



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

SECRETARIAT OF THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2021



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INTRODUCTION - Overall strategic objectives of the UfM Secretariat for 2021

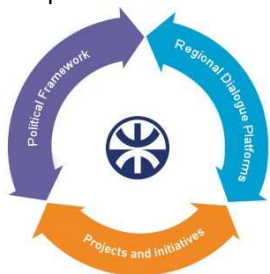
The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is an intergovernmental Euro-Mediterranean organization gathering, on equal footing and representation, the 27 Member States of the European Union and the 15 countries of the Southern and the Eastern Mediterranean shores. As a direct continuation of the Barcelona Process, the launch of the UfM in July 2008 was a true reflection of the shared political commitment of its 43 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 UfM Secretariat), 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 recent 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, social partners, 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.

Beyond the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Process: tackling the new challenges faced in the Mediterranean region through strengthened cooperation and dialogue

The last few years have marked a turning point for the institution, both at a political and operational level. Indeed, new challenges have arisen throughout the Euro-Mediterranean region, threatening the stability, security and prosperity of the area and calling for a reinforced cooperation.

Among these challenges, the high levels of socio-economic inequality, the upcoming redefinition of jobs in a still unpredictable future of work, the pressing climate change emergency and more recently the Covid-19 pandemic have pushed the region into an unprecedented crisis, the severity of which has not been seen in almost a century.

Its repercussions, be they political, socio-economic environmental or even cultural, will be extremely far-reaching, and will likely unfold for years to come. In fact, these new challenges expose and exacerbate vulnerabilities and inequalities within and among countries, and reconfirm that the systems on which we depend, are not only increasingly interdependent, but also growingly vulnerable.

This reality, valid at a global scale, is nonetheless a more urgent one for the Mediterranean region, where conditions of fragility and exposure are further concentrated, especially for vulnerable groups. The region faces today a stark and urgent reminder of the need for tangible and coherent cooperation across borders, sectors and people.

The Covid-19 pandemic has particularly affected the UfM Secretariat activities. The footprint of the Institution in the region is inevitably affected, mainly due to the lack of physical activity on the ground in the different capitals of the region.

In the face of this situation, the UfM Secretariat has strived during 2020 to adapt its functioning and its activities to best respond to the pandemic, and underline the positive impact cooperation and solidarity can have on this crisis. The UfM Secretariat has implemented different measures to contribute to the response to the consequences of the COVID-19, and ultimately to the achievement of an inclusive and sustainable development throughout the region.

2021 Work Programme: building the way forward

In this context, the UfM Secretariat will implement its 2021 Work Programme in accordance to the health and sanitary measures in place across the Euro-Mediterranean region, keeping in line with the 2017 Roadmap, the policy guidelines validated by the UfM Member States, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Such endeavours will seek to pave the way to a post-2020 agenda that responds to the new challenges faced by the Euro-Mediterranean region.

More specifically, the UfM Secretariat will capitalise on its consolidated experience to step up its activities in the socio-economic, health and research and environmental sectors, and enhance their impact in the four areas of action identified by the 2017 Roadmap, namely:



1. **Enhancing political dialogue amongst the Member States on key issues of the region:** The UfM Secretariat will further deepen and expand this dialogue to improve the effectiveness of its operational activities.

Following the 25th anniversary of the launching of the Barcelona Process, as well as the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the UfM Secretariat, the Secretariat will build on the reinforced commitment of the UfM Member-States and Co-Presidency to the principles of the Barcelona Process, the renewed European Neighbourhood Policy and more generally to Euro-Mediterranean dialogue and cooperation through the UfM.

As stipulated in the Roadmap and to coincide with the anniversary of the Barcelona Conference, the VI UfM Regional Forum will be held in November 2021.

Furthermore, the UfM Secretariat will also work on strengthening political dialogue at the level of Senior Officials during their meetings (SOM), cornerstone of the UfM governance and structure. The SOM will continue piloting the review of the UfM strategy and mandate, in close coordination with the UfM Co-Presidency and Secretariat.

Ensuring the contribution of UfM activities to regional stability and human development: Placing the people and their demands at the heart of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, the UfM Secretariat will address the root causes of challenges such as migration, violent extremism and terrorism by promoting economic growth and social cohesion with particular emphasis on business development, employment, employability and decent work, higher education, research and innovation, women and youth empowerment.

More concretely, 2021 will see the consolidation of UfM activities in these fields through the implementation of the Ministerial mandates adopted in the last years, namely on Employment and Labour, Trade, Women Empowerment and Higher Education and Research.

New initiatives to promote economic cooperation, trade and investment at regional and sub-regional level will be developed, with a strong involvement of the private sector, whose role will be reinforced in the framework of the Med4Jobs Initiative.

The Secretariat will also follow the implementation of the beneficiary projects of the UfM Grant Scheme for employment promotion, which actively supports non-profit organizations in the Mediterranean that work to give people opportunities in view of the COVID-19-induced economic crisis. The grant scheme focuses on projects that enable people to find jobs, continue to gain a living and improve their work and living conditions. At the same time, it seeks to support projects that encourage entrepreneurship and improve the business climate for Micro-, Small and Medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) as crucial providers of employment in the Mediterranean region.

Moreover, the follow-up on the results of UfM Progress Report on Regional Integration, mandated by Member States, will be launched, covering different dimensions of regional integration, from Trade and Foreign Direct Investments, to Financial Markets and Mobility.

Finally, given the importance of education as a prerequisite for development and stability, reinforced links will be established between the fields of higher education, research and innovation, and other UfM areas of action,



notably employment, environment and climate action, energy, blue economy, with a strong focus on mobility and peer-to-peer learning. The results and recommendations of the Study on the Internationalization of Higher Education in the Euro-Mediterranean Region will be presented in Bulgaria (*if travel limitations do not persist due to the COVID19 pandemic*).

Such developments will feed into the advancement of one of the major crosscutting issues under this objective, namely youth empowerment. The UfM Secretariat will work towards finalizing its first Strategy for Youth, which will seek to unleash the full potential of young people in achieving development and stability.

2. **Strengthening regional integration:** With the aim of enhancing connectivity and cohesion in the Euro-Mediterranean region, the UfM Secretariat will continue to promote a strong regional agenda on connectivity and sustainable development.

The UfM Secretariat will reinforce its activities on infrastructure, transport networks, sustainable urban development, environment, water, blue economy, climate action, energy connectivity and sustainable energy supply by holding the Ministerial Conferences on these issues in 2021 and in the coming years. The Secretariat will adopt priorities and objectives that are relevant to the current UfM regional context, and equip the UfM with tools to better address the post-2020 challenges.

Furthermore, the UfM Secretariat will reinforce synergies among global, regional, national and local levels to implement its sustainable development agenda efficiently, and in line with the UN 2030 Agenda methodology of action.

It will notably work with global partners in the promotion of climate finance, with national authorities in the implementation of the UfM Water Agenda and its associated financial strategy, as well as with cities and local authorities on their energy transition and energy efficiency through the UfM Energy Transition @Local Initiative.

3. **Strengthening UfM capacity for action:** The UfM Secretariat will continue to consolidate its capacity through impact-focused actions.

In 2021, it will notably put an emphasis on further interlinking the areas of action described above, to increase efficiency and impact, as well as to contribute to provide a response to the covid-19 consequences for the region. The development of a project on the prevention of climate and environment security threats in the Mediterranean, the promotion of research and innovation on blue economy to create jobs, or again the improvement of connectivity and infrastructure to enhance trade and investments are only a few examples of the synergies the UfM Secretariat strives to create.

Additionally, the UfM Secretariat is, at the request of our member states, developing its action in new areas of key relevance for the Euro-Mediterranean region, namely in tourism, migration and civil protection and disaster risk management.

Finally, the institution is also 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, on one hand, 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. On the other hand, the Secretariat further consolidates its capacities through the enhancement of its working tools, 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.

The 2021 Work Programme has been drafted under the assumption that activities will be held “physically” as from the second quarter 2021, if the epidemiological situation allows. Depending on the evolution of the covid-19 pandemic, the implementation of the activities could be reverted to an on-line format.



FIRST PART:
**UfM CONTRIBUTION TO STABILITY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN
THE REGION**



1.1.ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Promoting trade and investments

Taking into due account the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic 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), the UfM Secretariat's work in the sector of Economic Development focuses on further supporting regional and sub-regional initiatives to:

- improve trade and investment flows and strengthen value chains
- consolidating the ongoing efforts to promote private sector development with a focus on MSMEs,
- engaging further with Social and Solidarity Economy actors and players,
- and building on the momentum started in the field of Green industries, 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 foster 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.

2021 specific objectives

1. Encouraging new initiatives and strengthening the implementation of on-going initiatives for trade and investment facilitation;
2. Promoting economic regional integration in the Euro-Mediterranean area;
3. Engaging further in the fields of Industrial Cooperation, Digital Economy, Green Economy and Social and Solidarity Economy;
4. Supporting MSMEs in the region.

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

➤ Promoting Regional Dialogue

UfM Ministerial Conference on Trade

- The UfM Secretariat will engage actively in the UfM Regional Platform on Trade to follow up on the UfM Ministerial Conference on Trade (Online, 10 November 2020), with a special emphasis on the post-pandemic repercussions.

UfM Trade and Investment Forum

- Following the holding of the second edition of the UfM Trade and Investment Forum on 12 November 2020, 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 forum will provide recommendations on the contribution of trade and investment to employment creation in the Mediterranean region.

Report on “Reshoring on Manufacturing and Other Value-Chain Activities and Opportunities for the MENA Region”

- The UfM Secretariat will follow up on the findings of the Report of “Reshoring on Manufacturing and Other Value-Chain Activities and Opportunities for the MENA Region” that was issued during the last quarter of 2020, produced by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), to explore the potential impact of the current COVID-19 crisis on the trade dynamics in the UfM Region in terms of challenges and opportunities.

Concept Paper on Trade in the Mediterranean Region

- In collaboration with GIZ/BMZ, a UfM Concept Paper on Trade in the Mediterranean Region will be issued during the first quarter of 2021. The Paper will include a description of the state of play of trade in goods and services, and investment in the Southern Mediterranean Region, an overview of the UfM’s and regional stakeholders’ activities in the field, and recommendations to promote trade and investment in the Mediterranean region through the UfM and its regional stakeholders.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

Development of handbooks and conducting of workshops for Rules of Origins (RoO) schemes to Governments, private sector and other relevant stakeholders in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia

- 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 will be offered to the Agadir Agreement Signatory Countries in the area of trade policy, under the partnership between the UfM Secretariat and GIZ.
- These trainings will eventually extend to other accessing countries to the Agadir Agreement (Lebanon and Palestine), and at a later stage, to other interested UfM Member States. This initiative will be complementary to the Association Agreement work on this area and implemented in close cooperation with the Agadir Technical Unit (ATU) in order to avoid overlapping. The recent entry into force of the African continental free trade area (AfCFTA) is also an incentive for supporting further regional projects in the African continent.

Objective two: Promoting economic regional integration in the Euro-Mediterranean area

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

Launch of the Progress Report on Regional Integration in the UfM Region



- Upon the finalization of the Progress Report on Regional Integration in the UfM Region during the last quarter of 2020, the UfM Secretariat will hold a Regional Integration Forum that will bring together the partners involved in the report's preparation, namely the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and GIZ/BMZ during the first half of 2021, together with representatives from different regions like the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), the African Union to share their experiences alongside the UfM region. The Forum will promote the report and will bring together regional and international organizations, government officials, think tanks, international financial institutions, and other relevant stakeholders, notably from the civil society at large to take stock of the state-of-play of integration in the UfM region vis-à-vis other parts of the world. The Forum will be an opportunity to present the ground-breaking report.
- **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**
 - The UfM Progress Report will be the base upon which cross-regional collaboration with other regions like the ASEAN and the African Union would be explored in terms of concrete proposals for exchange of knowledge and expertise on the different dimensions of regional integration.
 - The implementation and modernization of existing Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements (by extending their scope, increase the degree of reciprocal liberalization and keeping trade and investment negotiations as transparent and inclusive as possible by regularly involving civil society) should foster better cooperation among the countries concerned and strengthening their mutual dialogue on trade and the setting up of regional initiatives. These initiatives should also include efforts to promote harmonization at the UfM level, not only in rules and procedures.

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

- **Promoting Regional Dialogue**
 - UfM Workshop on Social and Solidarity Economy**
 - Following the success of the first two editions of the UfM Workshop on Social Economy in 2019 and 2020, a third Workshop on Social Economy will be held in one of the UfM Member States in the Southern Mediterranean during the second half of 2021, with a focus on the resilience of the Social Economy model and the lessons learned for the post-pandemic recovery.
 - UfM Workshops on e-governance**
 - Workshops on e-governance will be delivered in Southern UfM Member States as a follow-up to the UfM Conference on Digital Transformation and Digital Skills for the Future (Estonia, 2019). The workshops will benefit from triangular cooperation between the UfM Secretariat, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, and the Governments of the beneficiary countries, directly organized and funded by GIZ/BMZ.

Creative Forum Ljubljana



- The UfM Secretariat will co-organize the third edition of Creative Forum Ljubljana, which will take place in the Slovenian Capital during the second half of 2021. The UfM Secretariat co-organize the first two editions in 2019 and 2018.

UfM Regional Platform on Industrial Cooperation

- The UfM Secretariat will engage actively in the UfM Regional Platform on Industrial Cooperation to:
 - o follow up on the Ministerial Declaration mandate
 - o follow up on the implementation of the 2018-2020 Work program extended until 2021, as well as the feedbacks of the concerned countries for assessment purposes;
 - o take stock of the recommendations developed by relevant UfM events and fora
 - o organize meetings, alternating with the Commission, of the UfM Regional Platform on industrial cooperation in 2021 in view of the preparation of the work programme after 2021.
 - o Reflect on the possibility of a Ministerial to be held during 2021 or 2022, after consultations with the relevant partners
 - o Integrate green economy, circular economy and digital transition in the future work, inspired by the EU green deal and new industrial policy, for a sustainable and clean economic recovery and as efficient vehicles for job creation.

During 2021, the main areas for cooperation will continue to be: (i) improvement of the business climate and access to finance policies, (ii) support to SMEs internationalization and clusters cooperation, (iii) promotion of the social economy and entrepreneurship.

➤ Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives

- The UfM Secretariat will explore the possibility of labelling eligible projects that would contribute to the post-pandemic recovery in the field of digitalization and new technologies, in coordination with its relevant stakeholders, in line with the newly updated labelling criteria, and acting upon the outcomes of the 2019 UfM Digital Transformation and Digital Skills Conference, as well as the outcomes of the 2019 and 2020 UfM Workshops on Social Economy.

Objective four: Supporting MSMEs in the region

➤ Promoting Regional Dialogue

UfM Conference on addressing the challenge of access to finance for Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in the South and East Mediterranean region¹

- The UfM Secretariat will work on co-organizing a conference together with GIZ on Access to Finance for MSMEs in the UfM region as a high priority for the UfM region, given its potential impact on sustainable development and job creation, and the importance of this

¹ This Conference has been postponed from 2020 to 2021 due to the global pandemic situation which started at the same time when this conference was due to take place (19 March 2020 in Barcelona).



issue in the UfM Ministerial mandates on Employment and Labour, Industrial Cooperation, and the 2017 UfM Roadmap, access to finance being one of the priorities of the work programme of industrial cooperation. In this context, particular attention should be given to innovative start-ups, which often have particular needs with regards to financing.

- The geographical focus would be on the Southern and Eastern shores of the Mediterranean, but relevant experience and success stories from other emerging countries outside the UfM, and even from more advanced economies, should feed the discussions.
- The objective of this conference, beyond giving SMEs an updated picture of the specific challenges the region is facing, would be to focus on new financial instruments and arrangements that SMEs can make use of, linking the discussions to the work done by the UfM Regional Platform on Industrial Cooperation and taking into consideration the main obstacles and concerns raised by partner countries on the occasion of the meeting.

UfM Workshop on MSMEs Development

- The UfM Secretariat will also explore the potential of holding a workshop on MSMEs development in Cyprus during the second half of 2021, with a focus on access to international markets.

➤ Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives

- The “UfM Grant Scheme for employment promotion - Regional response to the COVID-19 pandemic” has as one of its key priorities the improvement of the business climate for Micro, Small and Medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) as crucial providers of employment in the Mediterranean region. The beneficiaries of the Grant Scheme will develop their activities in 2021.



1.2.EMPLOYMENT: Fostering job creation and inclusive growth

With the labour market fragility provoked by the current COVID-19 Pandemic in mind, and drawing on the latest Ministerial Declarations on Employment and Labour (Dead Sea, 2016 and Cascais, 2019) and anchored to the mandate tasked to it by the 2019-2022 UfM Roadmap for Employment and Labour, the UfM Secretariat's work in the field of employment will focus on further investing in the Med4Jobs flagship initiative, as well as launching Communities of Practice covering the four priorities for action identified by the UfM Member States, namely:

- a. Supporting decent job creation and entrepreneurship;
- 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.

2021 specific objectives

1. Broadening and intensifying action on employment and labour
2. Setting up a framework for national monitoring processes in the field of employment and labour

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 take stock of recommendations developed by relevant UfM events and fora. The work will notably be focused on the implementation of a framework for national monitoring. Besides, the UfM Secretariat will continue its work to broker technical and financial support to UfM-labelled projects and initiatives in collaboration and coordination with the relevant stakeholders and partners.

UfM Workshop on Social Dialogue

- The UfM Secretariat will follow up on the Fourth UfM Social Dialogue Forum that was held on 6-7 October 2020, organizing a workshop in July 2021 dedicated to one of the key takeaways from the Forum. The UfM Secretariat will therefore organize a workshop in 2021 fully dedicated to following up on the skilling aspect of Social Dialogue. It will also



bring together the Social Partners to further reflect on the state of and perspectives for social dialogue in the Mediterranean Region, including possible steps and actions to take with a view to revitalizing it.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

UfM Grant Scheme for employment promotion

- The “UfM Grant Scheme for employment promotion - Regional response to the COVID-19 pandemic” will actively support non-profit organizations in the Mediterranean that work to give people opportunities in view of the COVID-19-induced economic crisis. It focuses on projects that enable people to find jobs, continue to gain a living and improve their work and living conditions. At the same time, we seek to support projects that encourage entrepreneurship and improve the business climate for Micro-, Small and Medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) as crucial providers of employment in the Mediterranean region.

UfM Study “Vision and Actions to Promote Employment in the Southern Mediterranean”

- The UfM Secretariat will explore new lines of action on promoting employment in the UfM Region, guided by the findings of the Study on “Vision and Actions to Promote Employment in the Southern Mediterranean” which was published in the last quarter of 2020.

UfM Labelled projects

The UfM will further promote the labelled projects focusing on job creation and entrepreneurship, particularly those in their second phase: YouMatch – Toolbox Project, and “Generation Entrepreneur” that will be supported through enhanced visibility to its activities and networking opportunities with relevant stakeholders through the UfM Med4Jobs Stakeholders’ Dialogue.

In this context, the UfM will also put a particular focus on ensuring the development of a responsible business approach in accordance with the promotion of decent work conditions for all.

Objective two: Setting up a framework for national monitoring processes in the field of employment and labour

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- Acting upon the 2019 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Employment and Labour, the UfM Secretariat and the European Commission, with the support of the European Training Foundation (ETF), will proceed with the reflection started in 2020 with respect to building a matrix conducive to the setting of a framework for national monitoring processes of the priorities agreed and included in UfM Ministerial Declaration. The UfM Secretariat will also continue to seek the expertise of its strategic partners in order to set one “Community of Practice”, reflecting the four priorities listed in paragraph 26 of the Ministerial Declaration of the Union for the Mediterranean Employment and Labour.



- The Community of Practice (CoP) mentioned in the 2019 UfM Ministerial Declaration, will facilitate collaboration on employment and labour issues and will advance peer-to-peer learning and experience-sharing within the region, bringing together experts, Representatives of UfM Member States on a voluntary basis, and practitioners from relevant sectors to work over a three-year period to compile, analyze, evaluate and diffuse best practices.
- The UfM Secretariat will confirm its commitment to contribute to the definition of a framework for national monitoring processes and to the reporting on progress made to the Regional Platform on Employment and Labour as well as to the UfM Senior Officials' Meeting.
- The UfM Secretariat will also accompany the efforts paving the way for the next Ministerial Conference on Employment and Labour, contributing the pertinent recommendations and takeaways from relevant UfM activities to the drafting of the next Ministerial Declaration.



1.3. HIGHER EDUCATION: Improving youth employability and academic mobility

Higher education institutions are facing unprecedented challenges caused by the current pandemic situation and regional cooperation will undoubtedly help them tackling this crisis as an opportunity for a positive change. The UfM Secretariat seeks to enhance cooperation in this field, being aware that higher education is a cross-cutting issue playing a central role in achieving its overall objectives and in fostering transformative agendas in the region.

Drawing on the UfM Roadmap for Action, and the Ministerial Declarations on Research and Innovation (Valletta 2017), Employment and Labour (Dead Sea 2016 & Cascais 2019), and Higher Education and Scientific Research (*Towards a Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education and Research Area*, Cairo 2007), the UfM Secretariat puts Higher Education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) at the core of its agenda.

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, for example, will be a constant concern.

In 2021, the UfM Secretariat will focus on two main objectives:

1. Promoting the internationalisation of higher education in the region through the recognition of qualifications, quality control, and academic mobility.
2. Promoting access to quality education for all in a context of growing digitalisation, preparing students for labour market needs and improving the school-to-work transition.

Objective one: Promoting the internationalisation of higher education in the region through the recognition of qualifications, quality control, and academic mobility.

Building on the outcomes of the 3rd Regional Meeting on Higher Education Internationalisation, which was held in Cairo in December 2019, and the recommendations of the Study on the Internationalisation of Higher Education in the Euro-Mediterranean Region, the UfM Secretariat will organise in partnership with other institutions and university networks (e.g. UNIMED, EMUNI, UEMF, Erasmus Student Network, GUNi) several activities:



➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- Presenting the results and recommendations of the Study on the Internationalization of Higher Education in the Euro-Mediterranean Region at the 4th Regional Meeting on Higher Education Internationalization. This event should take place in Bulgaria during the first trimester, probably in a hybrid format, if travel limitations persist due to the COVID19 pandemic.
- Organising the 1st UfM Regional Seminar for International Relations Offices (IROs) of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). This activity of peer-learning and networking could be held in Barcelona as a side-event of the 3rd UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education “*Reinventing the role and place of higher learning for a sustainable future*” (III UNESCO WCHE) that will take place in Barcelona on 6-8 October. Furthermore, the UfM Secretariat will actively participate and contribute to the organisation of the World Conference.
- The UfM Secretariat will also take part in the policy dialogue organised by the Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) on higher education with Southern Mediterranean Countries and the meetings of the Group of Senior Officials of the 5+5 Dialogue on Research, Innovation and Higher Education. The UfM Secretariat is supporting the creation of a network of higher education institutions within the 5+5 Dialogue, according to the Work Plan 2019-2020 of the 5+5 Ministerial Declaration on Research, Innovation and Higher Education. Portugal and Tunisia, which coordinate this specific action of the Work Plan, participated actively in the Steering Committee in charge of monitoring the development of the Study on the Internationalisation of Higher Education in the Euro-Mediterranean Region.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

Capitalising on existing academic networks (e.g. UNIMED, EMUNI, Téthys, Association of Arab Universities, International Association of Universities, GUNi, Erasmus Student Network), the UfM Secretariat will be supporting academic mobility through scaling-up labelled projects, namely the Euromed University of Fes, EMUNI University, HOMERe, and BlueSkills, by:

- Encouraging synergies between EMUNI University and the Euromed University of Fes in the framework of the existing MoUs signed with these institutions in 2018 (e.g. co-organization of activities and training); a jointly organised conference on “The Internationalisation of Higher Education in the Euro-Mediterranean” should be held in Fes, Morocco.
- Supporting the organisation of a joint HOMERe-BlueSkills conference on Blue Economy careers and the acquisition of useful skills, promoting the employability of young graduates in the marine and maritime sector.
- Participating and contributing to the summer school on co-creation in the field of climate change with a Mediterranean focus to be held in the framework of the EU-funded project H2020 TeRRIFICA led by GUNi at the University of Girona in June 2021.

Objective two: Promoting access to quality education for all in a context of growing digitalisation, preparing students for labour market needs and improving the school-to-work transition.



➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

The UfM Secretariat will assess the feasibility of launching a regional dialogue on the accessibility of higher education and technical and vocational education and training in the UfM countries. Special attention will be given to countries facing disruptive situations, such as those caused by natural catastrophes, disasters and pandemics.

- Through a technical assistance, commissioning a study assessing the state of the art and the feasibility of dialogue and future action on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in the Mediterranean, in possible association with the European and Training Foundation (ETF).
- Organising a workshop aimed at exchanging experiences and good practices on improving the quality, accessibility, relevance of the education in the Mediterranean countries, with a focus on the additional challenges posed by the COVID19 crisis and other unsettling situations.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- The UfM Secretariat will further support the development of several projects that are already labelled:
 - Accompanying the EuroMed University of Fes in the follow up of the technical assistance conducted in 2020 with the support of the UfM Secretariat and that focused on strengthening the regional dimension of the university through the accreditation of its programmes;
 - Supporting the Mediterranean New Chance network (MedNC) in the organisation of its Annual Conference; the project is financed with a grant from the Norwegian Cooperation Agency obtained through the UfM Secretariat and will be implemented until the end of 2021;
 - Supporting the participation of a group of EMIS students in a regional event related to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), environment protection or climate action.
- In the wake of the reflection set out last year, the UfM Secretariat will organise an event on the challenges posed by the digital transformation of higher education and the lessons learnt from the COVID19 crisis.



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

Research and Innovation have been both greatly impacted by the ongoing COVID19 crisis and central to efforts tackling it by building new health tools and increasing resilience in societies. As such, in 2021 UfM Secretariat will continue supporting regional cooperation deeply mindful of the new challenges requiring renewed efforts in this field.

In continuity with its support for the objectives highlighted by the Valletta Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation through Research and Innovation (2017) and in synergy with 5+5 Dialogue inputs on Research and Innovation, the UfM Secretariat will be strengthening regional sectorial dialogue and paving the way for future UfM Ministerial Declarations on Research and Innovation, once conditions allow and in full coordination with its Co-Presidency. Additionally, coordination will be ensured with thematic dialogues where Research and Innovation play a significant role, including Environment and Climate Change, Employment and Labour, Blue Economy, Water, and Renewable Energy.

In line with UfM Ministerial Declaration on Employment and Labour (2019), which called for the mainstreaming of employment and decent work objectives in sectorial areas including research and innovation, UfM Secretariat will also facilitate the switch towards “higher productivity, innovation capacity, quality jobs, green and inclusive growth” through the linkages existing between innovation and employability of researchers, graduates and students.

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. Finally, women empowerment is treated horizontally as a priority in Research and Innovation, for instance in the ongoing activities on the innovation-employment nexus.

In 2021, the UfM Secretariat will focus on two main objectives:

1. Developing future strands for sectorial cooperation on Research and Innovation, including the linkage between innovation and employability.
2. Promoting Research and Innovation in the areas of agri-food systems, blue economy, migration and integration, climate action and environment

Objective one: Developing future strands for sectorial cooperation on Research and Innovation, including the linkage between innovation and employability.

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**



- With the aim of paving the way for a possible future UfM Ministerial Declaration on Research and Innovation, UfM Secretariat will co-organize the 27th meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Research and Innovation (UfM RP on R&I – formerly known as EuroMed Group of Senior officials in Research and Innovation). The meeting will facilitate dialogue on identifying regional axes of cooperation on Research and Innovation and exchanging best practice with the participation of National Ministries and chaired by DGRTD and Jordan's Higher Council for Research and Technology. Additionally, the UfM Secretariat will participate in preparatory meetings of the Bureau of the Platform and support the work of the technical Expert Working Group on Research and Innovation.

The Platform is currently tasked to develop a new way forward for Research and Innovation cooperation on health, climate change and renewable energy, based on the reached consensus during the 25th meeting of UfM RP on R&I, hosted digitally by UfM Secretariat on 8 June 2020.

- Building on the references of the UfM Roadmap on aspects related to culture, a regional workshop could be promoted in order to explore and develop initiatives fostering regional academic cooperation on cultural heritage, and how to promote innovation and employability through culture and related industries in the aftermath of the COVID19 crisis.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- With the goal of reinforcing the capacity of Research and Innovation stakeholders to innovate local and regional economies by empowering high-level graduates and researchers, UfM Secretariat, supported by the GIZ, will continue delivering on the development of trainings linking Research and innovation with employability through the UfM initiative "Reinforcing the Innovation-Employability Nexus in the Mediterranean". Different regional and pilot trainings, both physical and digital according to the evolution of the ongoing COVID19 crisis, will be presenting and sharing best practices. The concluding regional seminar will strive to reinforce the importance of the topic in the Mediterranean and call for follow-up by stakeholders, also through a publication on best practices produced by UfM Secretariat in 2020. The outcomes of the seminar will feed into the development of follow-up based on stakeholders' consensus. A topic that will be addressed will also be the gender inclusion through innovation and employability.
- As a way of increasing resilience against COVID19-related economic shocks, UfM Secretariat will be exploring the possible development of new projects on digital innovation with a focus on entrepreneurship and employability, and the promotion of the participation of women in science.

Objective two: Promoting Research and innovation in the areas of agri-food systems, blue economy, migration and integration, climate action and environment

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- Promoting a common research and innovation agenda in the areas of food systems and water resources of Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area



(PRIMA), including through key enabling technologies (KETs) and circular economy processes, by continuing implementing a Joint Action Plan and taking part in supporting activities. Particularly, a workshop promoting successful PRIMA-financed projects could be foreseen.

- Promoting a shared vision of the Mediterranean Sea as a healthy, safe and productive common resource via the BLUEMED Initiative, by participating in BLUEMED-related meetings and promoting South Participation. (see also *Blue Economy*)
- Supporting the establishment of an inter-institutional platform on sustainable food systems together with Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM). As a follow-up of the Second World Conference on the Revitalization of the Mediterranean Diet -held in Palermo, Italy, on 15-17 May 2019- UfM Secretariat will be valorizing the role of Research and Innovation in circular economy applied to sustainable food systems and possibly foresee a launch event together with FAO and CIHEAM, while promoting the participation of regional stakeholders. (see also *Environment*)
- Promoting the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as a tool and prerequisite to address the environment and climate-related challenges, particularly by foreseeing a participation in the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (currently foreseen to take place in Berlin, May 2021). In this context, further linkages will be sought with the Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED) in order to connect ESD with regional environmental education.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- Supporting labelled project BlueSkills with focus on development of actions connected to internships and entrepreneurship (see also *Higher Education*).
- Supporting labelled project “Higher Education on Food Security and Rural Development”, especially in support of a Doctoral Platform (including possibly the Mediterranean forum of CIHEAM PhDs). For 2021, it will be explored a general update of the project, successfully launched in 2012, co-identifying new strands of cooperation.
- Supporting the participation of Southern researchers on academic discussions on migration and integration-related aspects in the Euro-Mediterranean area, particularly on the deep roots of migration and interconnections with sustainable development. Southern participation to the activities (such as Summer Schools) and possible thematic workshops in partnership with International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion (IMISCOE) Euro-Mediterranean Migration Network (EuroMedMig) and of Institute for Studies on the Mediterranean of Italian National Research Council (ISSM-CNR) are envisaged.



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

2021 specific objectives

In line with the UfM Ministerial meetings on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society (Istanbul 2006, Marrakech 2009, Paris 2013 and Cairo 2017) as well as the Ministerial meetings on Employment and Labour (Dead Sea, 2016 and Cascais, 2019) 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.

More concretely, four priority areas and four related working groups were created and endorsed by UfM countries and regional stakeholders for the coming years and were endorsed at the 4th Ministerial Conference on *Strengthening the Role of Women in Society* in Cairo (November, 2017):

1. Increasing women's economic participation by fostering their skills to promote an equal access to the labour market and by creating an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs.
2. Combatting violence against women and girls including in conflict and post-conflict contexts.
3. Strengthening women's access to leadership positions in public and private sector.
4. Combatting gender stereotypes and fighting against social norms that hinder the full participation of women. Guaranteeing access to sexual and reproductive health to all women in the region.

Within these four priorities areas, and as contribution to the implementation of the Women Peace and Security agenda, countries and stakeholders agreed to consider the specific needs of women and girl migrants, refugees and women in conflict and post-conflict context, as well as women in rural areas and women with disability.

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*.

In 2021, the UfM Secretariat will focus on promoting regional dialogue as well as concrete projects and initiatives in the field of women empowerment and gender equality through:

Objective: Supporting the implementation of the priorities set by the 2017 Ministerial Declaration

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)

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

This objective entails more concretely the support of a consolidated and sustainable dialogue process on women's empowerment and gender equality as a mutual monitoring mechanism and a learning-based exercise which will allow assessing the impact of countries and stakeholders' policies and interventions, evaluating the gaps and proposing concrete and corrective measures as well as recommendations to improve the implementation and maximise the impact on women and girls.

In 2021, the UfM Secretariat will more concretely:

- **Implement the Ministerial Follow-up mechanism on *Strengthening the Role of Women in Society***
 - Following the adoption of the indicators related to the Ministerial Follow-up mechanism on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society, validated by UfM member states on the 30 of July 2020, the UfM Secretariat has launched in 2020 the reporting exercise in order to prepare the second regional ministerial progress report. The reporting exercise in terms of approaches, deadlines and outcomes have been presented and discussed in the Regional Dialogue meeting on 16 November 2020. As agreed by countries, on 19 July 2019, as an initial phase, the reporting will focus on 6 indicators that reflect the most pressing challenges in the region and countries for the coming 2-3 years. Countries will be asked to provide national reports on the implementation of the commitments related to the 6 indicators that will be used as a basis to the preparation of the regional progress report.
 - Organise in the first quarter of 2021 a first round of online meetings with the 4 Working groups involved in the adoption of the 6 indicators pre-identified in order to discuss and monitor the needs and challenges of the reporting exercise. Depending of the real advancement in data gathering at regional level, a second round of online meetings of the Working groups is foreseen.
 - Organise minimum one or maximum two regional dialogue meetings (in a physical format if the Covid-19 pandemic evolution permits) with the following objectives:
 1. Prepare the regional progress report: discuss, comments and validate the draft report
 2. Develop policy recommendations for countries based on the progress made and the identified challenges. (SDG 16)
 3. Continue the discussion with the national statistic institutions toward building a gender data framework for the Ministerial follow-up mechanism. (SDG 16)
 4. Start discussing the preparation of the next ministerial meeting.



5. Organise training with the aim of building countries' capacities in specific areas related to the implementation of the ministerial follow-up mechanism (reporting, gender data production, using indicators...). If the Covid-19 pandemic evolution permits, the training scheduled only after the first quarter of the year will be organised in a physical format. Alternatively, online training will be considered pending on the internet accessibility of certain countries.
- Organise the 5th UfM Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society, provided that :1) one of the UfM Member States will host and cover the costs of the event for a physical format 2) timely cooperative feedback from countries and that concrete progress on data gathering at regional level from the countries is made to allow the UfM to draft, discuss and circulate the 2nd Regional progress Report ahead of the Ministerial meeting. If the Covid-19 pandemic evolution permits, the Ministerial Conference scheduled in last quarter of the year will be organised in a physical format. If a worst case scenario hampers any physical meetings by the end of 2021, the Ministerial Conference will be postponed to 2022.
- **Fostering women economic participation:**
 - The UfM Secretariat will organise, as each year, the Women Business Forum to promote women entrepreneurship and business development. Also, in this case the Forum will be organised in a physical format if the Covid-19 pandemic evolution permits. Under the framework of Sida cooperation agreement, 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. The forum is meant to build skills, connect and empower female entrepreneurs to start, grow and sustain their enterprises in a competitive environment that will lead towards a direct impact on the economy as well as the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the region. The forum's agenda generally includes B2B networking and matchmaking, product and business concept exhibitions, business tours, and specific panels, trainings and keynote addresses with participation of high-level business experts and policy makers that will offer knowledge and advice on various business opportunities, good practices and success stories in doing business in the Euro-Mediterranean region. (SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 8 and SDG 10).
 - Organising specific training activities for women entrepreneurs during the business forum. (SDGs 4 and 8)
 - Supporting initiatives providing opportunities for women to take part in traineeships and apprenticeships through partnerships between training institutions, employment services and businesses.
- **Combating violence against women and girls (VAWG)**
 - Continue supporting the EU regional campaign on preventing VAWG in the Southern Mediterranean countries, as provided by the Ministerial declaration. This will be achieved through the participation in the projects' regional events and dialogues, by providing visibility to projects' campaigns and outcomes and by involving projects' promoters such



as the Euromed Feminist Initiative (EFI) and potentially 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).

- Following the signature of the MoU with **WHO**, finalise and start implementing a concrete joint action plan 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).

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- 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 labelled projects will be undertaken to assess their progress.
- Continue working with promoters whose projects 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 countries. Funding availabilities will constitute a key element in this exercise.
- Building on the work that has already been conducted in 2017-2020 in promoting the relevance of the UfM Secretariat work on women's empowerment among key regional stakeholders, and based on the partnership opportunities explored in the last years, scaling-up the scope and impact of UfM actions in gender equality and women empowerment through the development of new operational partnerships.
- Monitoring the implementation of the partnership agreement with Sida in the field of gender equality and women's empowerment. (SDG 5)
- Monitoring the partnership agreement with Norway that finance CEED's Grow project.² The project aims to support and strengthen women's economic participation. (SDG 8).
- Monitoring the partnership agreement with Monaco that finance UNIDO's project that supports and sustains women entrepreneurship in green and sustainable value chains in Tunisia³ (SDGs 8 and 10).
- Coordinating the fundraising phase of the UfM recently labelled project "Enhancing the civic and social engagement of women and youth in preventing violence and extremism", promoted by the British Council, targeting in a first phase Morocco and Tunisia.⁴ (SDGs 3, 4 and 16).

Monitoring the implementation of ONCE pilot project in Morocco on promoting employment for women and youth with disabilities, funded by AECID. It aims to support skills' development and job integration for women and youth with disabilities and to overcome

² <https://ufmsecretariat.org/project/ceed-grow-growing-and-scaling-small-and-medium-sized-businesses/>

³ <https://ufmsecretariat.org/unido-empower-women-in-tunisia/>

⁴ <https://ufmsecretariat.org/project/engagement-preventing-violence-and-extremism/>



social inequalities. In the agreement with AECID, it is foreseen after the implementation of this pilot project to extend the project to other UfM countries provided that funds are available. (SDGs 8 and 10).

- Monitoring the implementation of WHO project on preventing violence against women that is expected to be labelled by the end of 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 take place of project visits if the Covid-19 pandemic evolution permits.

- **Technical Expertise**

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

- 1) collecting and analysing country and partners' data as outcomes of the reporting exercise to be launched in 2021; 2) drafting the UfM regional report; 3) preparing the policy recommendations for countries based on the progress made and the identified challenges; 4) liaising with the national statistic institutions towards building a gender data framework for the Ministerial follow-up mechanism; 5) co-ordinating with all the stakeholders for the preparatory actions and ad hoc meetings for the next Ministerial meeting; 5) developing capacity building actions for the UfM countries in specific areas related to the implementation of the ministerial follow-up mechanism (reporting, gender data production, statistics analysis, using indicators...).
- The engagement of the temporary external technical assistance is key to work on the whole reporting exercises involved as a major part for the implementation of the Cairo 2017 Declaration.

- **Empowering women and girls with disability**

- Organising jointly with ONCE Foundation a regional event on promoting gender equality for women and girls with disability. The event, envisaged to take place in the last quarter of 2021, will be in a physical format if the Covid-19 pandemic evolution permits.



1.6. YOUTH: EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE AS ACTORS FOR CHANGE

2021 specific objectives

The UfM Roadmap, centred on youth's potential for stability and development, mandates the UfM to launch "A Positive Agenda for Youth". The Union for the Mediterranean has therefore placed young people at the heart of its action, focusing on empowering young people in the Euro-Mediterranean region and engaging them as full partners in its activities and, more generally, in areas of regional priority, in view of unleashing their potential as agents for change.

"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).

Youth-related targets fall under several UN SDGs and are interrelated and transversal. The activities of the UfM Secretariat under this cross-cutting sector will therefore contribute, to a larger extent, to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda targets.

Objective: Finalizing the UfM Strategy for Youth

➤ Promoting Regional Dialogue

UfM Youth Strategy

- Following the drafting of the UfM Strategy for Youth and having circulated it with the UfM partners and relevant stakeholders for consultation, including Youth Organisations, in 2021 it shall be presented to the Co-Presidency, in view of its endorsement by the SOM.
- Following up on the initial consultations on this draft document and continue to consolidate on the outcomes of several preparatory meetings or events held with youth organisations and networks between 2018 and 2020.
- Advance on the process required for the endorsement of the Youth Strategy and co-ordinating with the Co-Presidency, including internal consultations within the UfM Secretariat.
In order to enhance the cohesion of youth in the region, the UfM youth strategy will be complementary to other current Youth Strategies and shall seek to build synergies with the EU's Council Resolution of 18.12.2018 on the renewed EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027. Similarly, in line with the UN Youth Strategy 2030, 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 proposed UfM Youth Strategy is foreseen to be presented to the Senior Officials for their endorsement, following a final round of consultations among the Member States.
- **Subject to the pandemic evolution, the following activities are foreseen:**
- Organizing during the Second half of 2021, the 3rd UfM Youth Forum where the UfM Youth Strategy will be presented to the youth representatives from the Euro-Mediterranean region;
- 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 organising both physical or virtual events on Youth; for example, on themes such as voluntary work in the community, or youth with disabilities or defying hate speech.
- 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, planning side-events, or organizing sessions at major events.
- Focusing further on youth voluntary work, due to the social crisis created by COVID 19; by working and collaborating with relevant organisations and partners.

Organising a number of online events on themes related to the Youth Sector such as the UfM Model.

- **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;
- Following-up on all the relevant Youth events organised by the UfM Secretariat, notably the UfM Regional Dialogue: "Shared View on Key Euro-Mediterranean issues" and the UfM Model organised in the framework of the World Youth Forum in Egypt in December 2019, to consolidate the UfM Youth network in the region;
- Organizing DIAMED 2021 (Les Dialogues pour la Méditerranée de Barcelone), pending to the pandemic evolution; The event, foreseen to take place after the first quarter of 2021 will be organised in a physical format if the Covid-19 pandemic evolution permits as the event involves young college students.
- Organizing UfM Youth Model(s) with the UfM labelled Universities: The Euromed University of Fes of Morocco and The Euro-Mediterranean University of Slovenia. The event, foreseen after the first quarter of 2021 will be organised in a physical format if the Covid-19 pandemic permits.
- Enhancing the Collaboration with National Training Academy (NTA) of Egypt to concretize the recommendations of the UfM Model in the World Youth Forum in Sharm Sheikh organized in December 2019.
- Identifying and promoting strategic projects/initiatives targeting on enabling youth empowerment in the region such as youth labs on youth policies and other youth related issues.



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SECOND PART: STRENGTHENING REGIONAL INTEGRATION THROUGH CONNECTIVITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



2.1. TRANSPORT: Facilitating transport connectivity and mobility

In 2021, the UfM Secretariat will continue to implement the mandate set out in the UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport (Brussels, 2013), under the guidance of the UfM Co-Presidency, and in close consultation and cooperation with the European Commission, by contributing to the development of a more efficient, integrated, interoperable, sustainable and resilient transport infrastructure network in the Euro-Mediterranean region, with the ultimate aim of achieving deeper regional integration. The Secretariat will continue laying the groundwork for the next UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport, possibly as of the last quarter of 2021.⁵

In tandem with the Decade of Action for the SDGs, the UfM Secretariat will contribute 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. In particular, issues related to **gender equality and women empowerment** (SDG 5), **environment and blue economy** (SDG 3, 14 and 15), **energy efficiency** (SDG 7) and **climate action** (SDG 13) are integrated and mainstreamed in all the activities of the UfM Secretariat in the Transport sector.

2021 specific objectives

More concretely, in 2021, the UfM Secretariat will focus on:

1. Preparing for the next UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport, in particular by finalising the key deliverables of the implementation of the 2013 ministerial mandate⁶, at the level of the UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity and its Thematic Working Groups, at the level of *ad hoc* and regular SOMs, and at the Conference.

⁵ At this point in time, the last quarter of 2021 seems to be the earliest possible timeframe for the organisation of the next Ministerial Conference on Transport due to the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in the originally planned 2020 schedule of some of the preparatory meetings for the elaboration of the planned deliverables of the Conference.

⁶ Alongside the new UfM Ministerial Declaration on Transport, the next Ministerial Conference will endorse the Evaluation report of the current Regional Transport Action Plan for the Mediterranean Region (RTAP-2014-2020), including the indicative maps of the future South-South Mediterranean Transport Network (TMN-T) and its connection with the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), as well as the new regional transport action plan.



2. Co-organizing joint activities with relevant international and regional organizations, building on consolidated UfM partnerships, and contributing to significant events at regional and international level.

3. Building strategic partnerships with other key international stakeholders with a view to engaging them in joint activities including, among others, through their participation in the UfM regional policy dialogue on Transport and the preparation of regional projects. **Objective one: Preparing for the next UfM Transport Ministerial Conference on Transport**

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- Organising, in coordination with the UfM Co-Presidency, two rounds of meetings of the UfM Thematic Working Groups (WGs) on Land, Air and Maritime Transport and Logistics to continue taking stock of the progress made in these sub-sectors under the current RTAP 2014-2020, and laying the groundwork for the next UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport, possibly as of the last quarter of 2021, depending on the finalization of the planned deliverables.
 - A first round of meetings of the UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity and its thematic Working Groups on Land, Air and Maritime Transport and Logistics, along with that of the UfM-IFIs Transport Finance Committee, will be held online in May/June 2021;
 - A second round of meetings of the UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity and its thematic Working Groups on Land, Air and Maritime Transport and Logistics, along with that of the UfM-IFIs Transport Finance Committee, will be held in Barcelona in September 2021.

Meetings are foreseen to be held in person as from the second quarter 2021, but could eventually be organized online, depending on the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the availability of air travel and hotel accommodation for country delegates and other invitees.

- Elaborating and finalizing the planned deliverables of the upcoming Ministerial Conference.

In accordance with the agreed UfM working methodology and governance arrangements, the recommendations of the thematic WGs on the potential deliverables of the next UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport will be fine-tuned by the UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity and conveyed to *ad hoc* SOMs for consideration.

Under the guidance of and in coordination with the UfM Co-Presidency, one or two transport-specific *ad hoc* SOMs could be organised in 2021 to hammer out and provisionally agree on the deliverables, with a view to paving the way for their adoption by UfM Senior Officials and endorsement by the UfM Ministers in charge of Transport,



respectively. The *ad hoc* SOMs could be organised back-to-back with the respective meetings of the UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity and the UfM-IFIs Transport Finance Committee.

The Ministerial Conference will be scheduled once its planned deliverables are adopted by UfM Senior Officials.

- Organising three workshops back-to-back with the meetings of the UfM Thematic Working Groups.

Workshops will be open to the participation of international and regional organisations and key stakeholders, including the private sector and academia, and aim at reflecting on post-COVID-19 scenarios related to various sub-sectors and developing recommendations that could be incorporated into the new UfM strategic action plan for transport connectivity. They will also deliberate on the nexuses between “transport connectivity and mobility” and “climate change mitigation & adaptation and resilience”, “environment and safety”, “decarbonisation and energy efficiency”.

- Participating in the Trans-European Transport Network (TENT-T) Days 2021 and a possible Ministerial Seminar for the South Mediterranean Countries that will be held back-to-back with the TEN-T Days (*date and venue TBC*).
- Contributing, in technical capacity, to the Steering Committee meetings of the regional Technical Assistance (TA) projects financed by the European Commission, namely, the on-going Euromed projects on maritime transport (SAFEMED IV), rail transport (EUmedRail), road and urban transport (Euromed Transport Support Project – ETSP), and the new projects on aviation and satellite navigation, and on Motorways of the Sea and logistics, in order to ensure that the Projects contribute to the implementation of the RTAP.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

The UfM Secretariat will monitor and support, 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 UfM strategic action plan, *inter alia*, by:

- Monitoring and following up on the developments regarding the implementation of the below-mentioned UfM-labelled transport projects, and encouraging key and relevant IFIs as well as cooperation agencies to support 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 monitor the progress made in the implementation of the UfM-labelled regional projects with a view to updating and developing the project pipeline.

The UfM-IFIs Transport Finance Committee will monitor 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 international and regional organizations, building on consolidated UfM partnerships, and contributing to significant events at regional and international level.

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- Contributing to the 2021 Summit of the International Transport Forum (ITF/OECD) on “Transport Innovation for Sustainable Development” (26-28 May 2021, Leipzig, Germany), as well as in the ITF Consultation Day with International Organizations (January 2021, Paris, France), for the preparation of the Summit. The 2021 edition of the Summit will also address relevant topics related to the post-COVID-19 impacts. 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-organising the 4th MEDports Forum, possibly in Marseille, France (*date and venue TBC*). The Annual Medports Forum provides a valuable opportunity to exchange knowledge, build on existing synergies and explore opportunities for cooperation with potential partners and stakeholders in the port and maritime sectors.
- Co-organising the 10th edition of MARLOG International Conference on Maritime Transport and Logistics (Alexandria, Egypt, *date TBC*), with a focus on the impacts of the fourth industrial revolution in port-city integration and on sustainability programme aspects in world ports.

Possibilities for synergic action with the UfM Secretariat’s Urban Development department will be explored for the two former events.

- Participating, with observer status, in the 29th Expert Group meeting of the GTMO 5+5 Policy Dialogue on Transport (*date and venue TBC*).
- Taking part in the Editorial Committee of the “Mediterranean Transport and Logistics in a Post-COVID 19 Era: Prospects and Opportunities” initiative. The initiative will provide a long-term strategic reflection on the future of transport and logistics in the Mediterranean region, through a compilation of selected articles by policy makers,



international associations in the field of transport, think tanks, international organizations and regional institutions. The initiative could contribute to the identification of actions to be carried out at regional level by pointing out opportunities that could arise in the new post-COVID-19 global scenario. Other members of the Editorial Committee are the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) and the Centre for Transportation Studies for the Western Mediterranean.

- Participation in the 15th **quadrennial** session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD 15), on 25-30 April 2021, in Bridgetown, Barbados. The conference is the highest decision-making body of UNCTAD at which member states, UN Agencies and international organisations assess current trade and development issues and formulate global policy responses. It also sets the organization's work priorities for the next four years. The conference presents an opportunity to rethink development solutions and build a new solidarity among countries. Transport infrastructure and services, including shipping, ports, roads and railways are essential for global merchandise trade and related supply chains. In accordance with its mandate, UNCTAD is carrying out work to help developing countries improve their transport systems and ensure better access to worldwide markets.
- Participation in the second United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference (Beijing, China, *date TBC*). It will follow up on the first Global Sustainable Transport Conference, held in 2016, in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. The Beijing Conference will bring together key stakeholders from Governments, UN system and other international organizations, the private sector, and civil society to discuss the integrated and cross-cutting nature of sustainable transport and its multiple roles in supporting the achievement of the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change.
- Involvement in the 2021 PIDA⁷ Week (*date, place and venue TBC*). The PIDA Week is the flagship advocacy event for the PIDA programme. It provides an opportunity to take stock of progress in PIDA's implementation, and in particular, to combine efforts to bring needed financing 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

⁷ PIDA: Plan for Infrastructure Development in Africa



States, development partners, financial Institutions, private sector actors and financiers, consulting firms, banks, civil society, academia and members of the media.

- Continue 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.
- Participation in / co-organisation of other possible joint activities, to be confirmed, with other relevant international and regional organizations, in the event that one of the previous activities is cancelled or postponed to 2022 due to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic or for other reasons.

Objective three: Building strategic partnerships with other key international stakeholders with a view to engaging them in joint activities including, among others, through their participation in 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 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 crosscutting issues, such as energy efficiency, climate change and environment.

Coordination meetings will be held with key stakeholders to better structure joint activities and to agree on common action plans, particularly with ITF/OECD, UNCTAD, *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD), Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), Centre for Mediterranean Integration (CMI)/World Bank, African Union Commission (AUC), *Union Internationale des Transports Publics* (UITP) and MEDports Association, building on the exchanges made with these entities in 2019.



2.2. URBAN DEVELOPMENT: Promoting sustainable and integrated urban development

Increasing rate of urbanization is a megatrend that interacts, *inter alia*, with economic growth, climate change, demographic shifts, the emergence of Industry 4.0 technologies and inequalities. It relates to all the SDGs, directly or indirectly; it can either reinforce geographical (spatial) inequalities, or stimulate more balanced social and economic development.⁸

In line with the mandates of the UfM Roadmap for Action and the UfM Urban Agenda, the UfM Secretariat will continue to facilitate the work of the UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Urban Development, in support of the development and implementation of the deliverables to be endorsed at the Third UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development to be held in 2021. Key deliverables include the “UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040 for sustainable, resilient and inclusive cities and communities in the Mediterranean” and the “UfM Action Plan on Housing”. The action plans promote inclusive and integrated planning, sustainable capacity building, and strategic investment in future-proof infrastructures and services.

2021 specific objectives

In 2021, the work of the UfM Secretariat in the Urban Development sector will focus on the following actions:

1. Facilitate the finalization of the deliverables for, and the organization of, the Third UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development;
2. Raise awareness about the Action Plans at all levels of governance, in partnership with all relevant public and private stakeholders, including local authorities;
3. Consolidate and build partnerships with universities, IGOs, NGOs, IFIs and donors for the effective implementation and monitoring of the action plans;
4. Launch and steer the overall implementation process of the action plans;
5. Support the implementation and monitoring of the adopted action plans at grassroots level, in partnership with stakeholders.

⁸ With over 50% of the global population, 70% of global energy use and up to 85% of economic activity, cities and urban areas hold the key to sustainable development. By 2050, cities and towns will contribute two thirds of world economic output and consume 80 percent of the planet's natural resources. Future urbanization and urban population growth will mostly take place in small and intermediate cities. Report of the UN Economist Network for the UN 75th Anniversary: Shaping the Trends of Our Time. UN DESA, 16 September 2020.



Objective one: Pave the way for the organization of the Third UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- Upon recommendation of the UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Urban Development, facilitate the adoption of the action plans by UfM Senior Officials, for subsequent endorsement by the UfM Ministers in charge of sustainable urban development;
- Translate the action plans from English to French and Arabic, print and e-publish them in three languages;
- Assist in the organization of an *ad hoc* SOM in the run-up to the Ministerial Conference for fine-tuning and provisionally agreeing upon the draft Ministerial Declaration, which will then be conveyed to UfM Senior Officials for finalization;
- Support the organization of the Third UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development in the last quarter of 2021, back-to-back, if possible, with the Informal Meeting of (EU) Ministers Responsible for Urban Matters.

Objective two: Raise awareness about the action plans

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- Coordinate the presentation of the action plans to:
 - The Urban Intergroup of the European Parliament;
 - Staff dealing with the urban development and/or housing dossier(s) at EU Delegations in UfM Member States;
 - UfM local authorities, as well as relevant international NGOs (e.g. ICLEI, UCLG, Medcities and Euromed Cities), in collaboration with the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM);
 - EU local authorities and stakeholders on the occasion of the European Week of Regions and Cities and/or other EU events on urban development;
 - UfM local governments, academia, private sector and civil society based in individual cities in the region, e.g. Algiers, Barcelona, Cairo and Mostar, through virtual ‘sounding board’ meetings to be held upon invitation to test the reception of the action plans at local level.
- Participate, upon invitation, in events and meetings of key knowledge partners and other stakeholders, including the:



- European Commission
- UN-Habitat
- European Investment Bank
- OECD Regional Development Policy Committee, the Working Party on Territorial Indicators, and the Working Party on Urban Policy
- UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management
- UNESCO

Objective three: Consolidate and build partnerships with key stakeholders for the effective implementation and monitoring of the action plans.

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- Develop annual work programmes under MoUs, as applicable, for joint implementation of the Action Plan with key global and regional knowledge partners and other stakeholders, including the:
 - UN-Habitat
 - UNECE
 - OECD on national policies, urban development, housing and programmes involving cities
 - European Commission-DG JRC on data gathering and urban risk assessment
 - Government of The Netherlands
 - Schools of Architecture and Urban Planning for the organisation of a conference on the upgrading of their curricula, promotion of the knowledge hubs on “Sustainable Urbanisation” and “Heritage”, and for the coordination of summer courses, urban and architectural workshops, as well as capacity building and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Possibilities for synergic action with the UfM Secretariat’s Higher Education and Research Division will be sought to maximise efforts and optimise resources.
 - AVITEM
 - Housing Europe on housing policies, housing cooperatives, and on setting up a Mediterranean Housing Knowledge Hub in the model of that of the Housing Europe.
 - UNESCO to:
 - Promote the Mediterranean cultural heritage.
 - Facilitate the updating the curricula of Schools Architecture and Urban Planning.
 - Support the development of building skills with traditional materials.



- Assist in establishing a network for Urban World Heritage sites in the Euro-Mediterranean region, to advance Historic Urban Landscape approaches and projects, including the promotion of heritage protection, support for peer-to-peer learning and exchanges for local, regional and national policymakers on the financing and managing of the conservation and re-use of the built heritage in cities in line with circular economy models.
- Gouvernement of Monaco on the “*Rencontres Internationales Monaco et la Méditerranée*”.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- Establish contacts with interlocutors in Germany and Luxembourg on the possible labelling of the Gap Fund initiative as a tool for access to finance for the implementation of urban projects in the region.

Objective four: Support the implementation and monitoring of the adopted action plans, in partnership with stakeholders.

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

Facilitate the launch of the process of implementation and monitoring of the adopted action plans in the “UfM Thematic Working Group on Affordable and Sustainable Housing”, the “UfM Thematic Working Group on Urban Regeneration”, and the “UfM Permanent Working Group on Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting Systems on Urban Development”, also organize two workshops in relation to the respective subject matters of the two thematic Working Groups.:

- Co-organize a workshop on National Urban Policies, creating synergies with the programme on National Urban Policies that the UN-Habitat Regional Office for Arab States has in place already in some North-African countries.
- Organize a workshop on International Perspectives on Land Management Instruments for Regulating Coastal Zones.
- Co-organize a project-oriented workshop on Natural Cooling with the GIZ Programme for Energy Efficiency in Buildings (PEEB), in particular for UfM Member States which are revisiting their housing policies or implementing specific housing initiatives.
- Co-organize a workshop with DG JRC on the impact of sea-level rise or other risks, such as landslides, floods, or access to fresh water resources, in Euro-Mediterranean cities.
- Co-organize a workshop with the OECD on public procurement as a tool to achieve SDGs in cities, also potential meetings on housing policies at national level.



- Organize a conference for Heads of Schools of Architecture and Urban Planning in the region.
- Co-organize with UNESCO a first meeting on Urban World Heritage sites in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
- Organize a RETE (International Association for the Collaboration between Ports and Cities) conference on the Mediterranean port city regions under the “Axis of Intervention 2” of the UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040. Possibilities for synergic action with the UfM Secretariat’s Transport department will be explored.
- Support the organization of a TAIEX Regional Workshop on the “Spanish Strategy for the Energy Renovation in the Building Sector in Spain” for UfM member Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro) with old housing stocks, which will be hosted by the Spanish Government as a follow-up to the UfM Meeting on Sustainable Housing held in June 2019 in Barcelona, Spain. This TAIEX Regional Workshop was originally scheduled for the Spring of 2020, but had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Co-organize online sessions, trainings and a physical workshop with the AFD/CMI within the framework of the initiative “Enabling Mediterranean Cities to Climate Action – MedCCA” to assist Mediterranean local authorities in formulating solid financing proposals for addressing climate change challenges, and to facilitate their access to available funding programs. Possibilities for synergic action with the UfM Secretariat’s Energy and Climate Action Division will be taken into account in this context.
- Co-organize with TU Delft a summer school for young planners and policy-makers.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

In order to promote the design of integrative projects for cities in the Euro-Mediterranean region:

- Monitor and follow up on the developments regarding the implementation of UfM-labelled urban development projects and initiatives, including the:
 - UPFI Imbaba Urban Upgrading Project;
 - UPFI Bouregreg Valley Development Project;
 - UPFI Development of the Taparura Seafront in Sfax;
 - Smart City Innovation Centres Project;
 - UPFI-ERI Urban Projects Finance Initiative – Economic Resilience Initiative.



- Organize a presentation on the UPFI-ERI initiative for the Finance Ministries of its targeted countries,⁹ if the duration of the labelled initiative were to be extended as of 2021.
- Mobilize the UfM-IFIs Urban Project Committee for encouraging key IFIs, as well as international development cooperation agencies, to extend technical and financial support to UfM-labelled projects and/or project proposals, with a view to updating and developing the urban development project pipeline.
- Organize fact-finding missions, as and when possible, to UfM Member States to help identify and elaborate on potentially bankable project proposals for UfM-labelling, in view of the evolving project pipeline.

⁹ Southern Neighbourhood: Algeria, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia
Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro



2.3. ENERGY: Supporting a sustainable energy transition in the Mediterranean

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.

2021 specific objectives

In 2021, the UfM Secretariat will focus on promoting regional dialogue as well as concrete projects and initiatives in the field of energy through:

1. The preparation and implementation of the next UfM Ministerial Meeting on Energy (foreseen to take place in April 2021), supporting the work developed under the UfM Energy Platforms;
2. The support to local authorities in their efforts to achieve the 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 preparation and implementation of the next UfM Ministerial Meeting on Energy (foreseen to take place in April 2021), supporting the work developed under the UfM Energy Platforms

➤ Promoting Regional Dialogue

– Preparation of the UfM Ministerial Meeting on Energy

As a continuation of the work undertaken during 2020, the UfM Secretariat will continue the preparation of the 3rd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Energy that is foreseen to be held in April 2021 in Portugal.

The submission of the final external evaluation report of the 2016 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Energy (including a summary and recommendations) is foreseen at the beginning of 2021. It will be reviewed by the UfM energy Co-presidency and the UfM Secretariat and circulated to UfM Member States. This external evaluation will support the preparation of the 2021 Ministerial Declaration.

Taking into account the date of the Ministerial (21 April 2021), the annual meeting of the UfM Energy Platforms will take place in January 2021 and it will be the occasion to discuss and approve the Roadmap for Action to be annexed to the Ministerial Declaration. The second Ad hoc SOM on Energy (if needed, following the first one held on 17 December 2020) will be organized in January 2021 to discuss, and approve (at technical level) the Ministerial Declaration, taking into consideration the outcomes of the external evaluation. Following the ad hoc SOM, the reviewed draft Ministerial Declaration will be shared with UfM members in order to be approved by silence procedure. The Ministerial Declaration will be circulated and approved by the SOM in February/March (at political level) before the UfM Ministerial Meeting on Energy of 21 April 2021 (Evora, Portugal).



– **3rd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Energy and follow-up**

The 3rd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Energy is foreseen to be held in Evora, Portugal, on 21 April 2021. The Ministerial will set the priorities and areas of action of the UfM energy cooperation in the Mediterranean region for the coming years. It is expected to approve the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Energy and its annexed Roadmap for Action.

Following the Ministerial, the necessary meetings of the UfM Energy Platforms will be organized and the required steps will be undertaken in order to implement the mandate of the Ministerial Declaration in 2021 and beyond.

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

The Mediterranean local communities play a key role in the energy transition. Cities are in the best position to take action on the ground and meet local needs in order to address a growing energy demand, the climate emergency and the need to find innovative and efficient solutions for their citizens, inter alia.

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue, Projects and Initiatives**

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

In 2021, 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.

If the COVID19 pandemic situation allows, peer-to-peer dialogue sessions will be foreseen in 2021 to happen back to back with the capacity building/ad hoc trainings 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 sessions and the capacity building trainings 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**

In 2020, the UfM launched together with the Copenhagen Centre on Energy Efficiency 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 in order to improve energy efficiency in street lighting and contribute to their energy transition. The exercise started with five UfM members: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Palestine.

In 2021, the UfM and the Copenhagen Centre on Energy Efficiency will explore 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 municipalities participating in the exercise. This activity will be coordinated with others of the Climate Action's portfolio, in particular with the operationalization of the Climate Finance strategy. The UfM and the Copenhagen Centre on Energy Efficiency might also explore the possibility to replicate the exercise with other interested UfM countries.

- 3rd UfM Energy and Climate Business Forum

In 2021 (or 2022 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 in this activity, by involving and highlighting projects and initiatives led by women.

The thematic of the 3rd UfM Energy and Climate Business Forum, yet to be defined, will take into account the 2021 Ministerial Declaration on Energy 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 to contribute to the energy transition towards decarbonization.

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

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- Follow-up of labelled projects

In 2021, the UfM Secretariat will follow up on the identification of new and the implementation of the UfM energy related labelled projects.

The UfM Secretariat will explore with the project promoter of the UfM Energy University by Schneider Electric the possibility to organize a specific training session with beneficiary countries' representatives (to be held online most probably).

Regarding the follow up on the implementation of the SEMed Private Renewable Energy Framework "SPREF" project, due to the pandemic situation in 2020, EBRD and UfM Secretariat decided to postpone to 2021 the 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.



2.4. CLIMATE ACTION: Addressing the challenges of climate change

The UfM climate action activities proceed 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.

2021 specific objectives

In 2021, in the continuity of the UfM CCEG Work Program (2017-2022), and in line with the mandate issued from the 2nd UfM ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Action (Spring 2021) and its annexed Action Plan, the UfM Secretariat will work following the Ministerial mandate and towards the implementation of the Action Plan. The main climate related objectives for 2021 will focus on:

1. The support to the continuous scientific assessment of the impacts of climate change in the Mediterranean basin;
2. The support to UfM members with regard to their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), through capacity building on monitoring and the development of action plans for NDCs preparation and implementation;
3. The promotion of regional information on climate finance and its access for SEMed countries;
4. The support to youth engagement in climate action;
5. The promotion of flagship initiatives and projects as well as institutional partnerships.

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

➤ Promoting Regional Dialogue

– Update of the scientific assessment of the impacts of climate and environmental changes in the Mediterranean basin and future of MedECC

Following the finalization of the 1st Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) on the impacts of climate and environmental changes in the Mediterranean Basin and its Summary for Policymakers, to be further valorized, the UfM will seek to promote growingly updated assessments of the impacts of climate change in the Mediterranean region in order to support UfM countries in their decision-making processes.

The UfM will also seek to consolidate the future of MedECC to ensure a more institutionalized, stable and transparent network that can continue updating the Mediterranean Assessment Reports thereby providing crucial data, and initiating consequent initiatives and programs for the region and the countries. The challenges ahead include inter alia the long-term funding for the network, actions aimed at the reinforcement of the active participation and empowerment of scientists from all SEMed countries. This will be done in full respect of the Paris Agreement (and the capacity-building dimension), as well as in close cooperation with IPCC and WMO. In this regard, the partnership with UNEP MAP Plan Bleu will be consolidated.



The activities foreseen in 2021 include further communication of MAR1 findings to stakeholders and the broader public; the development of Special Reports (concept notes were prepared in 2020) or similar products; measuring the real influence of MAR1 and its SPM (Summary for Policymakers) on political decisions; reinforcement of the voluntary scientist community for MedECC; reinforcing the support to governments; the identification of knowledge gaps, and barriers to capacity-building in SEMed countries; the identification of related initiatives and investment programs.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

– **Partnership with WMO (World Meteorological Organization)**

On the basis of the MoU signed at COP24, and the Work Plan agreed by both organizations at COP25, the UfM Secretariat and the WMO will develop common activities in 2021. An assessment, led by the UfM, in consultation with WMO, to identify the most pertinent WMO programs for the Mediterranean region will be conducted in close cooperation with MedECC.

Objective two: The support to UfM members with regard to their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), through capacity building on monitoring and the development of action plans for NDCs preparation and implementation

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

– **The UfM Climate Change Expert Group (CCEG) and the UfM Climate Week**

The UfM CCEG will continue to act as a regional policy dialogue platform for UfM Members and relevant stakeholders, in order to identify initiatives and projects that could support the implementation of regional and national strategies related to low carbon development and climate resilience building, in full consistency with the engagements adopted within the framework of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.

The meeting of the UfM CCEG, organized as the major element of the UfM 2021 Climate week, will be centered on the mandate (including the finalization of the UfM Climate Action Plan 2021-2025), adopted at the 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Action (Spring-Summer 2021) for the UfM in the field of climate action. This meeting will also be organized as a bridge from the said Ministerial Meeting towards UfM participation at COP26.

– **NDCs and SDGs**

Following the 2nd UfM Ministerial meeting on Environment and Climate Action, a specific follow-up and update of the Regional Analysis of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)", published in 2019 and 2020, will be launched and developed in 2021 in close cooperation with UNDP: the operational goal is to present a common publication at COP26, with the perspective of assisting SEMed countries in improving their NDCs and Long Term Strategies. UfM being a member of 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: The promotion of climate finance regional information and its access for SEMed countries

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

– **Regional Climate Finance Committee and related activities**



The UfM Regional Climate Finance Committee, established in 2016, initiated the cooperation through sharing of information among IFIs and donors active on climate finance in the Mediterranean region. In 2021, the UfM Secretariat will continue to animate it, with the objective to further promote coordination and sharing of information. Identifying new areas of cooperation for the possible development of complementary financing mechanisms will continue, on the basis of the results of the UfM Climate Finance Studies, and in line with the work relations developed with UNFCCC (and its climate finance team namely), as well as with the Green Climate Fund.

The results of these activities were essential to enhance the level of representation of the Secretariat of the UfM in international fora such as the “One Planet Summit”. The next Summit is planned to be organized in January 2021, *Date TBC*, with the participation of the UfM Secretary General and specific Climate Action activities (on climate finance related to nature-based solutions, but also on youth engagement). In the same perspective, a climate finance (and potentially sustainable investment) seminar may be organized back-to-back with the 2nd UfM Ministerial meeting on Environment and Climate Action.

- **Climate finance studies**

In 2021, the UfM Secretariat will continue to update the UfM climate finance studies to support UfM countries’ access to finance.

A report on the 2019 data will be prepared, and the “Mediterranean Climate Finance Strategy” will be developed, with a consultation process with the UfM CCEG and UfM RCFC. Its goals are to fill in some of the gaps identified between offer and demand, and participate in the development of regionalized approach (e.g. the participation of UfM Member States in the SnCF dossiers, submitted to GCF, is a major result of this approach).

Some operational tools (such as a simple information portal) may be put in place if its feasibility is confirmed. Finally, the opportunity of developing concepts of new regional facility(/ies) will be developed, in coherence with the global Climate Finance context and in complementarity with other UfM climate-finance related initiatives (in particular with the Water, Environment and Energy sectors).

- **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- **Cooperation Agreement with R20**

Following the signature of the Cooperation Agreement with R20, the organization of the first meetings within UfM Secretariat events in 2019 and the UfM Secretariat’s participation at the “One Planet Summit”, seven UfM Member countries (Albania, Lebanon, Jordan, Mauritania, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia) have submitted their Non-Objection Letter to GCF (Green Climate Fund) for the R20 Global Green Fund Program. After the approval of GCF Board (planned in November 2020), the operationalization will start with the selection of pilot-projects, etc..., in 2021.

In parallel, the preparation of a regional initiative “Sub-national Climate Fund for the Mediterranean (SnCF MED)” will start in 2021. This initiative is coordinated with several projects, in particular the UfM labelled project Clima-Med and the UfM Energy Transition@Local initiative.

Objective four: The support to youth engagement in climate action

- **Promoting Regional Dialogue, Projects and Initiatives**

- **Support to the Mediterranean Youth Climate Network (MYCN)**



In 2021, the UfM Secretariat will continue its support to youth engagement in climate action in the Mediterranean region. Specifically, the UfM will follow the advancements of the Mediterranean Youth Climate Network (MYCN) and host, if the situation due to the COVID19 pandemic allows, their yearly General Assembly meeting, back to back to the 2021 UfM Climate Week.

– **Co-organization of the 2nd Mediterranean Youth Climate Forum**

The UfM Secretariat will support the Mediterranean Youth Climate Network in the organization of the second Mediterranean Youth Climate Forum (initially planned to be held in 2020 and postponed due to the COVID19 pandemic). This activity would be in line with the support that the UfM Secretariat brings to youth regarding their climate action engagement, and also in line with the broader strategy of the UfM aiming at empowering youth in the Mediterranean region and in articulation with other UfM Secretariat priorities.

UfM ECA division will in parallel continue its cooperation with UfM Higher Education Division to support the demand by stakeholders for contents, methodologies and events for a growing education on climate change.

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

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

– **Bringing the Mediterranean agenda to the global level (UNFCCC)**

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 at COPs and to make contributions to the work of the UNFCCC secretariat. In 2021, the UfM Secretariat will be present at COP26 in order to continue ensuring the voice of the Mediterranean region is being heard in this key global forum.

In line with the guidance provided by the UfM Roadmap, financial aspects have been prioritized as part of the UfM agenda. As such, the UfM Secretariat envisages continuing its cooperation and partnership with UNFCCC and its SCF (Standing Committee on Finance), namely by being active participants in their meetings and especially at the annual SCF Forum.

The UNFCCC secretariat and the UfM Secretariat have signed a MoU at COP 24 on several priorities including climate finance, assistance to UfM developing countries in preparing nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and capacity-building in implementing the Paris Agreement.

In 2021, the UfM Secretariat will continue to closely collaborate with the UNFCCC in the above-mentioned areas as well as following the contributions made in 2020 to the preparation of UNFCCC's publications ("Biennial Assessment" and "Need-Based Finance") and to the UNFCCC "Arab Climate Finance Strategy".

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

– **Clima-Med (EU for Climate Action in the Southern neighboring countries)**

Clima-Med is the first "climate-dedicated" UfM labelled project. 100% funded by the EU, the project aims at the enhancement of capacities of ENI South partner countries to implement and regularly update Nationally Determined Contributions, to develop adaptation and mitigation plans (including long-term Low Emission Development Strategies) and increasing their knowledge and implementing abilities in the field of Measurement, Reporting and Verification in collaboration with all relevant government bodies as well as in consultation with regional, national and



subnational stakeholders. When these specific contributions of CLIMA MED will be fully ready (which should be the case before COP26), a specific workshop could be organized (for instance as an ad hoc UfM meeting).

It also provides dedicated technical support to more than 80 cities in the Southern Neighborhood to draft their Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) and seek for appropriate funding to implement it.

In full line with the UfM CCEG work program, it will help in operationalizing some of its activities, notably on Climate finance and on some sectoral issues, depending on the sectors chosen in the “spin-off” projects.

In the follow-up of the project, a specific attention will focus on the development of the investment component of the “spin-off” projects and their financing plan (with R20 Global Green Fund being one potential source of financing), as well as with the involvement on Energy related activities, namely on Local Level Authorities under the Energy Transition @ Local initiative.

Promotion of a Climate Change Capacity Building Regional 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 as well as youth-driven actions, and 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 UfM Secretariat will support 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.

UfM will cooperate to assess in 2021, the legal consistency of the Climate Hub, the search for funding and the organizational shaping of the Entity.

– Joint OSCE-UfM project on “Prevention of Climate and Environment Security Threats in Mediterranean”

The overall objective of this project is to enhance sustainable development and regional stability in the Mediterranean region through addressing potential security implications of climate change. It will enable policymakers and governments to garner a more accurate understanding of the issues at stake and by fostering co-operative responses to climate change related security issues. The project will be open for all interested UfM members to join.

After the development of the Draft Concept in 2018-2019, approved by the competent platforms of UfM and OSCE, the full draft project document (including a detailed logical framework, multi annual work plan and budget) have been prepared in 2020.



The next steps foreseeable in 2021 include the mobilization of resources for the full project to be developed and implemented in the coming years; a joint conference to be organized in Barcelona at the beginning of 2021 (if the pandemic situation allows); the implementation of the project (the first cost estimates of OSCE were around 3 M€, for a duration of 4 years).

– **“Emissions Control Area-Med” (ECA-Med)**

The “ECA-Med” project has been identified by the Heads of States in the 2020 Ajaccio Declaration as a priority project for the whole region.

The inclusion of the maritime transport in the carbon market confirms that the topic of air pollution by the maritime transport has a very clear and important climate dimension.

In that context, the Secretariat of the UfM (*has supported in 2020 and*) will support the project promoter in the preparation of the dossier to be submitted at the International Maritime Organization.



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

Following 14 years of environmental cooperation within the Euro-Mediterranean framework, the second phase of the “H2020 Initiative for a Cleaner Mediterranean” - launched in Cairo in 2006 and reconfirmed by the 2014 UfM Ministerial on ENV and CC, with an expanded scope and approach integrating depollution, pollution prevention/sustainable production and consumption, climate change as basis of a Mediterranean Green Deal – has closed. Its results are now compiled in the report “Reaching the 2020 Horizon: 14 years of Mediterranean cooperation on Environment - THE H2020 INITIATIVE FOR A CLEANER MEDITERRANEAN”.

The 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Action, which will mark the post-2020 was postponed due to the difficulties related to the Covid pandemic and it is currently intended to hold it during the first semester 2021 in Egypt.

The draft Declaration prepared for the postponed Ministerial meeting aims at renewing, reinforcing and giving a crucial push, at a particularly critical time, to the political commitments of the 43 UfM countries to promote the shift towards a green, circular, carbon neutral and socially inclusive economy and its implementation plan, the “2030 Agenda for a Greener Med”.

The “2030 Agenda for a Greener Med” aspires to be a strategic joint agenda in tune with the vision for the next decade. The document was progressively shaped over time as result of a) two years of consultations with countries and stakeholders, b) the support of an External Evaluation and c) the elaboration of the outcomes of the above mentioned H2020 and other relevant regional Initiatives. The 2030 Agenda for a Greener Med builds on three axes of work, namely

- Support the transition to a green, circular and socially inclusive economy based on sustainable consumption and production practices and nature-based solutions;
- Prevent and reduce pollution on land, sea and air;
- Protect, preserve, manage and restore natural resources in the Mediterranean region within an integrated ecosystem approach, including terrestrial, marine and coastal dimension/s.

The three thematic areas are closely interlinked and need to be addressed simultaneously. A fourth cross-cutting thematic area of high regional priority is the link with climate action for mitigation and adaptation. In its own essence, the 2030 Agenda for a Greener Med addresses the environmental root causes of the Covid outbreak and proposes a long term recovery approach based on the need to accelerate the green transition in line with the SDGs. 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.



2021 specific objectives

The specific objective of 2021 will be to work towards the adoption of the 2nd Ministerial on Environment and Climate Action and follow up on the related political decisions; therefore, the UfM Secretariat is expected to focus on the following objectives:

1. Reinforce regional dialogue around the 2nd UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Action as well as on the UfM “2030 Greener Med Agenda”, as instrument for the implementation of its environmental component;
2. Structure the post-2020 portfolio according to main thematic axes of the UfM “2030 Greener Med Agenda”;
3. Consolidate the existing - and promote new partnerships - in the region to maximize new opportunities for collaboration within the “2030 Greener Med Agenda”.

Objective one: Reinforce regional dialogue around the UfM “2030 Greener Med Agenda”, newly launched by the 2020 Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Action

➤ **Regional Dialogue**

- Organization of at least two meetings - one possibly in presence - of UfM WG on ENV and CC/ENV Task Force to focus on the preparation of a solid implementation plan in line with the UfM “**2030 Greener Med Agenda**”. The core objective of the “2030GreenerMed” Initiative is to set the framework to coordinate, streamline and promote the efforts in the Mediterranean region – involving UfM member countries and other relevant stakeholders, including regional partners and local authorities, through a participatory approach. The 2030 Greener Med Agenda is made of three thematic axes:

1. Ensure further coordination of efforts launched in the Mediterranean region to shift towards a greener, circular, carbon-neutral, socially inclusive economy;
2. Prevent and reduce pollution on land, sea, air;
3. Protect and restore natural resources in the Mediterranean region through an integrated ecosystem approach.

The three thematic areas are closely interlinked and need to be addressed simultaneously. A fourth cross-cutting thematic area of high regional priority is climate action for mitigation and adaptation.

- Discussion, finalization and adoption by the UfM WG on ENV and CC/ENV of the following:
 - *Annex for Implementation* of the UfM “2030 Greener Med Agenda” in the form of *living document*, progressively updated over time; in particular, the Agenda narrative and thematic axes need to be supported by *key priority actions* in order to launch the concrete plan of work; such key actions will be further fine-tuned to launch implementation.
 - *Monitoring and Reporting Plan* for the “2030 UfM Greener Med Agenda”. A first proposal for a conceptual framework for monitoring the “2030 Greener Med



Agenda” based on targets for each key thematic area and associated indicators is under development; mechanism/format for a regular reporting for future follow up is to be defined and agreed.

- Ensuring, integrating and fostering operational links of the Environment agenda and the implementation plan with other related UfM agendas, plans and activities, in particular water, climate action, blue economy (ex. SCP/climate change, green jobs, dialogue on emissions control area, ecotourism, food systems, etc);
- Participate in the relevant UN CCD, CBD, UNCCF events as well as the regional conventions meetings (UN Environment, FAO, UNIDO, etc) as appropriate, as well as to key international, regional, national events and gatherings; dedicated ad hoc missions to countries of the region are carried out, as appropriate

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- Analysis of the operational framework of Agenda 2030 for a Greener Med to visualize how and if all the agreed key actions are covered; the operational framework of the “2030 Greener Med Agenda” will be based on a coordinated implementation of ongoing and future initiatives, projects and activities – labelled and not labelled, but solidly associated to the UfM agenda - funded by different donors (EU, SIDA, GIZ, etc), linking and quantifying whenever possible, the contribution to the different SDGs;
- Identification of potential gaps 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; upscaling to other countries; policy and operational content; studies and reports; 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;
- Three thematic online (if possible, in person) workshop/s or webinars around three main thematic areas;

Objective two: Structure the post-2020 portfolio according to main thematic axes endorsed by the 2020 Ministerial Declaration

➤ **Regional Dialogue**

- Propose a more powerful and user- friendly virtual communication tool to keep countries, stakeholders and donors engaged and informed on the portfolio of initiatives, projects and activities of the 2030 Greener Med Agenda;
- Activation of a dedicated in house support to the Environment Portfolio.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- Structure the post-2020 portfolio of labelled and UfM relevant initiatives and projects by thematic area;
- Looking into the promotion and matchmaking of programs/activities related to the Ministerial Declaration’s key thematic axes of work; promoting transfer and capitalization of results, as well as the identification of further opportunities for involvement of UfM Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Countries into new initiatives and programs, or scaling-up and/or extension to other UfM countries;



- assessing/Promoting the UfM labelling of projects tackling the 2020 Ministerial priorities, linking with SDGs as well as international and regional frameworks and conventions;
- Monitoring and facilitation of the implementation of the labelled projects and other initiatives supported by the UfM Secretariat; 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 projects; launch of the technical assistance in support of projects/activities)
 - Support capitalization, upscaling and communication of the *Plastic Busters* Initiative; dissemination of the to-be-released toolkit for ML monitoring;
 - Support capitalization, upscaling, dissemination, integration of the policy messages emerging from the *Interreg Med Green Growth Community*; follow up with fund raising with other donors; links with other regional programmes, including SwitchMed (in particular, the postponed 2021 SwitchMedConnect event);
 - Enhance and promote *Interreg Med and CBC* projects links, based on the existing concrete successful examples;
 - Support upscaling of the events of the UfM labelled and IKI financed project “Scaling up forest and landscape restoration in order to restore biodiversity and promote joint mitigation and adaptation approaches in the Mediterranean” addressing the three Rio Convention, directly linking with the SDGs and operationally tackling the NDCs; the extension of technical assistance to other countries of the region
 - Enhance communication and potential support to *MPAs Trust Fund project*, also in collaboration with UNEP/MAP;
 - Support political buy-in, dissemination, upscaling, fund raising for the (to-be-labelled) project “Enhancing the conservation of coastal wetlands in the Mediterranean Basin
 - Dissemination and support to the organization, where appropriate, of initiatives/project related workshop/s or online webinars;
 - Participation to key initiatives/project events and gatherings.

Objective three: Consolidate the existing - and promote new partnerships - in the region to maximize new opportunities for collaboration within the “2030 Greener Med Agenda”

➤ **Regional Dialogue**

- Consolidate the plan of joint activities and events with the existing donors/partners (EU, GIZ, FAO/CIHEAM; UNCCD; UNIDO; UNDP, UNEP MAP, etc);
- Identify new strategic partnerships and develop them further.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- Define in details the annual EU funded WES support (Water and Environment Support) to the UfM Environment agenda, including on waste management, marine litter and green economy;



- Based on the Letter of Intent and MoU, operationalize the FAO-UfM Secretariat-CIHEAM food system platform through events and flagship projects in view of the UN 2021 Food Summit;
- Follow up with UNCCD to define future joint activities in the light of the “2030 GreenerMed Agenda” and, if appropriate, of the above-mentioned food-platform;
- Following up on the implementation of the initiatives 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.
- Linking the ongoing or to-be-launched plastic initiatives of the region into a coherent package of actions, including BLUEMED Pilot for a Plastic Free Mediterranean;
- Follow up as appropriate and in coordination with the other divisions the proposal of support/technical assistance associated to the August 2020 blast at the port of Beirut;
- Explore further opportunities for supporting environmental initiatives or projects linked to the UfM political agenda and ministerial priorities, including on green jobs, biodiversity, nature based solutions and plastics.
- Integrating and fostering operational links of the 2030 GreenerMed Agenda and its implementation plan with other related UfM agendas, plans and activities, in particular blue economy, climate change, water, environment (ex. SCP/climate change, green entrepreneurship, dialogue on emissions control area, ecotourism, food systems, etc), especially with the Research and Innovation, Transport, Water and Climate change sectors.



2.6 BLUE ECONOMY: Promoting Blue Economy

The Ministerial Meeting on Blue Economy, originally scheduled for the 2nd of July 2020 in Malta, has been moved to early February 2021 due to the Covid outbreak. As part of its mandate on blue economy, the UfM Secretariat continues to support and facilitate the regional dialogue towards a 2nd UfM Ministerial Declaration on Blue Economy, in coordination with other relevant UfM Divisions, in particular research and innovation, employment trade and industrial cooperation, sustainable transport, climate change, marine energies.

Acting upon the common understanding that 1) governance needs to be strengthened, 2) environmental pressures reduced and the sea used in a sustainable manner, 3) circular economy principles applied to the blue sectors; countries have led and engaged in strategic processes under the first Ministerial Declaration, whose implementation is now continuing and moving towards a renewed phase of political commitment. Over the last 5 years, countries and stakeholders have shown full engagement in the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration and its main strategic axes of work.

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*». Furthermore, questions 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.

2021 specific objectives

During 2021, the UfM Secretariat will focus on the following areas of action:

1. Supporting the process towards a 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Blue Economy;
2. Follow up on the Ministerial decisions and set the path towards the post 2020 Work Program on Blue Economy;
3. Consolidate the existing - and promote new partnerships - in the region to maximize new opportunities for collaboration

Objective one: Supporting the process towards a 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Blue Economy

➤ Regional Dialogue

- Assisting the Co-Presidency with the preparation of the 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting, taking care of the organization of the ONLINE part of the event, together with related preparatory meetings/documents;
- Assist the CoPresidency with the follow up in the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration, once adopted, integrating as appropriate the Covid crisis elements.



- Holding one (and if needed, two meetings, of which at least one in person) meeting of the UfM Working Group on Blue Economy as main channel of regional dialogue, covering the policy and technical aspects;
- Maintain operational and active the Med Blue Economy Platform as support tool for dialogue, reinforcing for example, its requested use as a platform of exchange of training tools/ mobility programs/etc.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- Supporting the BLUEMED implementation plan/s¹⁰ links with other UfM dossiers and the integration with the “H2030 Greener Med Agenda” of the BLUEMED Pilot: For a healthy plastic-free productive Mediterranean Sea
- Supporting WestMed advancements and in particular the WESTMED Technical Group on Transport/Green Shipping, whose work is relevant for the entire region and foresees as next step to engage with EU Programs to identify possible areas of funding/financing;
- establishing a closer link with the European Strategy of Adriatic Ionian Region EUSAIR, through the Blue Economy Working Group and the MedBEP, as appropriate;
- establishing closer links between the MedBESP and the new Black Sea Virtual Knowledge Centre (BSVKC);
- Within the PANORAMED Interreg MED Project, participating as an Associated Partner and in the advisory committees where requested, and the integration of related activities into the UfM BE work program; two innovation projects have been approved and are kicking off;
- Support further the process on Skills, Careers and Employment in the Blue Economy; the first UfM November 2019 Seminar on Skills, Careers and Employment in the Blue Economy specifically dedicated to the Mediterranean revealed that education, cooperation, decentralization are key concepts to be looked at. It also stressed that targeted educational and employment policies, adapted to the specificities of the region, are needed. Public and private sectors’ partnerships are extremely important, while local authorities also have a key role to play. Furthermore, vocational skills are also important as vectors of employability, in addition and complementary to traditional higher education ones. In particular, upskilling and reskilling in the blue economy sectors (including soft and future-proof horizontal competences such as digital; environmental; security; entrepreneurial, multi-disciplinary, social media skills and definitely languages...) can also increase employability and entrepreneurship, bridging gaps in the Mediterranean societies and empowering women and youth entering labour markets, while fighting against brain drain and gender imbalances in many blue economy sectors. Strategies in the sector should tackle a general lack of

¹⁰ Dedicated webpage <http://www.bluedmed-initiative.eu/strategic-research-and-innovation-agenda/#prioritization> and the direct link to download the whole (and big) file http://www.bluedmed-initiative.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/bluedmed-preliminary-implementation-plan_version-complete.pdf



awareness about existing tools and address the mismatch between graduates and competences required by business, facilitating provision of necessary skills for the entire region. A variety of strategies and tools for blue career development can be implemented/expanded to other countries in the Mediterranean, and easily adapted to local needs;

- Supporting the consolidation of the work started on sustainable blue finance/investments in the blue economy at national and regional level;
- Creating further opportunities for Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Countries involvement in other relevant initiatives;
-

Objective two: Follow up on the Ministerial decisions and set the path towards the post 2020 Work Program on Blue Economy

➤ **Regional Dialogue**

- As mentioned, holding one (and if needed, two meetings, of which at least one in person) meeting of the UfM Working Group on Blue Economy to turn the Ministerial Declaration into an active work plan, integrating the newly agreed upon objectives and activities;
- Preparing an updated report on the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration/s, following on the existing one;
- Attending/co-organizing other relevant Blue economy fora and event/s (UNESCO, Interreg MED Blue Growth Community; Interreg MED Sustainable Tourism Community; Interreg MED Green Growth Community etc);

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- Further improvement of the layout in a user friendly format and improvement of the outreach of the Mediterranean Blue Economy Stakeholders Platform through a technical assistance and consolidate its role as key digital hub for the emerging Mediterranean Blue economy community; Managing and maintaining the Platform as a tool for *networking and information sharing for the Mediterranean Blue Economy Community*; and consolidate its role as a key digital hub and as a tool for networking and information sharing for the Mediterranean Blue Economy Community;
- Managing and maintaining the Platform as a tool for networking and information sharing for the Mediterranean Blue Economy Community;
- Further use of the MedBEP called to further facilitate contacts between existing education networks, exchange information including pedagogic tools and serve as an interface for mobility programs;
- Organize a 2nd event on Skills, Careers and Employment in the Blue Economy, following up on the first UfM November 2019 Seminar on Skills, Careers and Employment in the Blue Economy;
- Coordinate, supervise the technical assistance aimed at preparing and releasing the 2nd UfM report on 'Blue Economy in the Mediterranean', analyzing each BE sector based on the most actual availability of data, indicators, trends etc., integrating the crucial aspects related to blue skills and jobs as well as integrating and highlighting



aspects related to demand for new skills and professional profiles as well as the related employment potential;

- Coordinate, supervise the technical assistance aimed at adapting and updating the Manual for the Training on Integrated Territorial Development (<https://cpmr-intermed.org/download/manual-for-the-training-on-integrated-territorial-development-2/>), to be the basis to develop a more practical approach applied to sustainable tourism also building on the experience gained through the UfM labelled MedCoast4BG;
- In close coordination with DG MARE/EASME, identify and launch the agreed technical assistance, webinars, trainings according to the priority setting discussed at the UfM BE Working Groups; participate in relevant UfM CoPresidency meetings;
- Participating in the WestMed Steering Committee meetings, events and activities;
- Participating in the BlueMed Steering Committee meetings, events and activities;
- Participating in the Panoramед meetings, events and activities;
- DG MARE
- Supporting the work on maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management, and its possible extension to new countries, within the context of the UfM labelled ENI CBC MED MedCoast4BG process supporting the capitalization of Interreg MED CoEvolve Project through transferring its methodology and results to the new MedCoast4BG.
- Follow up as appropriate and in coordination with the other divisions the proposal of support/technical assistance associated to the Lebanese post blast recovery;
- Assessing of relevant regional blue economy projects and/or initiatives for potential labelling and any other relevant initiative for future cooperation;
- Six-monthly bulletin/newsletter circulated through the Med Blue Economy Platform;

Objective three: Consolidate the existing - and promote new partnerships - in the region to maximize new opportunities for collaboration

➤ **Regional Dialogue**

- Consolidate the plan of joint activities and events with the existing donors/partners (EU, EIB, WORLD BANK, AFED, WWF, CPRM, UNESCO, regional and national Maritime Clusters, etc);
- Identify new strategic partnerships and develop them further.



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 2021 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 as well as to implement those activities that were not substituted by online means due to covid19 pandemic.

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

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 thus 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) and environment and climate action (SDG 13) will be mainstreamed throughout the UfM Secretariat action in this priority area.

2021 specific objectives

In 2021, 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
3. Enhancing cooperation and ensure coherence with relevant partners and initiatives in the UfM region.

Objective one: Supporting the implementation of the UfM Water agenda

The objective during 2021 will be to continue the iteration of the UfM Water Agenda, which began in 2019, and continue 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 resource 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**

- a. **Organizing two Water Expert Group (WEG) meetings** 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 these meetings to ensure links with international initiatives on water and in other relevant sectors, such as climate change, and in developing initiatives to materialize the recommendation from the Financial strategy.

- b. **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 (using back to back with big 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 of proposals to the WEG. Task Force Meetings will generally be convened ahead of each WEG meeting and continue to be based on voluntary participation by a limited number of Member states and partner organizations.

- c. **Joint endeavor of CMI and UfM on 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 in the water sector, promoting water youth networks as awareness raising instruments, and disseminating knowledge products –studies, analyses – from the MedYWAt network toward consolidating more synergized approach on youth- the meeting will take place in Jarba, Tunisia 2021.

- d. **3rd edition of the Technical Project Preparation Workshop for Transformational Climate Resilience GCF Water Project Concepts in the Mediterranean-**

The Workshop responds to needs from MENA and SEE countries and to expressed demand for strengthening capacity of Water Ministries as well as the National Designated Authorities (NDAs) and Direct Access Entities (DAEs), to prepare climate-resilient water projects that can access GCF financing. Specifically, the Workshop aims to:

- Present the GCF, its mandate, investment criteria, and its operational modalities and procedures for delivering climate finance to water initiatives through different windows.
- Discuss GCF financing instruments, along with fit-for- purpose examples of climate rationale, paradigm shift, project design, and financing instrument selection in the Mediterranean context, tackling priorities of MENA and SEE countries.
- Discuss methodologies for articulating incremental costs of climate-proofing water projects.
- Review challenges and constraints, and explore solutions for DAEs to coordinate with NDAs, and ministries in charge of water and water-related sectors in the preparation of GCF projects.
- Identify opportunities and follow-up activities for GCF Project Concept Note preparation.

The Workshop will target the Water Directors and/or assigned officials from Water Ministries/Agencies, GCF National Designated Authorities (NDAs), GCF Direct Access Entities (DAEs), Project preparation and co-finance partners. And **Expected to achieve the following Outcomes:**



- Enhanced understanding of the GCF investment criteria, operational modalities and procedures, and financing instruments.
 - Clear understanding of concrete steps needed to prepare strong water-related adaptation project proposals.
 - Methodologies understood for articulating climate rationale and estimating incremental costs of climate- proofing water-related investments.
 - Enhanced understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved throughout the project cycle.
 - Identification of potential GCF project concepts.
- e. **Workshop with JRC and partners** on dissemination of best practices on research in water scarcity in relation to the WEFE task force, as well as to the WEFE Atlas with PRIMA initiative during July 2021.
- The conference has the ambition to distinguish itself from the many conferences/workshops touching the topic of the WEFE Nexus. Looking at many past events, their impact has vanished the same day of the last session. We want instead the conference to be very practical in developing not only ideas, but mainly plans for the development of the science basis of the policy making in the field of the management of WEFE resources. Then, we have to look for speakers and panelists not for the political opportunity to have representatives of certain organizations, but considering what the speakers and panelists in their individual capacity can provide in terms of science-to-policy interface. Not an easy task, but certainly winning in the medium- to long-term. Then, excellence in the relevant science fields is a must in our selection of speakers and panelists. In this context, the role of moderators is essential, also to be selected for their capacity to manage discussions towards concrete conclusions. The template below is intended to help structure the selection process. A possibility is that of organizing Session 3 as a role-playing game rather than as a panel.
- f. **Water, employment and migration; organization** of WEM labs in association with UNESCO, Global Water partnership- Med (GWP-Med) and WEM Task force participants, **WEM Lab is a session supported by the UfM focusing on real example on water employments activities in the region by different actors including GWP-Med, Women for water partnership, UNESCO and others, the focus is to implement action oriented plans based on implementation of the newly Sida agreement with UfM/GWP-Med.**
- g. The UfM Secretariat will cooperate with GWP, GWP-Med and SIDA to continue the implementation of the round table discussion on the WEFE nexus aiming at engaging the most influential actors in the topic including GIZ, EIB, AfD, not to mention implementing partners such as UNECE, Organization Sahelo-saharien (OSS), the League of Arab States, as well as sub-regional organizations and UN agencies aiming at launching Blue entrepreneurship program (WATER Jobs And Business Module) and project facility in cooperation with relevant departments.
- h. **WEFE and WEM Nexus priority sector;** It is envisaged to organize a regional or sub-regional conference on the nexus dialogues in accordance with the UfM Water Agenda in cooperation with UfM Member States, GWP-Med, as well as with GIZ, the league of Arab States, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and Konrad Adenauer Foundation MENA programme, and Middle East Desalination Research Center (MEDRC). June 2021

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**



a. In the framework of the renewed UfM – Sida cooperation agreement, UfM Secretariat agreed with Sida that GWP-Med will implement, in coordination with the implementation of the UFM water Agenda, the **Project 'Making Water Cooperation Happen in Middle East & North Africa: Piloting Tangibles' (MENA Water Matchmaker 2 Project)**, aiming at fostering at local level sustainable water resources management, climate resilience and their related long-term COVID-19 responses through implementing the UfM Water Policy Framework for Action 2030 (UfM Water Agenda) for tangible socio-economic benefits, peace and security in Middle East & North Africa. The Project will increase local natural resources efficiency in selected UfM MENA countries and will promote employability and entrepreneurship for Youth & Women in WEFE Nexus/ Non-Conventional Water Resources (NCWR) fields, also for migration prevention, while replicating good practices.

--b. As part of the development of the UfM Water Agenda, supporting the advancement of responding positively for different partners and member states. The UfM Secretariat will response 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. Meanwhile not forgot 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.

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

Several activities and initiatives will be undertaken in this regard during 2021. The UfM Secretariat will also continue engaging with UN agencies, regional organizations, as well as member states in order to engage in the Global efforts of implementation of the monitoring schemes for implementing the regional water agenda with the Global efforts including, High level panel on Water, High level panel on development, Water and peace initiative with Blue Peace, the Swiss international agency and 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 eth financial strategy last chapter.

➤ Promoting Regional Dialogue

- 2nd edition of the UfM High Level Regional Forum on Financing and Investments.
- Technical assistant to study the added value of eth investment forum.
- National consultation workshops on the UfM Financial strategy, potentially in Morocco, and a 2nd UfM Country.
- - **Following up of the workshop on SDG 6 and related SDG for the Mediterranean region with the support of UNESCO, UNECE and ESCWA aiming to develop a project on "Achieving SDG6 and related SDGs in the Mediterranean Region".**

➤ Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives

- A regional study on the socio-economic impact of large water infrastructure projects in the Mediterranean.



- A series of regional capacity development workshops focused on specific water financing topics, as well as country peer review studies **analyzing the financial sustainability of the water sector in selected countries (on voluntary basis) and providing recommendations.**
- Project investment needs and financing capacities of countries in the region in cooperation with ongoing work by EC on water economics and by the OECD to analyze means and instruments to harness additional sources of finance, including domestic commercial finance. The work would be developed in collaboration with development agencies active on water in the region.
- Technical Assistant to support the Development and Implementation of water policies and project identifications.

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

The UfM will seek to enhance cooperation and ensure coherence with relevant partners and initiatives in the UfM region, including the World Water Forum (WWF), the PRIMA initiative for strategic research, UNECE, CMI, the UNESCO-IHP and UNESCO WAP in relation UN high-level panel for Water as well as other international partners, as well as the SDG6 and other related SDGs.

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- In line with its past coordination role for the contribution of all Mediterranean Countries to the 2018 edition of the World Water Forum, and as part of its cooperation agreement with the IME (Institut Méditerranéen de l'Eau), the UfM Secretariat will cooperate in the preparations for the next WWF, scheduled for 2021 in Dakar, Senegal, in particular through the co-organization of the Mediterranean regional process forum.
- Contribute to the multi-dimensional water activities by the Member states, including the Cairo Water Week, Palestine International Water Forum, World Water Week, the UN Water Day, as well as the UNECE working groups at regional level. UFM SECRETARIAT will mobilize some resources to conduct TA and studies to support the dialogue with knowledge and scientific based elements.

➤ **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.

- In 2021, the UfM Secretariat will continue its support to promoters for fund-raising activities as well as participation in the Regional workshop with all Mediterranean countries on national indicators used to monitor national water policy, and on existing indicators suggested for monitoring or taking into consideration the 4 priority areas of the



UfM water agenda into national (water) policies (WEFE nexus, WSS, Climate Change adaptation, employment and migration).

- The Desalination Facility for the Gaza Strip project: The project is a flagship project labeled 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, which it co-chairs, 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 WB and PWA 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 2021 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.

The UfM Secretariat will also consider for labelling infrastructure projects coming from the Interreg initiative, focusing on the AQUARES project led by the Regional Government of Murcia, the Government of Spain, the Spanish Ministry of Water, Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, General Directorate for Water, as well as the project from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) **“Integrating multiple water sources and local institutions for enhanced food security in North Africa’s hinterland by reinforcing agricultural & rural innovation systems”**, and



continue the identification of relevant programs and initiatives that will consolidate the regional interactions and enhance the regional integrations concept on water issues.

- **Role of Women in water and water Diplomacy and cooperation.**

Because the growing imbalance in global water supply and demand leads to tensions and conflicts and could potentially evolve into a widespread threat to international peace and security. At the same time, water deprivation is increasingly seen as a fundamentally political and security problem, and not confined only within the realms of human development and environmental sustainability. It is indicative that after recognizing water formally as a foreign policy issue in 2011, the EU Foreign Affairs Council adopted the new conclusions on EU Water Diplomacy making the case for linking water, security and peace, including the potential of water as an instrument for peace. For water diplomacy to bear fruits, the inclusive participation of all stakeholders in the process is an absolute must include women. Enabling women to have a meaningful voice in decision-making provides an opportunity to include their distinctive knowledge, diverse perspectives and experiences to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of relevant water issues and challenges and to identify a broader set of equitable solutions to those challenges, especially as women are most suffering from water scarcity and climate change impacts. However, the role of women in water diplomacy related decision-making has been underestimated, despite the acknowledged essential role of women in peacebuilding, conflict management and sustaining security, as reaffirmed by the landmark United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (adopted on 31st October 2000) and by the eight resolutions on the issue adopted thereafter. Further emphasis on encouraging and capacitating women to take up such positions has strong merits that are yet to be explored.

Enhancing the role of women in water diplomacy means building more equitable and more sustainable water policy and promoting peace and cooperation. The UFM-Water will harness on the results of Comparative Study on Women & Water Diplomacy in the MENA region, prepared with financial support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), which has contrasted the challenges to the attainment of more women decision makers in water diplomacy and transboundary water cooperation settings, and to expand it for the whole Med Region. It builds upon a previous mapping exercise conducted in five MENA countries (Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt and Morocco), and adopts the same methodology of surveying and interviewing women in water-related institutions.

The focus of the Comparative Study is to identify the similarities and the differences in the challenges female water experts faced among the five countries, and to identify the capacity building needs in terms of the various skills of a 21st century water diplomat. Importantly, the Comparative Study will provide the enabling environment for the creation of a network of women in the five countries that aspires to provide the platform for future interventions and exchanges.

- The UfM will engage as well new with the MASAR Water governance program of the AECID, as well as with OSCE, UNECE-disaster risk reduction and all other partners.



THIRD PART: REINFORCING UfM CAPACITY FOR ACTION



3.1. BUILDING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Given the important role that partnerships have in the promotion of the UfM as a platform for regional dialogue and cooperation, and in an effort 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.

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 UfM Secretariat seeks to build strategic partnerships with projects promoters, as well as to maintain an open dialogue with associated stakeholders.

i. INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

2021 Specific objectives

- 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 2021 on strengthening strategic institutional partnerships with a set of key identified and potential actors involved in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation:

- 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 UfM Secretariat will continue to provide support and substance.
- The European Parliament, namely during its upcoming Presidency of the Bureau of the PA-UfM in the beginning 2021, 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.
- The Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF): to support the development of the cultural dimension of the UfM and the reinforcement of the intercultural and interreligious dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The cooperation between the two institutions on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Process paves the way to new joint-initiatives to be developed in 2021.
- The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), as well as with other economic and social councils (ESCs) of the region, in the framework of the MoU signed on 30 September 2020.
- 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).
- The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), notably through the joint development of a project on "Prevention of climate and environment security threats in the Mediterranean". The two institutions will further develop their joint-initiatives, in line with the MoU signed in October 2018 for 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 the successful meetings of the UfM SG with his counterpart and the participation of the Secretary General of the LAS in the V UfM Regional Forum.
- The International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) continues to be reinforced in a number of sectors, particularly through the divisions of Water, Environment and Blue Economy, Energy and Climate Action and Business Development and Employment, to potentiate the synergies and the impact of the actions developed by the two institutions.
- The Centre for Mediterranean Integration of the World Bank (CMI), within the framework of the signed MoU, to collaborate in joint initiatives in order 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 UfM Secretariat has developed close partnerships with several UN institutions, which have contributed to the success of UfM Secretariat initiatives and events or to the implementation of regional projects of cooperation. In 2021, these efforts will continue to be strengthened, in the following lines:

- UN-Habitat, within the signed MoU in 2016, to strengthen collaboration towards the definition of a regional strategy to implement the new UfM Urban Agenda. Both parties agreed to find common responses to the pressing challenges facing urban areas in the Euro-Mediterranean region and have identified several areas of collaboration. 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 2018 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), with whom the UfM signed an MoU in January 2017, continues to be developed to further encourage South-South and triangular cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
- UNESCO, within the MoU signed in October 2015, 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 2021, 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”. " It is important to know that EEA and UNEP/MAP jointly published the monitoring report «*Towards a cleaner Mediterranean: a decade of progress: Monitoring Horizon 2020 regional initiative*». This report, EU funded/supported, give additional interesting information on the H2020 initiative. 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. In 2019, the UfM Secretariat and UNFCCC signed an MoU that will open way to more and closer cooperation.



- The UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States, with whom the UfM Secretariat has been collaborating in the last years on a number of initiatives, notably on women, youth and the prevention of violent extremism. A more structured partnership between both organisations is currently discussed.
- 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.

➤ **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 2021, the UfM Secretariat 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.

Also 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.

The co-organisation of the Annual Forum of the MedThink 5+5 network with the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) could be envisaged.

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

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):**



- last July 2020 Sida and the UfM Secretariat concluded an addendum to the existing cooperation, extending the implementation period of the cooperation agreement until the end of 2022.
- Furthermore, the global amount of the cooperation agreement has been increased of approx. €1,5 million that will be forwarded by the UfM Secretariat to our partner GWP-Med, in the framework of the UfM Water Agenda.
- During 2021, the UfM Secretariat will implement the 2021 work plan, formulated in coherence with the 2021 Work Program of the UfM Secretariat, according to the priorities jointly defined with Sida.
- **Norwegian Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs:**
 - The cooperation agreement with Norway, covering UfM labelled projects in the field of gender equality, was renewed and enlarged end of 2019, to finance labelled projects addressing women and youth empowerment and strengthening gender equality and job creation in particular in North Africa.
 - During 2021, the UfM Secretariat will closely monitor the implementation of the UfM labelled projects funded under the agreement.
- **“Support to the UfM on Employment and Trade” provided by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and commissioned to GIZ.**
 - The project is based on a Memorandum of Understanding between BMZ and UfM, aimed at the advancement of regional integration, employment promotion and regional trade, implemented by GIZ, with a total budget of € 5 Million for the period 2018-2021.
 - Focused on the priority areas of employment and trade, the project objectives for the two priority areas are:
 - Capacity Development for UfM-Secretariat
 - Increased contribution of UfM multi-stakeholder dialogues to the regional exchange on employment and trade
 - Development and implementation of measures in UfM Member States, particularly in North Africa and Middle East
 - During 2021, the UfM Secretariat will implement the 2021 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 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. TRANSVERSAL ACTIVITIES

i. TOURISM: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

2021 specific objectives

As set out in the 2017 **UfM Roadmap for Action**, “the importance of tourism for the economies of the countries of the region as well as the potential for growth and its impact on job creation, infrastructure and cultural understanding cannot be ignored. The consolidation and development of a sustainable tourism sector and tourism capabilities with its cross linkages with other sectors of the economy can contribute to the sustainable development of the national economies. The UfM Secretariat will use its role as regional platform to coordinate and promote initiatives and concrete projects related to tourism within the UfM activities.”

With this definition and mandate as guiding principle, the UfM Secretariat aims to support the tourism sector by thrusting knowledge or lessons learned on regional or global tourism policy frameworks, advocating for responsible tourism while promoting tourism as a driving force towards economic growth, inclusive development, facilitating accessible tourism, enhancing skills, harnessing innovation and digitalisation, and environmental sustainability. Given that tourism has cross-linkages with the other sectoral activities of the UfM Secretariat, it will continue being dealt with transversally focusing on sustainable tourism, environmental preservation and green growth, Blue Economy, private sector development, decent job creativity especially for youth and women and social inclusiveness.

The UfM Secretariat in the area of the Tourism will contribute to the implementation of SDGs 8, 11, 12, while SDGs 13 and 14 will impact tourism horizontally.

In 2021, the UfM Secretariat will focus on promoting regional dialogue as well as concrete projects and initiatives in the field of tourism through:

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- Pending on the pandemic evolution, a physical format working group meeting is to be held with tourism stakeholders hailing from the private sector, academia, civil society, tourism experts, operators from the hospitality industry including women or youth entrepreneurs. The tourism working group will focus on a chosen theme from the priority areas such as environmental preservation, energy efficiency, blue economy, water management, eco mobility, equal social inclusion, accessible tourism, and job creativity. Where possible this event will seek to be co-organized with another tourism organization or institution operating in the region that address issues and challenges related to the tourism sector.
- Organising an online webinar with regional partners and relevant stakeholders to exchange views, on the massive transversal impacts brought about by the global pandemic crisis on tourism, with a view to creating a regional solidarity awareness to reflect, redevelop and restore tourism. The online event will help to provide regional stakeholders in the tourism

sector to share experiences in mitigating the massive socio-economic impacts caused by the pandemic on millions of livelihoods particularly women's and youth employment.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- Through its horizontal activities and meetings, the UfM Secretariat shall strive to identify, develop and label regional projects related to the tourism sector, in particular those initiatives or projects that address the challenges of environmental issues, energy efficiency, water management, blue economy, job creation, accessible tourism and social inclusiveness.
- Selected tourism related projects will be considered and promoted according to their coherence at the horizontal level with the other UfM Divisions. Moreover, a follow-up of any projects and initiatives concerning tourism identified in the various UfM Secretariat sectors will be maintained.

ii. **MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT: MINIMIZING THE ADVERSE DRIVERS OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT**

Building and sustaining peace infers addressing the root causes of conflicts and crises, given that investment in prevention pays off in human lives, in financial savings and in development gains.

The assessment of the risks associated to climate and environmental changes in the Mediterranean region by the Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC) indicates that Mediterranean countries could be faced with significant and increasing risks in the coming decades, and that limited resources and conflicts might lead to large-scale human migrations.

An Expert Working Group (WG) on Displacement will explore in 2021, in line with the guidance and direction of the UfM Co-Presidency, and in close consultation and cooperation with the European Commission, along with other key international stakeholders/knowledge partners, including the IFIs, how harmonised multidisciplinary public policy and development strategies can help minimize the underlying drivers and structural factors of forced displacement and how the UfM could possibly contribute to efforts towards mainstreaming and scaling up at regional level the implementation of agreed international and European policy frameworks to this end.

The inaugural meeting of the Expert Working Group on Displacement could be scheduled for the last quarter of 2021, in coordination with the UfM Co-presidency.

2021 specific objectives

In 2021, the UfM Secretariat will focus on:

1. Identifying missing data for verified, consolidated and multi-sourced estimates of the number of people internally displaced or at risk of becoming displaced across the region.
2. Analysing, through interdisciplinary research, main drivers, patterns and impacts of internal displacement in the region to help develop risk-informed sustainable and resilient macro-regional development strategies that could provide tailor-made advice and support to regional and national policy-making.



3. Exploring possibilities for synergic action with key international stakeholders, including the IFIs, academia and NGOs.

Objective one: Identifying missing data for verified, consolidated and multi-sourced estimates of the number of people internally displaced or at risk of becoming displaced across the region.

- Convening an Expert Working Group on Displacement in 2021 (*date and venue TBC*) to explore the data gap in the region.

The UfM Secretariat will continue to prepare the groundwork for the deliberations of the Expert Working Group on Displacement by liaising, interacting and networking with potential knowledge partners and stakeholders, such as IOM, the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, the World Bank - UNHCR Joint Data Centre on Forced Displacement (JDC), the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC).

Objective two: Analysing, through interdisciplinary research, main drivers, patterns and impacts of internal displacement in the region to help develop risk-informed sustainable and resilient macro-regional development strategies that could provide tailor-made advice and support to national policy-making.

- Factoring into the deliberations of the planned Autumn 2021 meeting of the Expert Working Group on Displacement, applicable conclusions, findings and recommendations contained, *inter alia*, in:
 - ✓ The final version of the MedECC assessment;
 - ✓ The planned joint UfM/OECD report on “Shaping Public Policy and Development Strategies to Mitigate the Causes of Forced Displacement”.

Objective three: Exploring possibilities for synergic action with key international stakeholders, *inter alia*, the IFIs, academia and NGOs, by taking part in their key events, including the following:

- The UfM Secretariat will collaborate with the OECD Secretariat, in close consultation and cooperation with the European Commission, in the elaboration of the joint UfM/OECD report. The report will be commissioned as and when the required financial resources are secured.
- The UfM Secretariat will attend the meeting of the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (EFDRR) to be held in Matosinhos, Portugal, on 2-5 November 2021.
- Upon invitation of the IOM (UN Migration) or the 5+5 Dialogue, the UfM Secretariat will attend, in its capacity as an observer, the Global Meeting of Chairs and Secretariats of Consultative Processes on Migration (GRCP) (*date and the venue TBC*).
- Upon invitation of the European Commission, the UfM Secretariat will attend the meetings of the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF for Africa) (*date and the venue*



TBC). The duration of the mandate of the EUTF for Africa was extended until 31st December 2021.

iii. **CIVIL PROTECTION**

2021 specific objectives

The global landscape is littered with examples of the devastation caused by man-made and natural disasters. Disasters know no borders and the challenges and risks faced are very often shared, resulting in high human, economic and environmental losses. With an increasing number of forest fires, floods, earthquakes, marine pollution, pandemics and other natural and manmade disasters across the Euro-Mediterranean area, greater cooperation among UfM Member States is now widely recognised as a much needed focus of efforts to strengthen civil protection and disaster risk management in the region. The fight against many of these disasters is often won or lost in terms of human resources, depending on the prevention, preparedness and response, regional coordination and capacity to implement timely and effective response.

The Mediterranean area remains a political and operational priority, including due to the specific risks that the region is facing. In the context of climate change, disasters are becoming more complex. Managing emergencies and disasters is a growing challenge. The Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean (13 July 2008, Paris - France), the Council of the European Union (23 November 2009, Brussels), Meeting of Director Generals of Civil Protection of Member Countries of the Union for the Mediterranean (5 May 2010, Paris) identified Civil protection as one of the priorities of the UfM.

Following the 3rd meeting of Civil Protection Directors-General of the Member States of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) held in Barcelona on 11-12 February 2019, UfM partner countries agreed to continue deepening the discussion in the field of civil protection and disaster risk management. To this effect, they decided to set up three working groups that will tackle the following themes:

- engaging citizens in disaster risk management,
- civil protection volunteers,
- preparing for efficient mutual assistance in the Euro Mediterranean area.

The working group preparing for ‘Efficient mutual assistance in the Euro Mediterranean area’ met for the first time on 26 November 2019 in Brussels. The discussion focused on enhancing cooperation for a better assistance in case of disaster in Mediterranean area.

The two other Groups on “Engaging citizens in risk management” and “Volunteers in civil protection”, were postponed due to the development trend of the pandemic, from June 2020 to January 2021. A preparatory meeting of the two working groups was organised 19-20 October 2020.

Objective one: Implementing the recommendations of the DG meeting



➤ Promoting Regional Dialogue

On 11 February 2019, the 3rd Meeting of the Directors-General of Civil Protection of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Member States launched a reflection to develop an action plan for further strengthening Euro-Mediterranean cooperation on prevention, preparedness, emergency response and disaster risk management. This plan, has been elaborated and approved by the experts designated by the Member States of the UfM, their Partners and the UCPM.

The Action Plan covers the 3 main thematic identified as priority areas of regional cooperation.

- Organization, with the European Commission, of the 2 remaining working groups that will focus on elaborating a concrete action plan on:

1. Engaging citizens in risk management
2. Volunteers in civil protection

The progress on the work of the above-mentioned working groups will be presented to the SOMs in 2021 and will serve as a way-forward to prepare the next Civil Protection UfM Director Generals' meeting to be held in 2021 or the following year. During 2021 the UfM Secretariat will continue to monitor the progress of the working groups on the three main themes. Following the initial preparatory online meetings that will take place in October 2020, it is foreseen that two working groups will convene in 2021 in physical format to discuss further the regional implementation of the Action Plan.

The Action Plan underlines that whilst Member States have primary responsibility for national disaster risk management, international and regional assistance can complement national response capacities in case of disaster when they are overwhelmed or in need of support.

➤ Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives

- The UfM Secretariat shall strive to identify, develop and label potential regional projects related to Civil Protection, in particular those initiatives or projects that address the challenges in regional co-operation in disaster risk management, and preparing for efficient mutual assistance in the Euro Mediterranean area.



3.3. OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

i. PROJECT PROCESSES and REFLECTION ON THE LABEL

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 effort 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, in 2021 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.

ii. INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE UfM Secretariat

2021 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, 2021’s main objectives will focus on the following directions:

- strengthen the internal mechanisms for business continuity, adaptation of internal process 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 channeling resources to final recipients will represent a key area of 2021 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 internal legal update approved by the Senior Officials in July 2018 and its first year of enforcement (2019) as well as the increased accountability requirements resulting from activities and partnerships growth as well as from diversification of funding sources and mechanisms.

➤ **Adapting internal functioning and business continuity during and beyond covid-19 pandemic**

As initiated in 2020, UfM Secretariat services will continue in 2021 its dedicated action plan to adapt the internal functioning and capabilities striving to come to terms with the impact the coronavirus pandemic is having on UfM activities. This action plan is structured around 3 axes: i) Prioritize people (staff and non-staff) safety and continuous engagement; ii) Reshape internal working methods for business continuity; ii) Resumption of work in premises and adapt to the new normal

i) Prioritizing people (staff and non-staff) safety and continuous engagement through:

- Providing regular information on covid-19 outbreak's and related precautionary measures on the basis of relevant authority's guidance.
- Enforcing teleworking measures for all UfM Secretariat staff except for the business continuity team
- Enacting preventive measures with providers to ensure minimum service while ensuring protection of their staff (optimized services of cleaning, gardening...)

ii) Reshaping internal working methods for business continuity by:

- Maintaining the business continuity team established since march 2020 and composed of the UfM Secretary General, the Executive Director of Operations and Partnerships, and the Deputy Director of Legal and Administration.
- Ensuring day-to-day work in operational and administrative fields including finance, contracts, legal advice, HR and corporate and support services.
- Adopting remote work methods and tools and reinforcing internal guidelines for their use to support all staff internal work and meetings and sectorial activities online meetings of platforms and webinars.
- Adapting and reinforcing guidance and procedures issued in 2020 for legal and contracting procedure to unlock suspended procedures and define way to continue delivering under the exceptional circumstances on the basis of European Commission best practices and FAQs.

iii) Resuming of work in premises and sustain the “new normal” measures

- Maintaining a prudent, progressive and flexible process to return to work in premises in the form of stages, while maintaining teleworking as an important norm, i.e.:
 - stage 1: one person per Division/Department;



- stage 2: shifts in the form of Teams: Team A and Team B per division/department, working each in alternate way two days and three days a week in the workplace and teleworking rest of the time, with a maximum of 50% of staff at the same time at UfM premises with two teams A and B.

This process will continue having the health and safety of all at the heart of preoccupation and aligning our steps in this regard with Host Country measures, include necessary protective and organizational measures. It will continue be supported by the advice of professional company of occupational health and safety at work and remain subject to adaptation when need arises and in accordance with evolution of measures decided by the Host country.

- Updating IT plan (investment in applications, software licenses and devices) to recover and improve internal capabilities in software, hardware and IT support.
- Revisiting cash flow plan and medium-term forecasts.

➤ **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 2021, the UfM Secretariat will focus its efforts to:

- 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 the maintenance, the incident management of its applications;
- Take necessary steps to put into operation a helpdesk and IT expert capacity to support UfM Secretariat in managing its IT infrastructure and related installations after a short term solution was put in place for helpdesk services with package of hours during 2020.
- To move to the second phase in 2021 in terms of optimization of IT solutions and infrastructure put into operation for the UfM Secretariat staff to work into two sites, in terms of servers and VPN management, firewalls set up and systems of data use and sharing. In this respect, a second firewall was purchased during 2020 and is being presently installed and configured as minimum requirement solutions. A more comprehensive protection and security package with more firewalls/back up firewall either physical or in cloud type is under study.
- After sharing data and VPN solutions have been further developed during 2020 owing to urgent needs generated by the covid-19 outbreak and subsequent teleworking requirements, a new and update version of Microsoft 365 capacities, One Drive functionalities as well as VPN and team-viewer resources, will be launched in 2021 to enhance further UfM internal capacity.



- Continue its ongoing work in order to enhance the interplay and interconnection between applications in the perspective to centralize data for management use, and following technical analysis during 2018 and first actions in 2019 a solution including components of privacy by design will be developed for the integration of the Financial System application (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.
- Finalize 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 i) assessment of systems and ICT assets as well as ii) development and/or maintenance of applications such the intranet. In this context,
 - pursue and finalize IT Governance Consultancy: process initiated to align the UfM to international IT standards in terms of infrastructure, security and best practices.
 - finalize the upgrading the Intranet and 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 continuation of the Internal Portal 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 UfM Secretariat 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 2021 and in the context of diversifying and adapting its instruments of technical support to better ensure proper follow up and monitoring of its increasing activities, the Secretariat will direct its efforts toward:

- Preparation of new guidelines for several components of event/conference and platform meetings and new ToRs for the new Framework contract. This will encompass also 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 on the basis of 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
- Further development of guidelines and procedures for online meeting and webinars taking into account the circumstances of covid-19 outbreak.
- Putting in place remote online interpretation system: new technical support which allows simple management of online events, platform and conferences for simultaneous translation.

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 2019 and 2020, necessary actions were taken to accompany the re-allocation plan and putting in place support actions to facilitate work into two sites.

During 2021, the UfM Secretariat will pursue its action for:

- 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.
- Revising 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.

- Enforcing its archiving procedures following the putting in to 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.
- Improving UfM Secretariat 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 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 fulfillment 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 in its first year in 2019 based on orderly internal action plan paying due regards to its main objectives, to needs to ensure business continuity and budget constraints.

During 2021, the UfM Secretariat will:

- Continue the process of implementation and related actions i.e. contract conversion. 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 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. In this context, an update Staffing Plan has been prepared and submitted for the 1st SOM of 2020.
- Pursue its action to support the mechanism of governance notably the oversight committee and launch the establishment advisory board. In this respect, the members of the UfM Oversight Committee have been nominated and notified. The first meeting was scheduled during 1st quarter 2020 but was prevented by the circumstances of covid-19 outbreak. Online preparatory 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 2021, 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 2021 the UfM Secretariat will more specifically:

- 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. In this context, during 2020 the UfM Secretariat issued a first update of the UfM donor's funds management on the basis of the last update of PRAG in terms of grants. In addition, this update has been put into operation through grant dossiers under the cooperation agreement with Norway.

- 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.
- Develop tools in order to enforce methodologies of Result based management in its financial and accounting systems.
- 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

The UfM Communication & Public Affairs Unit will focus on **communicating effectively the 2021 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.

Should the **Day of the Mediterranean** be endorsed by the Member States during the 5th UfM Regional Forum, a communication strategy to raise visibility and awareness around the Day will constitute a priority for the year 2021. **Human success stories** will also take 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.

Following the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Process in 2020 and in the midst of the **COVID-19 health and economic crisis**, the Secretariat's communication actions will stress the overarching message that there is a **renewed momentum for a forward-looking and positive agenda** in the region. In that regard, the Secretariat will put an emphasis on communicating the developments



and initial results of the UfM Grant Scheme for employment promotion as a regional response to pandemic's economic consequences.

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 2021 communication endeavours.

The main target audiences of the UfM Secretariat are:

- Government representatives, ministers, senior officials, parliamentarians, civil servants, etc.
- International and regional organizations active 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
- Youth, as a transversal component to be integrated into all key audiences

In 2021, the UfM Secretariat will seek to meet the above-mentioned objectives through the following pillars of actions and activities:

➤ **IDENTIFY: Map the key audiences of the UfM Secretariat in the Mediterranean region**

MEDIA

In 2020, the Secretariat made a special emphasis on identifying and targeting selected renowned and influential journalists from the region with the aim to raise awareness, increase visibility and foster engagement for a better in-depth coverage as part of the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Process. These efforts will continue throughout 2021 with a focus on targeting influential journalists and intellectuals who have published relevant articles on this historical process and on Euro-Mediterranean relations for further coverage on ongoing UfM's initiatives.

The Secretariat will also seek to identify partnerships with relevant media groups that can lead to impactful communication towards UfM target audiences via the organisation of debates and colloquia (online or offline) with the participation of the UfM SG, DSGs and/or experts depending of the theme. These dialogue fora jointly organised with the press usually lead to a special coverage that can help reinforce UfM's positioning.

Furthermore, the UfM Secretariat will drive special efforts to identify and reach out to specific shows across the region to set up regular collaborations and ensure a continuing communication of UfM's activity and its expert fora.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS/DIGITAL



In 2021, the identification of relevant stakeholders and contacts will build on the efforts made throughout 2020, where a general update of the UfM public affairs database took place.

Having successfully identified the communication counterparts of the main UfM target audiences, these efforts will continue throughout 2021 in order to keep these audiences up to date, while a special emphasis will be made in identifying their respective social media accounts. This endeavour will also allow 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 particular focus will lead to the identification of digital influencers and opinion-leaders, aiming to involve them in UfM events and conferences.

On another hand, should the Day of the Mediterranean be endorsed by the Member States during the 5th Regional Forum, an enhanced effort will be made to identify key stakeholders from civil society organisations as well as local authorities, as the celebration of a Day of the Mediterranean will be truly effective if these two target audiences take ownership of it.

➤ **INFORM: Actively inform the key audiences about the activities of the UfM Secretariat**

MEDIA

The UfM Secretariat has developed a proactive media-relations strategy over the last years that will further continue in 2021. The press office activity will be implemented as a transversal support to all the sectorial divisions through the following actions:

- The dissemination of information on the main UfM achievements and activities, including through newly launched platforms such as an official Whastapp channel
- The publication of articles and interviews with UfM representatives and participants in UfM activities in renowned media across the region
- The arrangement of informative meetings with relevant media across the region with the aim of building relations and ensuring visibility of UfM activities
- The organisation of press briefings and conferences.

In order to inform new audiences who are not familiar with the UfM and reinforce the understanding of current stakeholders on the institution, the Secretariat will develop a series of documents with pedagogical information. The resources will be available on the website and accompany the media actions. This content will also allow to reach new types of media and deepen the understanding of the UfM work methodology.

Furthermore, ongoing op-eds throughout the year will also be published to further strengthen the positioning of the UfM at the forefront of current important topics in the region like climate change, youth empowerment and economic development.

The Secretariat will organise specific media activities to further consolidate its positioning as a reference institution for regional cooperation in the Mediterranean:



- **Press trips to the UfM Secretariat, events, projects:** The Secretariat will build on these press trips to ensure a more in-depth coverage of the UfM activities.
- **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
- **Mediterranean Day:** If Mediterranean Day is declared, a full detailed media plan will be prepared including a press announcement, a press release, and encourage visibility towards Mediterranean initiatives and projects.
- **Issuing a statement on 28 November 2021:** The Secretariat will encourage UfM Member States to issue a statement on occasion of the Mediterranean Day, if it is declared. The Secretariat will therefore prepare a draft press release to be shared with the Member States.

Note - The UfM Secretariat will adapt if due to the pandemic certain press activities aren't possible physically and need to be turned into the online sphere and/or offer live transmission.

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION



Website

The UfM website is at the centre of the UfM Secretariat's digital communication as it centralises all the information about the institution, as well showcasing its different activities. Fully renewed in 2018, the website is updated daily in 3 languages (English, French and Arabic) and has over 18K visitors per month.

Among others, 2021 should see some major improvements. The website supports three languages, and full translation of key pages and news was improved in 2020. In 2021 the UfM will continue to translate news and relevant pages in 3 languages, as well as improving web presence and traffic in French and Arabic.

With 2018's redesign, the website had its mobile responsive adaptation developed. The site's mobile version, navigation and internal links were adjusted to improve both the user experience and visibility. In the second semester of 2020 the UfM audited major pages to be adapted to mobile format (font sizes, images, buttons, etc.) and 2021 should see the continuation of this task by adapting all new pages to mobile adapted view, including full page redesigned, if needed.

The year 2021 should also see the design and development of new ad-hoc landing pages on key information, such as the Annual Report page or a Mediterranean landing page, should the International Day be endorsed in the 5th Regional Forum, among many others. These news pages will benefit from having its special design, including more visual adaptations infographics, animations and will be promoted throughout the website (homepage, menus, sidebars, etc.) and resulting in more cross-embedding of content between UfM social media channels and the UfM website. Among new pages that will be created, it is foreseen for 2021 to review the content and make more visual the UfM platform pages, following the redesign developed in 2020 for all the project pages.



In 2020, one third of the total website traffic came from searched on search engines, mostly Google. Therefore, the improvement of SEO (Search Engine Optimization) in posts and pages is an ongoing task and should continue throughout 2021, with all the new content added on a daily basis to ensure the visibility of the UfM website and its content on search engine results pages, in all 3 UfM languages and in all UfM Member States.

Finally, in terms of content, the UfM website will seek to showcase more human interest stories with content and interviews from UfM project beneficiaries to highlight more of UfM activities and tangible results on the ground.

Mailing / Emailing

The UfM Secretariat's partners and stakeholders are informed of UfM activities through the regular diffusion of newsletters and sectorial bulletins. In 2020, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the UfM intensified its online communications and doubled the number of newsletters sent to the stakeholders to ensure new webinars and activity reached wider audiences. The general newsletter database gathers over 25,000 contacts. Through the development of the institutional database and the study of the analytics of the newsletters, the mailing and emailing strategy will be strengthened in 2021 to amplify the knowledge provided on UfM Secretariat's activities to its stakeholders. In line with the human stories showcased on the website, the UfM newsletter will also feature stories from the ground from different projects, albeit not forgetting to also feature the political dialogue, platform and other news. Also, specific sectorial emails will be sent to key audiences on key UfM activities and topics such as women empowerment, climate change, economic development, etc.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In 2021, the UfM Secretariat will ensure 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. Given the uncertainty brought by the pandemic, most of these activities might be held online, which has proved to be a successful format in 2020.

Should the situation allow, the UfM Secretariat will put a special focus on including digital influencers in the media field visits to the UfM main events and projects, tailoring each trip to their respective areas of influence.

With the aim to communicate more on the tangible outcomes of the UfM initiatives and projects, the UfM Secretariat launched in 2020 an online communication initiative with the communication counterparts of all the UfM project promoters, aiming at regularly gathering and disseminating news and achievements of the UfM-labelled projects currently implemented. In 2021, this relationship will be reinforced feeding the UfM outreach actions and informing its ecosystem about the achievements of UfM-labelled projects.



Should a **Day of the Mediterranean** be declared during the 5th UfM Regional Forum, the UfM Secretariat will consequently inform its audiences through a strategy inspired in “blended marketing” combining outreach efforts with both offline and online communication channels. This informative action will build on the stakeholders with whom the UfM Secretariat has created a strong relationship, as well as on the new stakeholders that will be identified specifically for this campaign.

In light of the special circumstances that have marked 2020, specifically considering that most of the year has been spent teleworking, devising and implementing internal communication processes is now more important than ever. In 2021, the UfM Secretariat will explore ways to strengthen internal communication in order to contribute to increasing in-house synergies and strengthening the feeling of belonging and the commitment of UfM staff towards the institution.

PUBLICATIONS & INFO TOOLS

UfM institutional and sectorial publications are valuable tools to present the UfM activities to external stakeholders and position the UfM as a unique source of information on strategic thematic areas for the region. UfM publications will continue to be regularly updated in 2021, as to reflect the newest endeavours of the UfM Secretariat. In addition, new institutional publications and content will be created, such as:

- **2020 UfM Annual Report:** as each year, the UfM Annual Report will reflect the major milestones and achievements reached during the previous year, highlighting the link between the UfM endeavours and their contribution to the UN 2030 SDGs. This edition of the Annual Report will specifically highlight the adaptation capacity of the UfM Secretariat during the covid-19 pandemic as well as its efforts in tackling the consequences of this crisis. A specific outreach plan will be devised and implemented for the dissemination of the report within the UfM ecosystem.
- **Publication on Mediterranean personalities:** The UfM Secretariat gathered in 2020 a series of articles signed by key figures of the Euro-Mediterranean relations and also conducted interviews with prominent civil society profiles, whose talent is recognised in their respective fields, such as authors, musicians, cooks or sportsmen and women. The aim was for these personalities to give their vision on the importance of regional cooperation and solidarity, as well as their hopes on the future of the region. In 2021, these testimonies will be gathered in a single publication, which will thus provide a diverse and multi-cultural overview of the Mediterranean and its future as well as foster the feeling of a common Mediterranean identity, especially in view of the potential Mediterranean Day.
- **Audio-visual content:** should the situation related to the covid-19 pandemic allow, the UfM Secretariat will coordinate trips on the ground to gather audio-visual material from UfM-labelled projects with the aim to produce short videos, video-interviews and testimonials, thus conveying messages in a more efficient and impactful manner. Likewise, audio-visual content has the advantage of being easily shareable on a multitude of online platforms. 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-labelled projects.



- **Human Stories:** The UfM Secretariat will continue to identify success stories from the UfM projects to create compelling stories and articles to illustrate the tangible contribution of a strengthened regional cooperation and its positive impact on people's lives.
- **Day of the Mediterranean:** should the International Day be declared, the UfM Secretariat will develop a whole visual identity and a logo which will be compiled in a Visual Identity Guidelines to be shared with the UfM ecosystem and relevant stakeholders. In addition, these guidelines will be coupled with a document centralising different ideas on initiatives and activities that government, local authorities or civil society organisations could implement to celebrate the Day of the Mediterranean. Other publications and info tools will be created, should the day be declared, such as leaflets, infographics, audio-visual material and so on.

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.

- **ENGAGE: Detect opportunities for the reinforcement of ties with stakeholders, design and implement actions to ensure their engagement**

MEDIA

As journalists strive for better credibility in the eyes of their readers, it is important for the UfM to position itself as a reliable source of information when it comes to the region's current affairs and remarkable events. Aiming at fostering engagement with relevant journalists from the region, the Secretariat will arrange one-to-one meetings with the UfM SG and DSGs during their missions to Member States. Such meetings are also an opportunity for the UfM to obtain information on the journalists' topics of interest and preferred ways to be contacted, which allows for a qualitative engagement when sharing information on UfM activities.

Likewise, the Secretariat will encourage the organization 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.

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION



Social media

UfM follower's database platforms gather over 450,000 followers on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. These social media platforms are key vehicles to target the media, opinion leaders, stakeholders, policymakers, experts and professionals. The UfM Secretariat also uses Flickr, YouTube and Wikipedia. In 2021, the UfM will continue to reach out to its key audiences in order to give timely visibility to the UfM Secretariat activities. Through specific online campaigns the UfM seeks to shed light on key issues such as climate change, women's empowerment, or youth unemployment, as well as expand its reach. 2021 will see more frequent human interest stories as



well key UfM specific content on climate, women empowerment and, if approved in the 5th Regional Forum, the Mediterranean Day. While consolidating and increasing its followers base, the UfM will continue developing more attractive online products such as videos, infographics and animations. The Secretariat will seek to foster more interaction, engagement and positive advocacy (mentions, retweets, likes, etc.).

In 2021, the UfM will continue to build a stronger e-reputation with UfM key audiences to generate digital advocates and multiply positive messages towards the public opinion. In this sense, the UfM 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, influential journalists and digital influencers, etc. Once identified, the UfM will seek to foster more engagement and quality interactions. Throughout all the platforms, the UfM will also try to achieve more geographical balance amongst UfM Member States followers.

Finally, in order to reach new and younger audiences the UfM will reinforce the recently launched UfM Instagram account, seeking to increase the followers base and feature new and engaging content in a new format and platform.

UfM APP

Linked to the increase in the use of mobiles by the UfM audiences, the UfM launched in 2019 a UfM APP for phones to improve the digital experience of participants in UfM events. Because of Covid-19 pandemic, many events of the first semester of 2020 were postponed but the app was still updated to feature relevant information on UfM Covid's response and on the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Process. Nonetheless, with the resuming of key events such as the Regional Forum, the UfM app was fully renewed to host full or partial online events. In 2021, the App should see further updates to feature more content and generate more engagement.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Ensuring strong political and institutional support from a consolidated network of stakeholders is an essential part of the UfM Secretariat communication strategy. In addition, the UfM Secretariat also has to foster a sense of trust with its wider audience, as all of the UfM endeavours are directed towards improving the lives of its citizens.

As a platform for dialogue, the UfM gathers annually thousands of key stakeholders coming from all over the region and enables synergies that otherwise would not have taken place. From thematic workshops to high-level conferences and field visits, the Secretariat constantly works towards enabling a more collaborative and integrated region. In 2021, the Secretariat will thus implement outreach actions in line with the UfM calendar of activities, the activities in the region and possible synergies with other partners that will increase the awareness and visibility of the Secretariat's activities:

- **6th UfM Regional Forum:** as every year, the UfM Secretariat will organise in 2021 its 6th Regional Forum. As the major political conference organised by the UfM, the Regional



Forum represents a timely occasion to bring together experts, policy-makers and civil society, to share best practices and enable a multi-stakeholder brainstorming on topics of relevance. In terms of communication, the UfM Regional Forum also gives a great opportunity to receive incoming visits of journalist 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.

- **Joint debates or webinars:** in order to reinforce the UfM position as expert in Mediterranean matters, the UfM Secretariat will organise joint debates and/or webinars, notably with experts from renowned think tanks and academic institutions, in order to tackle key topics of interest in the region. In addition to the visibility these institutions will bring, it will also allow the UfM to keep pushing for a positive agenda in the region, seeing the opportunities that lie in challenges, even more so considering the current situation
- **Regional conferences:** The Secretariat will also 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. As most of the large-scale conferences might still be held online in 2021, the UfM Secretariat will secure the presence of UfM experts as speakers for webinars and digital conferences that will take place.
- **Day of the Mediterranean:** as described under “Inform – Publications”, the UfM Secretariat will create a document centralising ideas of initiatives and actions that interested stakeholders could implement for the celebration of the first Day of the Mediterranean. A special focus will be made to engage with national Governments and local authorities, in order to push for these celebrations to take place (either online or physical events). Other engagement actions will also be implemented with influencers and opinion-leaders who have a far-reaching audience.
- **Perception survey:** in order to reach satisfactory levels of engagement with its stakeholders, the UfM Secretariat needs to know and understand its target audiences, how they perceive the UfM, as well as the activities and messages that will engage them more actively. To that end, in 2021 the UfM Secretariat will start exploring ways to conduct a perception study to gauge and analyse the perceptions and trust that different audiences have on the institution, both from a political and an economic/social standpoint.



4. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: GLOSSARY

ADEME	the French Agency on Environment and Energy Efficiency
Ad-hoc SOM	Ad-hoc Senior Official Meeting (usually dedicated to a thematic area)
AECID	Spanish International Cooperation Agency for Development
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AfD	Agence Française de Développement
AFED	Arab Forum for Environment and Development
ALF	Anna Lindh Foundation
AP-UfM	Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM
ARLEM	Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATU	Agadir Technical Unit
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
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CIHEAM	International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies
CMI	Centre for Mediterranean Integration
CoE	Council of Europe
COP	Conference of the Parties
CPRM	Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions – Inter-Mediterranean Commission
EASME	Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises of the EC
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
EIB	European Investment Bank
EMUNI	Euro-Mediterranean University
ENV and CC	Environment and Climate Change
ERASMUS	European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FEMISE	Euro-Mediterranean Forum of Institutes of Economic Sciences
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Development Agency)
GUNi	Global University Network for Innovation
GWP-Med	Global Water Partnership-Med
H2020	H2020 Initiative for a Cleaner Mediterranean Sea (EU Programme)



IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IKI	International Climate Initiative
IME	Institut Méditerranéen de l'Eau
IMISCOE	International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISSM-CNR	Institute for Studies on the Mediterranean of Italian National Research Council
ITF	International Transport Forum
JRC	EU Joint Research Center
Med4Jobs	Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs / UfM Initiative for Youth Employment
MedECC	Network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change
MEDREG	Mediterranean Energy Regulators
Med-TSO	Mediterranean Transmission System Operators
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoS	Motorways of the Sea
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Marine Protected Areas
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
MYCN	Mediterranean Youth Climate Network
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NWIS	National Water Information System
OCEMO	Office of Economic Cooperation in the Mediterranean and the Middle East
OECD	Organisation for Economic Development
ONCE	National Organization of Spanish blind people
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PA-UfM	Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean
PRIMA	Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area
REEE	Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (Platform)
REM	Regional Electricity Market (Platform)
RoR	Rules of Origins
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEMED	Southern and Eastern Mediterranean region
SEO	Search Engine Optimization
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
SOM	Senior Officials' Meeting
SPREF	SEMed Private Renewable Energy Framework
SSE	Social and Solidarity Economy
SWIM	Sustainable Water Integrated Management (EU Programme)
TA	Technical Assistance
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UEMF	Euro-Med University of Fes
UfMCCG	UfM Climate Change Expert Group



UfM Secretariat	UfM Secretariat
UNAOC	United Nations Alliance of Civilizations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
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
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHLP Water	United Nation High Level Panel on water
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNIMED	Mediterranean Universities Union
UNOSSC	United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation
UNWTO	The UN World Tourism Organization
UPFI	Urban Projects Finance Initiative
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
WASH	Water Access and Sanitation
WB	World Bank
WEFE	Water-Energy-Food Ecosystem Nexus
WEG	UfM Water Expert Group
WEM	Water-Employment-Migration Nexus
WHO	World Health Organisation
WMO	World Meteorological Organisation
WWF	World Water Forum