilateral cooperation in the fields of economic cooperation, such as energy security, environment and climate change mitigation in the Mediterranean region, as well as the study of new initiatives in the fields of gender equality, youth engagement, education and research.



- The League of Arab States, following successful meetings of the UfM SG with his counterpart. Cooperation in the field of women economic empowerment will be particularly underlined.
- The International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) continues to be reinforced in several sectors, particularly through the divisions of Water, Environment and Blue Economy, Energy and Climate Action and Economic Development and Employment, to potentiate the synergies and the impact of the actions developed by the two Institutions.
- The Center for Mediterranean Integration of the World Bank (CMI) to collaborate in joint initiatives to advance the cooperation to promote the integration and development of the Mediterranean region in the areas consistent with their mandates.

➤ **Global partnerships**

The UfM was granted the status of Observer to the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 2015 and has consistently been engaging with the UN System in a comprehensive effort to guarantee its coherence with and its contribution to the implementation of the SDGs in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The UfMS has developed close partnerships with several UN institutions, which have contributed to the success of UfMS initiatives and events or to the implementation of regional projects of cooperation. In 2023, these efforts will continue to be strengthened, in the following lines:

- UN-Habitat, to strengthen collaboration towards the definition of a regional strategy to implement the new UfM Urban Agenda. UN-Habitat is an important stakeholder in the ongoing processes of the UfM Working groups on “Affordable and Sustainable Housing”, “Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting systems on sustainable urban development”, “Urban Regeneration” and “Sustainability, Energy Efficiency, Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience in Housing”, launched in 2019 to implement the agenda approved in the Second UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development in Cairo in May 2017.
- United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), continues to be developed to further encourage South-South and triangular cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
- UNESCO, with the aim of promoting initiatives and projects focused on youth, intercultural and interreligious dialogue. UNESCO is an active stakeholder in several UfM Regional Dialogues and the two organizations are keen on studying further ways to develop cooperation.
- UNWTO to jointly develop the UfM agenda on Tourism.



- Partnerships with UNEP/MAP, FAO/GFCM and UNCCD have been developed in the last years in the field of water, environment, and blue economy, and will be reinforced. In 2023, the UfM Secretariat will continue working with UNEP/MAP to promote activities on pollution prevention and control in Mediterranean coastal and marine waters, especially in the framework of the UfM-labelled project “Plastic Busters for a Mediterranean Free from Litter”. Joint programmes are under development with FAO/GFCM and UNCCD on blue economy, and drought policy and land restoration respectively.
- The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), where the UfM Secretariat was granted observer status, and actively participates in the Conference of Parties (COP) as well as in its Standing Committee on Finance.
- The UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States, with whom the UfM Secretariat has been collaborating in the last years on several initiatives, notably on women, youth and the prevention of violent extremism. The signature of an MoU in 2021 helped structure this partnership.
- WHO, on a number of issues, in the framework of the MoU signed in March 2020. Furthermore, more strategic and coordinated cooperation with UNIDO, ILO, UN Women and other key stakeholders, with whom the UfM Secretariat is working in the fields of employment and job creation, youth and women empowerment, will continue to be developed in the coming year.
- A joint event will be organized with UNAOC to renew their regional Mediterranean Strategy, with a focus on youth, in the first semester 2023 in the Balearic Islands (Spain).

➤ **Non-governmental and other actors**

The UfM Secretariat aims at including non-governmental and other actors in the efforts of promoting dialogue and cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region. It therefore includes NGOs, think-tanks, academia, youth associations, and others, in the regional policy dialogue fora, in its technical platforms or as promoters and partners of the UfM-labelled projects at the operational level.

During 2023 the UfMS will continue enhancing its approach by involving civil society, in particular universities and NGOs, to bring an interesting bottom-up perspective and share their regional analysis, knowledge, experience and proposals to tackle the current challenges, always in close coordination with the governments concerned.

In addition, another focus will be on increasing the involvement of Private Sector in regional policy sectorial dialogues, identifying the priority issues regarding regional economic integration, as well as contributing to projects development and financing.



Given the important contribution that they can bring to UfM regional efforts, the Secretariat will continue to widen and deepen its network of institutional and public affairs partnerships with think tanks and research centres throughout the region. A particular focus will be given to cooperation with the Euromesco network, building on the close relations established in the last years.

ii. **REINFORCING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH KEY ACTORS INVOLVED IN REGIONAL COOPERATION**

Reinforcing partnerships with financial institutions and bilateral and multilateral donors

As part of its efforts to strengthening strategic institutional partnerships with a set of key potential donors for UfM activities and projects, the UfM Secretariat will continue to strengthen and explore further structured long-term partnerships with some of the region's major partners, liable to support UfM projects and activities on a thematic basis.

- **Swedish International Development Agency (Sida):**

The cooperation agreement with Sida, started in 2017, was extended in July 2020 for an additional period of two years (till December 2022) and, in December 2021, to secure the continuity of the financial contribution of Sida, a new agreement covering the period 2022-2025 was agreed. A new feature in this cooperation is the change in terms of philosophy of intervention, moving from an operating grant to a programmatic approach. The cooperation between Sida and the UfM Secretariat for the upcoming period consists in a programme designed from a Results-Based Management (RBM) perspective, compatible with the mandate of the UfM and the Secretariat yearly work-programs, geared towards presenting the impact of the Secretariat activities and how the action of the UfM brings changes in the region. Through this process an enhanced coordination and interaction between divisions will be facilitated and synergies will be built.

In 2023 the UfM Secretariat will implement the 2023 work plan, formulated in coherence with the 2023 Work Program of the UfM Secretariat, according to the priorities jointly defined with Sida.

- **“UfM Hub for Jobs, Trade and Investment”, financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and commissioned to GIZ**

- From February 2022 to January 2025, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) will continue its ongoing support to the UfM Secretariat under the project “UfM Hub for Jobs, Trade and Investment”. Under this project, to be implemented by GIZ, 6,5 Mio EUR will be provided to support the activities of the UfM in the area of regional economic



- integration as well as employment and investment promotion in the UfM region.
- The project objectives for the priority areas of employment, trade and investment are:
 - Capacity Development for the UfM Secretariat
 - Development of recommendations for enhanced regional integration via UfM multi-stakeholder dialogues, regional exchanges and training formats
 - Development and implementation of measures in UfM Member States, particularly in North Africa and Middle East
 - During 2023, the UfM Secretariat will implement the 2023 work plan formulated according to the priorities jointly defined with GIZ and in coherence with the UfM Secretariat Work Programme.

As part of its funding strategy, the UfM Secretariat will intensify bilateral exchanges with potential financial and Development partners, such as AFD, AECID, The Netherlands and Italy, as well as explore any innovative ways of additional funding for UfM Secretariat activities and projects.



3.2. OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

i. PROJECT PROCESSES

The UfM Secretariat will continue to maintain, consolidate and improve the Project Monitoring System, as the reference tool for validated information and coherent and horizontal output on projects. Continuous efforts will be undertaken internally to ensure that the system remains relevant, updated and useful in view of providing an accurate and reliable overview of UfM labelled projects, internally and for the UfM Senior Officials.

Following the revision of the labelling approved by the Member States in 2018, the UfM Secretariat will continue to ensure the effective application of the approved recommendations, in particular:

- Encourage the discussion of projects to be potentially labelled within the UfM sectoral regional platforms, as a way of raising interest of and receiving feedback and support from all Member States, promoting complementarity and avoiding duplication with other ongoing activities in the region.
- Support, when justified, to label “Initiatives” or “Programmes”, which would by definition aim to promote a common regional approach and to cover as many countries as possible in the region, even though individual projects may remain national. This would have the added benefit of allowing for a more aligned and systematic approach within a given sector across the region.

Finally, the process of re-assessment of labelled projects will continue by the UfM Secretariat, in order to allow the SOM to determine whether the Label should be maintained or discontinued.

ii. INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE UfM Secretariat

2023 specific objectives and major actions

Taking into account the different levels of progress during previous years in terms of internal management, namely in improving the internal mechanisms of activities’ governance, accountability and compliance with internationally recognized standards, enhancing the quality of its processes and instruments towards optimization of resources, 2023’s main objectives will focus on the following directions:

- strengthen the internal mechanisms for business continuity, adaptation of internal processes and pivoting capabilities to respond to disasters and high exposure disruption.
- reinforce the internal capacities of the Secretariat to meet requirements and challenges derived from its role of platform and focal point of multisource funding. Therefore, strengthening mechanisms of funds management and channelling resources to final recipients as well as reporting activities will continue to represent a key area of 2022 action plan.



- streamline the Secretariat processes and working methods both in terms of financial, operational and resources management and in terms of corporate and logistical support in order to better implement its activities and fulfil mandates given by the Member States.
- sustain a sound internal and financial management in order to ensure compliance with applicable rules and regulations, in particular following the increased accountability requirements resulting from activities and partnerships growth as well as from diversification of funding sources and mechanisms.

➤ **Reinforcement of digitalization and optimization of ICT components**

Throughout previous years, the UfM Secretariat has put in place several applications, databases and tools (financial and accounting systems, database of Memoranda of Understanding and Agreements, Project Monitoring System, etc.) to better manage, monitor and report on its activities, and made further efforts, especially during 2016-2019 to operationalize them to its profile of business.

During 2023, the UfM Secretariat will focus its efforts to:

- Monitor and follow up the implementation of new telecommunications services with enhanced and optimized solutions for UfM both sites for which the tendering procedures have been finalized in 2022.
- Continue and strengthen the sustainability of management of its ICT assets, in terms of i) reinforcing the pair system in its main applications with a functional focal point (dealing with functionalities) of the system and a technical focal point (dealing with IT administration of the application); ii) enlarging the technical support to guarantee this pair system, the maintenance, the incident management of its applications.
- Take necessary steps to put into operation a helpdesk and IT expert capacity to support UfMS in managing its IT infrastructure and related installations. The technical specifications and terms of reference currently under preparation for tendering under public procurement procedures for after a short-term solution was put in place for helpdesk services with package of hours during 2020-2021.
- To move to a further stage with a more comprehensive protection and security package with an upgrade of its firewall/security solution following the second phase made in 2021-2022 in terms of optimization of IT solutions and infrastructure put into operation for the UfMS staff to work into two sites, in terms of servers and VPN management, firewalls set up and systems of data use and sharing.
- To enlarge and optimize the use update version of Microsoft 365 capacities including possible training and tutorials, One Drive functionalities as well as VPN and team-viewer resource which was launched in 2021 to enhance further UfM internal capacity. This optimization will be coming after of sharing data and VPN



have been further developed during 2020 owing to urgent needs generated by the covid-19 outbreak and subsequent teleworking requirements.

- To enhance the interplay and interconnection between applications in the perspective to centralize data for management use and following the 1st phase done in 2021-2022 for the integration of the Financial System application (BPM-Bizagi) and the Accounting System application (Microsoft NAVISON) via an appropriate interface. This integration will ensure more security for the transactions along with confidentiality, availability and integrity with data finally stored in the accounting system in the sense that accounts are only affected by authorized transactions processed in the financial system. It will support the reduction of manual processing and reduce transactions' time especially in terms of issuing payments through bank transfers.
- Pursue the ongoing internal project of documents' management application in order to better manage, use and safeguard all documents of the Institution in terms of working documents, technical, legal and administrative documents, studies and analysis papers in an organized manner. The documents' management is a second phase following electronic filing allowed by the financial system (all documents of technical nature and administrative nature are saved in the expenditure cycle in the financial system) that will enable an optimized use of available documents and institutional memory. At another level, the documents' management solution will ensure security and integrity of available data as it will allow the use of copies while safeguarding originals. The exploitation of documents capital of the Institution will be made easier and optimized through the interface of the documents' management application.
- Finalize the action plan covering assessment of systems and ICT assets. In this context,
 - Pursue the corrective and upgrade action plan derived from the assessment part (the IT Governance Consultancy: process initiated to align the UfM to international IT standards in terms of infrastructure, security and best practices). Therefore, critical actions set, required actions set and recommended action set pending for block 2 will be gradually implemented during 2023 (block 1 and 3 successfully finalized in 2022).
 - Start the third part of this endeavor which correspond to implementation of ITIL ((Information Technology Infrastructure Library) and includes: a) initial preparation, b) introduction to ITIL4, c) assessment, d) improvement plan.
- Finalize the upgrading of the Intranet and start implementation of the SSO (single sign on): authentication scheme that will allow UfM staff to log in with a single ID and password to any of several related, yet independent, software systems



currently in use. This is a continuation of the Internal Portal/Intranet put in operation in 2018 and stabilized in 2019 notably to enlarge its functionalities to include on one hand more capabilities of devices allocation, inventory and management and on the other hand more functionalities such as the creation of a unified database for the management of institutional external contacts asset, with the scope of insuring the persistence of data, the control of rights and the organization of the external contacts lifecycle.

Likewise, all ICT services and assets will be streamlined through progressive alignment to internationally recognized standards such as ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) with the necessary adaptation to UfMS profile of business. This compliance process with international standards will ensure a professionalization of all IT working methods, investment and management actions and better rationalize new actions benefiting from high level and up to date methods (enabling better needs analysis, better selection of solutions and technologies and rational for the equation of in-house activities and outsources ones) and provide framework allowing a strategic planning on the matter. The adoption of ITIL targets the improvement of the level of service provided by IT team with the definition of SLOs (Service Level Objectives).

These efforts are being accompanied by a progressive update and adaptation of the Secretariat's internal procedures, circulars, and manuals to reflect automated processes and authorization workflow.

➤ **Investing in internal capacities and optimization of resources**

During 2023 and following the conclusion of the new Multiple Framework Contract of events (*Organization of workshops, meetings & conferences - 04 - PRO259LAD-2020/PRO376LAD-2022*) the Secretariat will direct its efforts toward enhancing its standards operations procedures (SOP) for conference and events management in order:

- i) to streamline the planning of its conferences and expert's groups meetings,
- ii) to strengthen the design and preparation of these gatherings for better use of available resources,
- iii) to optimize the resources used for these events through better costing based on experience of previous years and best practices and enhancing the partnership with the providers while ensuring adherence to requirements of public procurement, accountability and transparency.

In order to accompany the activities growth, the UfM Secretariat's general resources, logistics and support services are being further optimized and enhanced in terms of equipment and facility services and working space. As initiated in 2017 and 2018 (finalization of the archiving room, video conference, data centers, etc.), efforts made in terms of allocating additional working space with subsequent facility services -renting temporary working space- as well as fitting out works, facility services and telecommunications related. During previous years (2019, 2020 and 2021), necessary actions were taken to accompany the re-allocation plan and putting in place support actions to facilitate work into two sites.



During 2023, the UfM Secretariat will focus its action to:

- Continue improving the working methods and technical arrangements for working into two sites with regard to circulation of dossiers, information sharing, meeting organization, security and access while keeping same quality standards in both sites as well as better using the available space.
- Revise its official registry processes and mailing management in order to put in place an upgraded Official Registry taking into account both the logistical feature of being into two site and the IT aspects of the registry. The upgraded UfM official registry is intended to deal with the following functions: receive, record and distribute incoming and internally created mail of all kinds ; open and index files, attach relevant papers and pass the files to action officers; build up and control all officially registered files and other documentation in their care, so that they can be produced quickly by means of effective indexing, classification and tracking procedures; know the location of all officially registered files in their care and be able to produce them quickly, by means of effective indexing, classification and tracking procedures; provide storage, repository and reference services for all officially registered files and other documentation in their care; record and arrange for the efficient and timely dispatch of all correspondence produced by the officers they serve.
- Pursue enforcing its archiving procedures following the putting into operation of the archiving room, its equipment and the circular on archiving during 2018-2019. Operating templates and routing slip will be further developed to ensure that documents as per the established nomenclature are archived centrally, retained the applicable durations/terms and that outdated documents following the internal rules are removed to keep an optimized archiving documentation.
- Take further steps improving UfMS compliance with environmental standards and best practices in workplace in terms of waste management, plastic use, recycling, energy use etc. An action plan will be established following best practices and taking into account the nature of its activities and characteristics of its sites.

Likewise, the Secretariat's human resources evolve within the framework of lean management to mitigate normal turnover of its staff members and to meet activities' needs namely the project and initiatives portfolio growth, requirements of cooperation programs with partner institutions, regional dialogue processes and to answer related implementation challenges. In this regard, in 2020-2021, despite covid-19 pandemic circumstances, further efforts both in terms of secondments and targeted recruitments in fields where expertise and support are most needed and critical will be made in accordance with limited resources and including internal recruitment and internal mobility deploying existing staff to areas with emerging needs.

In this context, the update of the Secretariat's legal framework was finalized in 2018 in line with best practices in similar institutions and inter-governmental organizations following a long process of preparation during 2016-2017 and covering its Statutes and Staff Regulations and introducing Implementing Rules for the Staff Regulations as well as a Code



of Conduct and an Anti-Fraud and Anticorruption Policy, aiming at aligning the legal framework with the current Secretariat's profile in terms of portfolio activities growth and simplifying and harmonizing the regulations for the better fulfilment of principles of equal treatment and accountability, as well as supporting efforts for geographical balance and promotion of ethical culture. This update was successfully implemented 2019-2020-2021 based on orderly internal action plan paying due regards to its main objectives, to needs to ensure business continuity and budget constraints.

During 2023, the UfM Secretariat will:

- Continue the first steps initiated in 2022 for HR processes digitalization with focus on HR database and platform for talent acquisition. This activity will be using the support of appropriate consultancy services to be contracted through public procurement procedures.
- Continue the process of implementation and related actions i.e. incremental system, tax regime. Indeed, the process of employment contract conversion has been quasi finalized with the majority of the staff contract converted into the new staff regulation and implementing rules regime.
- Initiate further steps dealing notably with series of instruments in relation to promotion and performance schemes, benefits packages, training policy, etc. as follow up and continuation of substantial progress has been made in the draft performance evaluation scheme during 2020.
- Maintain its work to further develop the instruments of internal organization and planning i.e. through regular update of the organigram and the staffing plan.
- Pursue its action to support the mechanism of governance notably the oversight committee. In this respect, after the members of the UfM Oversight Committee have been nominated and notified, the first meeting scheduled during 1st quarter 2020 but was prevented by the circumstances of covid-19 outbreak and the work was resumed in 2021 with UfM-OC visit to the UfM Secretariat in July 2021. The 2nd meeting took place in May 2022 with the team of consultants of the technical assistance which has been contracted to provide technical support to UfM-OC. Other sessions are foreseen for the committee to start and get acquainted with the institution functioning.

➤ **Continuous, sustainable sound financial management and streamlining internal processes**

Results of successive external audits on the Secretariat's accounts, use of funds and processes are positive and with unqualified opinions.

This sound management is continuous. In this respect, auditing processes covering the Secretariat's financial statements prepared under IPSAS (International Public Sector Accounting Standards) and expenditure verifications have been further enhanced during 2019 and 2020 through dedicated audits as per grant and cooperation agreements as well as by fostering a comprehensive approach of its accounting system under IPSAS, allowing thus a full picture of its resources and financial situation. In this respect, during 2020, the



accounting system has been updated and a module to follow up specific funds has been settled, in order to have control of the budget of these funds (i.e. Sida, GIZ, etc.) and how they are expended. This way of working allows to isolate from all the entries, the ones related to these specific funds and will allow us to get better control on the development of the activities.

During 2023, risk management and internal control framework as well as simplification and streamlining the Secretariat's internal processes and procedures, will continue to be further enlarged towards more comprehensive policies and internal processes, notably business continuity plan and internal control standards as per internationally recognized standards adapted to the UfM Secretariat context. Likewise, budgeting and financial management processes, in continuation of steps taken, will be enhanced through enlarging progressively the scope of Activity Based Budgeting (ABB) methodology to the whole of the Secretariat's budget in terms of resources allocations, so that the budget structure reflects the activity profile and use of funds of the Organization.

In this context, during 2023 the UfM Secretariat will more specifically:

- Continue developing tools in order to enforce methodologies of Result based management in its financial and accounting systems.
- Further reinforce its funds management policy with a more detailed standards operating procedures for grant management and sub-granting in line with European Union standards and procedures and in compliance with the Financial Regulations to meet requirements of funds channeling to final recipients.
- Work toward starting a formal process of pillar assessment following tests made in previous years and follow up actions that took place during 2018-2019, financial and system audit commissioned by the European Commission in 2020-2021 the system audit conducted by Sida in 2019.
- Strive to align its procedures and practices with Internal control standards and management of risks recognized methodologies notably EU-based ones and COSO ones' through updating and upgrading its internal manuals and policies. In this regard, mechanism of segregation of duties and avoidance of incompatibilities will be strengthening between the authorizing officer and the accounting officer duties. In this respect, during 2020, charters of authorizing officer, accounting officer and code of professional standards of financial actors have been prepared and put in place.
- Propose an internal audit scheme to be put in place in UfM in line with EU financial regulations and international best practices and taking into account the size of the Secretariat and its resources
- Work with the governance mechanism established notably the oversight committee and provide needed support and information to facilitate the performance of its duties
- Enhance the accountability and transparency schemes through making available more documentation on its use of funds to its MS and to the public notably through its website.
- Initiate process for putting in place a data protection policy with needed assessment, benchmarking and external technical support.



iii. COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

➤ Overview

The UfM Communication & Public Affairs Unit will focus on **communicating effectively the 2023 main initiatives, activities and achievements of the UfM Secretariat**, increasing the visibility, awareness and overall understanding of the organization's mission and role among its key target audiences and the general public.

The third edition of the **Day of the Mediterranean** and the joint initiative with the Anna Lindh Foundation on the **Capital of the Mediterranean** will constitute a communication priority for the year 2023. Likewise, **compelling human stories** will keep taking an important place in the UfM communication efforts as a concrete and tangible contribution of strengthening regional cooperation and delivering results that have an impact on people's lives. Furthermore, 2023 will mark the **15th anniversary of the creation of the UfM**. The UfM Secretariat will take advantage of this symbolic date to raise awareness on the role and mission of the organization and increase the visibility of the achievements made on regional dialogue and cooperation to date.

Keeping informed and **fostering engagement with the UfM main target audiences**, in particular with the media, closer partners (UfM ecosystem), opinion leaders and influencers will also be part of the communication endeavours.

The main target audiences of the UfM Secretariat will be:

- Government representatives (ministers, senior officials, parliamentarians, civil servants)
- International and regional organizations working on cooperation in the Mediterranean
- International Financial Institutions and development agencies
- UfM-labelled project promoters
- Opinion leaders: Think Tanks, Universities, researchers, experts, policy analysts
- Influential journalists and media actors
- The civil society, in particular youth

The UfM Secretariat will seek to meet the above-mentioned objectives through the following pillars of action:

➤ Media

2022 was marked by strong media events in the fields of climate action, women's empowerment and employment. These events helped the UfM Secretariat increase its database of journalists specialised in these topics. To continue strengthening relations with them and position the UfM as an expert in these fields, the Secretariat will pay particular attention to continuously share related information.



Due to the nature of the press in the Euro-Mediterranean region, the Communication Unit will continue **identifying and targeting selected renowned and influential journalists from the region** with the aim to raise awareness, increase visibility and foster engagement for an in-depth coverage in all sectors tackled by the Secretariat. The UfM Secretariat will be taking into special consideration the **Ministerial meetings and important events to be hosted in 2023**, to look for key media outlets and journalists to be contacted for media coverage. **It will also seek to identify partnerships with relevant media groups that can lead to impactful communication** towards UfM target audiences on the occasion of the Day of the Mediterranean, ad-hoc events, or via the organisation of debates and events with the participation of the UfM SG, DSGs and/or experts, depending on the theme.

Furthermore, the Secretariat will encourage **the organisation and/or the participation in regional media events in order to foster dialogue and networking among/with journalists** on topics of critical interest for the region.

The press office activity will be implemented as a transversal support to communicate on the most relevant sectorial activities through the following actions:

- The **dissemination of information** on the main UfM achievements and activities, including developing new pedagogical and audio-visual content, as well as awareness campaigns
- The **publication of articles, op-eds and interviews** with UfM representatives and UfM partners in renowned media across the region
- The arrangement of **informative meetings** with relevant media outlets across the region with the aim of building relations and ensuring visibility of UfM activities
- The organisation of **press briefings and conferences**.
- The organisation of **press trips to the UfM Secretariat, events or projects**. The Secretariat will build on these press trips to ensure a more in-depth coverage of the UfM activities.
- The arrangement of **one-to-one meetings with relevant journalists from the region** and the UfM SG and DSGs during their missions to Member States.

Furthermore, several transversal media campaigns will be implemented in 2023 to consolidate the UfM Secretariat's positioning as a reference institution for regional cooperation in the Mediterranean:

- **UfM Regional Forum:** The organisation of the UfM Regional Forum will lead to a specific media planning including a press visit to ensure regional coverage of the UfM key messages
- **Day of the Mediterranean and Capital of the Mediterranean:** Both initiatives will have a detailed media plan including a press announcement, a press release and visibility actions on Mediterranean initiatives and projects.
- **15th anniversary of the UfM:** Some press actions will shed light on the work and achievements made to date and on the priorities identified by the Foreign Affairs



Ministers in 2020 for the coming future. The campaign will include op-eds and interviews.

- **Important international days including the Women's Day, the World Water Day or the Environment Day.** The labelled projects, supported regional initiatives and ongoing work done by the Secretariat, each key international day will allow the organization to place different interviews and articles in the regional media.
- **Other important UfM events specified within this work programme**

➤ Digital communication

The global spread of digital communication technologies keeps profoundly transforming and reshaping the way all organisations and institutions operate and interact with the outside world. The UfM concentrates its digital efforts to capture the benefits of these trends and yearly improves its digital strategies to drive truly successful engagement amongst UfM priority audiences.

UfM website

The UfM website is at the core of UfM online strategy, a key tool to disseminate UfM content and engage with all partners and stakeholders. The UfM website is updated daily in 3 languages (English, French, and Arabic), has over 20K visitors per month and gathers all the information about the institution, as well as showcase its different activities, initiatives, publications and projects. In 2023 the UfM will continue to **translate the web content in 3 languages, as well as improve the traffic in French and Arabic.**

The year 2023 should see some new enhancements to the existing platform. Amongst its 2023 objectives, the website will seek to **increase the email subscriptions to the UfM institutional newsletters, increase visits and downloads for UfM publications**, as well as more available **content for targeted audiences, such as journalists**. In this sense, the UfM will seek to offer **more audio-visual content for download by broadcasters**, including high quality videos, as well as more human stories to better portray our efforts on the field. Building on the current website, the UfM Secretariat will **develop special designs for landing pages**, including the annual report, but will also seek to visually **improve the general overlay of homepage, menus and sidebars**. Furthermore, **the webpages of the UfM regional platforms will be redesigned and updated** with a view to better explaining their purpose, their work, and their ongoing activities.

Ongoing back-office improvements will continue throughout 2023, adapting all new pages to **Search Engine Optimization (SEO)**, the process of making changes to our website design and content to make the site more attractive to the search engines, especially Google. According to the analytics, over one third of the total UfM website traffic comes from Google. Therefore, the improvement of SEO in posts, pages and images in all languages is a needed ongoing task to ensure the visibility of the UfM website online.



Finally, the year 2023 should also see **enhancements in mobile/responsive view of the website** as mobile users account now for one third of website visitors (stats from June 2022). All web developments will have to take into the site's compatibility with mobile version and include tests verify proper visualization on mobile devices, including readability and adaptive design.

Day of the Mediterranean website

Born in the 2021, the Day of the Mediterranean website is now a platform updated in 8 languages: English, French, Arabic, Spanish, Italian, German, Portuguese and Catalan. The website gathers information and download materials around the Day of the Mediterranean and receives around 27k views a year (data of June 2022).

In 2023 the **website should see all updates to the new day goals and campaigns as well as new digital identity in line with the strategy for the year celebration**. Among others, it is foreseen to keep improving its SEO positioning and mobile version to become the hub of Mediterranean activities and initiatives around the international day. The platform will likely include more partners joining the celebrations as well as more materials to download for social media, etc.

Mailing / Emailing

Email campaigns are key to the UfM's online communication's strategy, as many of the Secretariat's partners and stakeholders are informed of UfM activities and initiatives through the regular diffusion of newsletters and sectorial bulletins. The general newsletter database gathers over 27,000 contacts. In 2023, the UfM Secretariat will seek to progressively **increase this database, notably in for French and Arabic stakeholders**. In 2023, **human stories with positive impact across the region will also be more prominent in the UfM newsletter to be able to portray real stories of the ground**. The UfM newsletter will continue to feature political dialogue events, platforms, key publications and other news, along with shared initiatives with partners organisations. Also, as every year, specific sectorial emails will be sent to key audiences on key UfM activities and topics such as women empowerment, climate change, blue economy, etc.

Social Media

The UfM's social media platforms gather over 500K followers on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram (data from June 2022). These platforms are essential vehicles to inform the journalists, opinion leaders, stakeholders, policymakers, experts and professionals but also civil society, in particular youth. The UfM Secretariat also publishes photos, videos and other information on platforms such as Flickr, YouTube and Wikipedia. In 2023, the UfM will continue to **increase its follower's base under the principle of geographical balance** and reach out to its key audiences in order to enhance visibility to the UfM Secretariat activities and initiatives taking place in the Euro-Mediterranean region.



Through specific online campaigns, the UfM seeks to shed light on key issues such as climate change and the fight against plastic pollution, women's empowerment, or youth unemployment, as well as **expand its engagement and positive advocacy**. In 2023, the UfM will continue to draft content to showcase Mediterranean human-interest stories, UfM activities and the third edition of the Day of the Mediterranean.

In 2023, the UfM will also seek **to involve young regional influencers to further reach younger audiences**, notably on Instagram and on wider topics of the Day of the Mediterranean. Younger people are more likely to engage with an influencer on social media, therefore partnerships with influencers can help not only make the UfM known to new audiences but also create social media buzz around UfM areas of work. Actions with these influencers will seek to solidify a stronger UfM e-reputation. Besides young influencers, the UfM Secretariat will improve the identification of these key social media accounts such as other international institutions (international organizations, mainly those related to the UfM working areas and the UfM ecosystem), project promoters and journalists.

Visually, the UfM will continue to **create new designs across all platforms creating a distinguishable visual guideline, notably in Instagram**, and increase the production of audiovisual materials videos, infographics, and animations to be featured both on social media platforms but also in the UfM websites.

➤ Public affairs

Identify key target audiences

Efforts to **identify and update key contacts within the main UfM target audiences** will continue throughout 2023 with a view to keeping the UfM ecosystem up to date on the organization's news. The perspective to establish an annual Capital of the Mediterranean would provide an opportunity to further identify new contacts and engage with local authorities and their respective ecosystems.

Furthermore, an additional focus will be given to the identification of personalities who are particularly active on the digital platforms, which are gradually gaining more influence compared to the traditional communication channels. This will lead to **identify digital influencers and opinion-leaders with a view to involving them in UfM events and conferences**.

As every year, **communications will align with the thematic European year**. The UfM Secretariat will **identify the appropriate stakeholders with a view to building communication synergies**. On another hand, 2023 will also see **Spain take the presidency of the European Union (1st July 2023)**. In that sense, and since the UfM Headquarters are located in Spain, more opportunities to identify and engage with local stakeholders will arise, yet again in the spirit of fostering synergies in the region.

Engagement activities



Ensuring strong political and institutional support from a consolidated network of stakeholders is an essential part of the UfM Secretariat's strategy. The Secretariat must foster a sense of trust towards its wider audience since UfM endeavours are directed towards improving the lives of the citizens.

In 2023, **the Secretariat will thus implement outreach actions in line with the UfM calendar of activities and the overall calendar of regional events and initiatives.** This will allow to build synergies with other partners and increase the awareness and visibility of the Secretariat's activities:

- **8th UfM Regional Forum:** as every year, the UfM Secretariat will organise its 8th Regional Forum. As the major political conference organised by the UfM, the Regional Forum represents a timely occasion to bring together the UfM Foreign Affairs ministers, experts, and the civil society to discuss the regional priorities, share best practices and enable a multi-stakeholder discussion on topics of relevance. Furthermore, this edition of the Regional Forum will be of particular importance as it will coincide with the 15th anniversary of the creation of the UfM. In terms of communication, this milestone will allow for a comprehensive communication campaign around the Regional Forum and will also give a great opportunity to receive incoming visits of journalists and organise interviews with multiple stakeholders, showcase the UfM endeavours through exhibitions and other promotional material as well as feed the digital communication with a variety of content targeting the different UfM audiences.
- **Day of the Mediterranean and Capital of the Mediterranean initiative:** the UfM Secretariat will keep building awareness around the third edition of the celebrations, while looking for **synergies and collaborations with partner organisations.** In particular, the Communication Unit will seek to build partnerships ahead of this international day and **the Capital of the Mediterranean.** This joint initiative pushed notably by the UfM Secretariat and the Anna Lindh Foundation will provide additional opportunities for both organisations to engage and collaborate. The UfM Secretariat will also keep encouraging stakeholders and cultural actors to join the celebrations of the Day, aiming at fostering a shared Mediterranean identity and a sense of belonging. Finally, other engagement actions will also be implemented with influencers and opinion-leaders who have a far-reaching audience.
- **Engaging with academia and regional initiatives:** The Secretariat will explore the possibility to **participate in important regional events/conferences** related to the UfM scope of work via the organisation of side-events and/or placing UfM speakers or informative booths with the aim to reach and inform wider and diverse audiences. In order to reinforce the UfM position as expert in Mediterranean matters, the UfM Secretariat will continue to organise **joint debates and closed briefings,** notably with experts from renowned think tanks and academic institutions, tackling key topics of interest in the region. Furthermore, the Communication Unit will strive to organise more **one-to-one or group meetings with academia representatives** (coming mainly from think tanks and universities) with UfM diplomats and experts, taking the opportunity brought by UfM staff's missions to foster engagement with the local ecosystems.



Finally, the UfM Secretariat will also keep ensuring that the UfM key audiences are fully informed and engaged in the UfM mission by organising informative activities such as **visits of groups of target audiences including parliamentarians, students from renowned Universities and representatives of institutions from the UfM ecosystem.**

➤ **Communication tools and publications**

UfM institutional and sectorial publications and info tools (Annual report, brochure, press kit, newsletters, PPT, leaflets, reports, videos, etc.) are valuable tools to present the UfM Secretariat activities to external stakeholders. UfM publications will continue to be **regularly updated in 2023** to reflect the newest endeavours of the UfM Secretariat.

The **2022 UfM Annual Report** will showcase the major highlights and milestones reached in 2022, including a special focus on the second celebration of the Day of the Mediterranean and on the Mediterranean Pavilion at the COP27.

The UfM Secretariat will also continue to create **audio-visual material on UfM projects and initiatives**, as short videos are a great way to share multiple messages in an entertaining way for the viewers. Likewise, audio-visual content has the advantage of being easily shareable on a multitude of online platforms. Furthermore, building on the UfM-labelled projects as well as the several initiatives supported by the Secretariat, the Communication Unit will conduct in 2023 more **field trips to meet with the people behind each project, interview beneficiaries and record images of the projects' day-to-day**, with the aim to showcase the positive impact on the ground of UfM endeavours. These trips will also nurture the UfM photo database of implemented projects, which are used to illustrate any kind of publication or web-related content and are also useful to regularly update the UfM Photo Exhibition of UfM-supported projects and initiatives.

Moreover, **videos** will also be developed in the framework of the **Day of the Mediterranean** to showcase the Mediterranean diversity while reinforcing the narrative aiming at strengthening a sense of regional unity.

Aiming to build an emotional connection with the UfM wider audience, the Communication Unit will keep focusing on the **creation of Human Stories** whose protagonists come from UfM-labelled projects and other supported initiatives, but also partners, collaborators, or institutional stakeholders, creating compelling narratives to illustrate the tangible contribution of a strengthened regional cooperation and its positive impact on peoples' lives.

Finally, the Communication Unit will continue to coordinate the production of **sectorial publications, ensuring the visual coherence amongst all publications**, while disseminating the key findings of expert reports to its target audiences.



Union pour la Méditerranée
Union for the Mediterranean
الإتحاد من أجل المتوسط



4. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: GLOSSARY

| | |
|-------------|--|
| AASTMT | Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport |
| Ad-hoc SOM | Ad-hoc Senior Official Meeting (usually dedicated to a thematic area) |
| ADF | African Disability Forum |
| AECHE | Arab-Euro Conference on Higher Education |
| AECID | Spanish cooperation agency |
| AfD | Agence Française de Développement |
| AFDB | African Development Bank |
| AFED | Arab Forum for Environment and Development |
| ALF | Anna Lindh Foundation |
| AMU | Arab Maghreb Union |
| ANCT | French National Agency for Territorial Cohesion |
| AOPD | Arab Organization of Persons with Disabilities |
| ARLEM | Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly |
| ASEAN | Association of Southeast Asian Nations |
| ATU | Agadir Technical Unit |
| AUC | African Union Commission |
| AVITEM | Agence des Villes et Territoires Méditerranéens Durables |
| BE | Blue Economy |
| BLUEMED | Research and Innovation Initiative for Blue Jobs and Growth in the Mediterranean Area |
| BMZ | Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany |
| BSVVC | Black Sea Virtual Knowledge Centre |
| BUSINESSMED | Union of Mediterranean Confederations of Enterprises |
| CCEG | Climate Change Expert Group |
| CETMO | Centre for Transport Studies in Western Mediterranean |
| CIHEAM | International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies |
| CIS | Commonwealth of Independent States |
| CMI | Centre for Mediterranean Integration |
| CoE | Council of Europe |
| CP | Civil Protection |
| CPRM | Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions – Inter-Mediterranean Commission |
| CSF | Civil Society Facility |
| DSG | Deputy Secretary General |
| EBRD | European Bank for Reconstruction and Development |
| EC | European Commission |
| EDF | European Disability Forum |
| EESC | European Economic and Social Committee |



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|-----------|--|
| EFDRR | European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction |
| EIB | European Investment Bank |
| EIGE | European Institute for Gender Equality |
| EMUNI | Euro-Mediterranean University |
| ENI CBC | European Neighbourhood Instrument for Cross Border Cooperation |
| ESA | European Space Agency |
| ESCWA | Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia |
| ESD | Education for Sustainable Development |
| ETF | European Training Foundation |
| ETSP | Euromed Transport Support Project |
| EU | European Union |
| EUKN | European Urban Knowledge Network |
| EuroMeSCo | Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization |
| FEMISE | Forum Euroméditerranéen des Instituts de Sciences Économiques |
| FOMEJE | Mediterranean Forum for Youth |
| FSSD | Food Systems Dialogues |
| GAP | Gender Action Plan |
| GCEF | Global Citizenship Education Fund |
| GCF | Green Climate Fund |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GGKP | Green Growth Knowledge Partnership |
| GIZ | Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Development Agency) |
| GMF | German Marshall Fund of the United States |
| GWP-Med | Global Water Partnership-Med |
| HUL | Historic Urban Landscape |
| IAPH | International Association of Ports and Harbours |
| ICMPD | International Centre for Migration Policy Development |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technologies |
| IDMC | Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre |
| IEMED | European Institute of the Mediterranean |
| IFI | International Financial Institution |
| IKI | International Climate Initiative |
| ILO | International Labour Organisation |
| IME | Institut Méditerranéen de l'Eau |
| IMISCOE | International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion |
| IMO | International Maritime Organization |
| INSS | Institute for National Security Studies |
| INWRDAM | Inter-Islamic Network on Water Resources Development and Management |
| IOM | International Organisation for Migration |
| IPA II | Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance |
| IPSAS | International Public Sector Accounting Standards |
| ITC | International Trade Center |
| ITF | International Transport Forum |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature |









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|----------|---|
| JRC | Joint Research Centre |
| KAS | Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Foundation |
| MAR1 | First Mediterranean Assessment Report |
| Med4Jobs | Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs / UfM Initiative for Youth Employment |
| MedECC | Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change |
| MEDENER | Mediterranean Association of National Agencies for Energy Management |
| MENA | Middle East and North Africa |
| MINBUZA | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands |
| MSME | Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprise |
| MSSD | Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development |
| MYCN | Mediterranean Youth Climate Network |
| NDCs | Nationally Determined Contributions |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| NSC | North-South Center |
| OCEMO | Office of Economic Cooperation in the Mediterranean and the Middle East |
| OGS | Italian National Institute of Oceanography and Applied Geophysics |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Development |
| ONCE | Spanish National Organization of Blind People |
| OSCE | Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe |
| PA-UfM | Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean |
| PEEB | Programme for Energy Efficiency in Buildings |
| PIDA | Plan for Infrastructure Development in Africa |
| PPRD | Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-Made disasters |
| PRIMA | Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area |
| PWE | Promoting Women's Empowerment for Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development in the MENA Region |
| REMPEC | Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre |
| ROM | Results Oriented Monitoring |
| RTAP | Regional Transport Action Plan for the Mediterranean Region |
| SCP | Sustainable Consumption and Production |
| SCP/RAC | Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SEO | Search Engine Optimization |
| SFS-MED | Sustainable Food Systems in the Mediterranean region |
| Sida | Swedish International Development Agency |
| SG | Secretary General |
| SME | Small and Medium-sized Enterprise |
| SOM | Senior Officials' Meeting |
| SPM | Summary for Policy Makers |
| SPREF | SEMed Private Renewable Energy Framework |
| TA | Technical Assistance |
| TENT-T | Trans-European Transport Network |
| TU Delft | Delft University of Technology |
| TVET | Technical and Vocational Education and Training |
| UCPM | Union Civil Protection Mechanism |



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|-----------------|--|
| UEMF | Euro-Med University of Fes |
| UfM Secretariat | UfM Secretariat |
| UITP | Union Internationale des Transports Publics |
| UNCBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| UNCCD | United Nations Convention on Desertification |
| UNCTAD | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |
| UN DESA | United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| UNECA | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa |
| UNECE | United Nations Economic Commission for Europe |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNEP-MAP | UNEP - Mediterranean Action Plan |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNESCWA | United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| UNIDO | United Nations Industrial Development Organisation |
| UNIMED | Mediterranean Universities Union |
| UNOSSC | United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation |
| UPFI | Urban Projects Finance Initiative |
| WASH | Water, Sanitation and Hygiene |
| WBIF | Western Balkans Investment Forum |
| WEFE | Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus |
| WEG | UfM Water Expert Group |
| WEM | Water and Environment Management |
| WES | Water and Environment Support |
| WG | Working Group |
| WHO | World Health Organisation |
| WMO | World Meteorological Organization |
| WWF | World Water Forum |



ANNEX 2: LABELLED PROJECTS⁸

| | Name of the project | Promoter | Project status | Priority area | Date of labelling |
|---|--|---|----------------|---|-------------------|
| 1 | Euro-Mediterranean Guarantee Network | European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) | Ongoing |  Business Development | 15/06/2022 |
| 2 | EURO-MED Governance | Interreg MED programme Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat | Ongoing |  Water, Environment and Blue Economy | 09/12/2021 |
| 3 | Implementing a Rapid Response Mechanism for Higher Education in Emergencies in the Euro-Med region (EuroMed-RRM) | Global Platform for Higher Education in Emergencies | Ongoing |  Higher Education and Research | 21/10/2021 |
| 4 | Startup Europe Mediterranean (SEMED) | FacilityLive OpCo S.r.l. | Ongoing |  Higher Education and Research | 17/06/2021 |
| 5 | Strengthening capacity for a public health approach to preventing and responding to violence against women and girls in the countries from the Euro-Mediterranean region | World Health Organisation (WHO) | Ongoing |  Social and Civil Affairs | 05/11/2020 |
| 6 | Enhancing the conservation of coastal wetlands in the Mediterranean Basin | The Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet) | Ongoing |  Water, Environment and Blue Economy | 05/11/2020 |
| 7 | UPFI-ERI, Urban Projects Finance Initiative - Economic Resilience Initiative | European Investment Bank (EIB/BEI) | Ongoing |  Transport and Urban Development | 16/06/2020 |
| 8 | ENI CBC MED thematic clusters | ENI CBC MED Programme – Managing Authority | Ongoing | Cross-cutting | 18/12/2019 |
| 9 | Environmental Fund for Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas: The MedFund | Association for Sustainable Financing of Mediterranean MPAs | Ongoing |  Environment and Water | 02/10/2019 |

⁸ Up to date as of September 2022.



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|----|---|--|---------|---------------------------------|------------|
| 10 | Interreg MED Green Growth community | Interreg MED programme Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat (Interreg MED programme) | Ongoing | Environment and Water | 02/10/2019 |
| 11 | Optimising the implementation of the 2nd RBMP in the Malta River Basin District (LIFE-IP RBMP-MALTA) | Energy and Water Agency of Malta (Energy and Water Agency of Malta) | Ongoing | Environment and Water | 02/10/2019 |
| 12 | EU for Climate action in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood | European Commission (EC/CE) | Ongoing | Energy and Climate Action | 28/03/2019 |
| 13 | Blue Jobs and Growth in the Mediterranean area throughout Enhancing Skills and Developing Capacities (BlueSkills= | National Institute of Oceanography and Applied Geophysics (OGS) | Ongoing | Higher Education and Research | 28/03/2019 |
| 14 | Scaling up forest and landscape restoration in order to restore biodiversity and promote joint mitigation and adaptation approaches in the Mediterranean | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) | Ongoing | Environment and Water | 20/09/2018 |
| 15 | Euro-Mediterranean Smart City Innovation Centres | Euromed Cities Network | Ongoing | Transport and Urban Development | 20/09/2018 |
| 16 | Med Coasts for Blue Growth | CPMR Intermediterranean Commission | Ongoing | Environment and Water | 11/12/2017 |
| 17 | INCORPORA, a labour integration program | "La Caixa" Banking Foundation (La Caixa) | Ongoing | Business Development | 16/10/2017 |
| 18 | TransLogMED | European School of Short Sea Shipping (2e3s) | Ongoing | Transport and Urban Development | 16/10/2017 |
| 19 | Fostering SME competitiveness and trade in the Agadir Agreement member countries phase 1 - pilot phase | Agadir Technical Unit (ATU) | Ongoing | Business Development | 14/10/2016 |
| 20 | Elaboration and implementation of a demand-driven toolbox for youth-orientated, innovative labour market services in the MENA region - "Toolbox Project" (TP) | German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) | Ongoing | Business Development | 01/06/2016 |



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|----|--|--|-----------|---|------------|
| 21 | Eastern Mediterranean International School | Hakfar Hayarok | Ongoing |  Higher Education and Research | 01/06/2016 |
| 22 | UPFI Multi-Site Regeneration Project in Jericho | Municipality of Jericho | Completed |  Transport and Urban Development | 01/06/2016 |
| 23 | SEMed Private Renewable Energy Framework | European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD/BERD) | Ongoing |  Energy and Climate Action | 16/02/2016 |
| 24 | Plastic Busters for a Mediterranean free from litter | MED Solutions network, University of Siena (Italy) (UN SDSN Mediterranean) | Ongoing |  Environment and Water | 16/02/2016 |
| 25 | Women's Right To Health | WHO Collaborating Center for early detection and cancer screening (CPO) | Ongoing |  Social and Civil Affairs | 16/02/2016 |
| 26 | UfM Energy University by Schneider Electric | Schneider Electric Global (Schneider) | Ongoing |  Energy and Climate Action | 27/11/2015 |
| 27 | UNIDO Women Economic Empowerment in the MENA Region | United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) | Ongoing |  Social and Civil Affairs | 27/11/2015 |
| 28 | EUROMED Invest Promotion & Observatory - EMIPO | ANIMA Investment Network (ANIMA Investment Network) | Completed |  Business Development | 27/11/2015 |
| 29 | Economic Development through Inclusive and Local Empowerment - EDILE - Phase 1 | ANIMA Investment Network (ANIMA Investment Network) | Completed |  Business Development | 27/11/2015 |
| 30 | Femmes d'Avenir | Sciences Po Paris | Completed |  Social and Civil Affairs | 24/05/2015 |
| 31 | CEED Empowering Women in Business | CEED Global | Ongoing |  Social and Civil Affairs | 24/05/2015 |
| 32 | UPFI Development Project for Phase 3 of the Bouregreg Valley Development Plan | Bouregreg Valley Development Agency (AAVB) | Ongoing |  Transport and Urban Development | 24/05/2015 |
| 33 | Med4Jobs - Regional Youth Employability Program - Maharat | Business Development Center (BDC) | Ongoing |  Business Development | 31/03/2015 |
| 34 | High Opportunity for Mediterranean Executives Recruitment | Mediterranean Network of Engineering Schools/Universities (RMEI) | Ongoing |  Higher Education and Research | 04/12/2014 |
| 35 | Capacity Building Programme on Water Integrity in the Middle East and North Africa | Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) | Ongoing |  Environment and Water | 04/12/2014 |
| 36 | Med4Jobs - Réseau Entreprendre en Méditerranée | Reseau Entreprendre International (REI) | Completed |  Business Development | 04/12/2014 |



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|----|---|---|-----------|---------------------------------|------------|
| 37 | UPFI Sfax Taparura Project | Society for the Study and Development of the North Coast of the city of Sfax (SEACNVS) | Ongoing | Transport and Urban Development | 04/12/2014 |
| 38 | Méditerranée Nouvelle Chance II | European Institute of Cooperation and Development (IECD) | Ongoing | Higher Education and Research | 04/12/2014 |
| 39 | Promoting Mobile Financial Services in the Mediterranean partner countries | Bank al-Maghreb/Central Bank of Jordan (Bank al-Maghreb/Central Bank of Jordan) | Completed | Business Development | 02/06/2014 |
| 40 | BlueGreen Networking Civil Society in the Mediterranean through environment and water issues | Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE) | Completed | Environment and Water | 02/06/2014 |
| 41 | Establishment of a Regional Platform for the Development of Culture and Creative Industries and Clusters in the Southern Mediterranean Countries | United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) | Completed | Business Development | 02/06/2014 |
| 42 | Tafila Wind Farm 117MW | Jordan Wind Project Company PSC (JWPC) | Ongoing | Energy and Climate Action | 07/04/2014 |
| 43 | MedReSCP: Post Rio +20 - Supporting the adoption of sustainable consumption and production patterns, in particular resource efficiency, in the Mediterranean region | European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD/BERD) | Completed | Environment and Water | 07/04/2014 |
| 44 | Citizenship and equality education for school prevention of violence: Forming Responsible Citizens | Ideaborn | Ongoing | Social and Civil Affairs | 07/04/2014 |
| 45 | Mediterranean Knowledge Platform on Water (Med Water Knowledge) | Office International de l'Eau/Institut Méditerranéen de l'Eau (OIEau/IME) | Ongoing | Environment and Water | 07/04/2014 |
| 46 | Integrated Programme for the Protection of the Lake Bizerte against Pollution | Government of Tunisia, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development | Ongoing | Environment and Water | 03/10/2013 |
| 47 | Med4Jobs - Generation Entrepreneur | Injaz Alarab | Ongoing | Business Development | 03/10/2013 |



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| 48 | Euro-Mediterranean Development Centre for MSMEs | Chamber of Commerce of Milan (Promos) | Completed |  Business Development | 04/12/2012 |
| 49 | Higher Education on Food Security & Rural Development | International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) | Ongoing |  Higher Education and Research | 04/12/2012 |
| 50 | Jordan National Railway Project | Government of Jordan, Ministry of Transport | Ongoing |  Transport and Urban Development | 04/12/2012 |
| 51 | Skills for Success: Employability Skills for Women | AMIDEAST | Ongoing |  Social and Civil Affairs | 28/06/2012 |
| 52 | Université euro-méditerranéenne de Fès / Euro-Mediterranean University of Fes | Government of Morocco, Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Professional Training (MESRCFC) | Ongoing |  Higher Education and Research | 28/06/2012 |
| 53 | Completion of the Central Section of the trans-Maghreb Motorway Axis | Technical Secretariat of GTMO 5+5 (CETMO) | Ongoing |  Transport and Urban Development | 10/02/2012 |
| 54 | Developing Women Empowerment | Fondation des Femmes de l'EuroMéditerranée (FFEM) | Completed |  Social and Civil Affairs | 16/12/2011 |
| 55 | LOGISMED Training Activities | European Investment Bank (EIB/BEI) | Completed |  Transport and Urban Development | 18/11/2011 |
| 56 | EMUNI Master programmes | Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI) | Ongoing |  Higher Education and Research | 17/11/2011 |
| 57 | Three areas of EMUNI PhD Research Programmes | Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI) | Completed |  Higher Education and Research | 17/11/2011 |
| 58 | Young Women as Job Creators - Phase 1 | Association of Organisations of Mediterranean Businesswomen (AFAEMME) | Ongoing |  Social and Civil Affairs | 25/09/2011 |
| 59 | Master Study Programme in Risk Science | Euro-Mediterranean Institute of Risk Science (IEMSR) | Completed |  Higher Education and Research | 15/09/2011 |
| 60 | Overcoming Governance Challenges for the Mobilization of Financing in the Water Sector (Governance & Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector) | Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean/Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (GWP-Med/OECD) | Completed |  Environment and Water | 09/07/2011 |
| 61 | Desalination Facility for the Gaza Strip Project | Government of Palestine | Ongoing |  Environment and Water | 22/06/2011 |