



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

SECRETARIAT OF THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2022



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INTRODUCTION - Overall strategic objectives of the UfM Secretariat for 2022

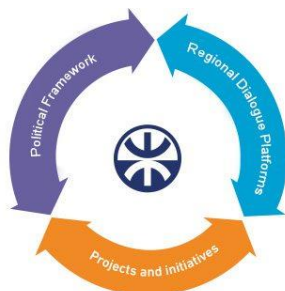
The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is an intergovernmental Euro-Mediterranean organization gathering, on equal footing and representation, all 27 countries of the European Union and the 15 countries of the Southern and the Eastern Mediterranean shores. As a direct continuation of the Barcelona Process,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

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

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

Methodology: putting policies in action

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



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

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

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

3. *Projects with regional impact*: The UfM identifies and supports regional cooperation projects that have a tangible impact on the ground and can contribute to the goals set by Member States in each area of action. Through the awarding of a label, the UfM Secretariat acts as a catalyst of projects, accompanying promoters throughout the project lifecycle.



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

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 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 or environmental, 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. The region faces today a stark and urgent reminder of the need for tangible and coherent cooperation across borders, sectors and people.

In the face of this situation, the UfM Secretariat has strived since 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 and initiatives to contribute to the post-covid response and recovery, and ultimately to the achievement of an inclusive and sustainable development throughout the region.

2022 Work Programme: implementing the UfM reviewed priorities

In this context, the UfM Secretariat will implement its 2022 Work Programme in accordance to the health and sanitary measures in place across the Euro-Mediterranean region, always in line with the 2017 Roadmap, the reviewed priorities adopted by the member states following the 25th Anniversary of the Barcelona Process, the policy guidelines validated by the UfM Member States at sectoral level, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Gender Action Plan III for EU external action

The UfM Secretariat will particularly focus on playing an essential role in the post-Covid recovery of the Euro-Mediterranean region, notably through three overarching dimensions: regional integration; inclusive development and sustainable development.



Building on the experience of the past 25 years, UfM Ministers have recognised the need to prioritise the areas of action where the UfM can play a crucial role and provide for a comparative advantages and agreed to focus the UfM's work in the coming years on the following specific areas:

1. Environmental and climate action:

In line with the three new Ministerial declarations adopted in 2021 on Environment and Climate Change, Energy and Blue Economy, the UfM Secretariat will enhance its action towards the promotion of sustainable development in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

It will notably strive to support the implementation of a reinforced science-policy interface in the area of climate action through the support to MedECC Network, and of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of UfM member states. It will also promote regional information on climate finance and its access for Southern Mediterranean countries, and support youth and women engagement in climate action.

Furthermore, the UfM Secretariat will kick-start the implementation of the UfM “2030 Greener Med Agenda”, as a tool for operational cooperation at regional level on environment-related issues. Activities will be structured around three main axes of work, namely: *i) supporting the transition to a green, circular and socially inclusive economy based on sustainable consumption and production practices and nature-based solutions; ii) preventing and reducing pollution on land, sea and air; iii) and protecting, preserving, managing, and restoring natural resources in the Mediterranean region within an integrated ecosystem approach, including terrestrial, marine and coastal dimension/s.*

Regarding energy, the UfM Secretariat will continue sustaining the development of renewable sources in the region, fostering South-South and North-South interconnection of energy networks, training and building the capacities of concerned professionals, as well as fostering energy efficiency both as a form of energy security and as a contribution to enhanced climate ambitions of UfM countries to be reflected in their NDCs. The UfM Secretariat will pay particular attention to the energy transition of local authorities, as well as to the promotion of a stronger involvement of the private sector.

The UfM Secretariat will also be working during 2022 on the continued implementation of actions, initiatives and policy dialogue agreed upon in the UfM Water Agenda, in particular in the four thematic priorities, namely 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 to promote better conditions for financing water sector activities and projects in the region, as well as better coordination of water with other sectors to achieve the targeted milestones of the 2030 Agenda.

Finally, the UfM Secretariat will call for new joint actions to speed up recovery of the blue economy sector in the Mediterranean, as well as to ensure its long-term sustainability. It will more concretely support the preparation of a roadmap following the 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Sustainable Blue Economy, setting the path towards the post 2020 work program on these issues.



2. Sustainable and inclusive economic and human development:

On the one hand, taking into account the current and expected impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the trade flows and investment landscape, as well as labour markets and societies, and drawing on the latest Ministerial Declarations, the UfM Secretariat will strive in 2022 to consolidate its ongoing efforts to promote private sector development with a focus on MSMEs, to engage further with Social and Solidarity Economy actors, and to enhance trade and investment flows and strengthen value chains.

The Secretariat will notably engage in the UfM Regional Platform on Trade and Investment in preparation for the UfM Ministerial Conference on Trade, to take place in 2022. Moreover, it will work on the development of handbooks and workshops on Rules of Origins (RoO) schemes in the Agadir Agreement Signatory Countries, and will explore cross-regional collaboration with other regions like the ASEAN and the African Union for exchange of knowledge and expertise on the different dimensions of regional integration.

The UfM Secretariat will contribute to the preparation and implementation of the fifth UfM Ministerial on Employment and Labour to be held in Spring 2022. Furthermore, the beneficiaries of the first “UfM Grant Scheme for employment promotion - Regional response to the COVID-19 pandemic”, which entered into the implementation phase in 2021, will present their results during the year.

On the other hand, the UfM Secretariat will continue to pave the way towards the UfM Ministerial on Research and Innovation, to be held in 2022. It will notably support sectoral dialogue on research, innovation and science in the areas of climate change and environment, health, renewable energy, agri-food systems, blue economy, and integration; as well as reinforce the innovation-employability nexus in the Mediterranean, including academia-business interconnections, open innovation and skills.

Finally, the 4th Regional Meeting on Higher Education Internationalisation will be organised as a side-event of the 3rd UNESCO World Higher Education Conference, creating a space for a proper Euro-Mediterranean dialogue on how to translate at the regional level the global challenge of the recognition of qualifications, and to discuss the recommendations of the UfM Report on the Internationalisation of Higher Education in the Mediterranean, launched in 2021.

3. Social inclusiveness and equality as an essential element in the socio-economic development of the region:

Under this priority, the UfM Secretariat will continue implementing the priorities set by the 2017 Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society, notably its regional follow-up mechanism. It will hold the annual UfM Women Business Forum to promote women entrepreneurship and business development; develop joint actions for combating violence against women and girls (VAWG), notably with WHO in the framework of their MoU; support the implementation and the monitoring of Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan (NAP); and empower women and girls with disability through a joint regional event on Disability and Social Inclusion in the Mediterranean. Furthermore, the UfM Secretariat will prepare for the 5th UfM Ministerial Conference on Strengthening



the Role of Women in Society in the second semester of 2022. The findings and policy recommendations of the 2nd UfM Regional progress report will be the supporting basis for this Ministerial Declaration.

In addition, following the adoption of the 2030 UfM Youth Strategy, the UfM Secretariat will establish the very first UfM Youth Working Group, to start operationalizing the Strategy with the national focal points as well as youth-led organisations - as the UfM considers that young people should not only be mere beneficiaries of the Strategy, but rather the architects of its implementation.

Finally, the UfM Secretariat will continue including non-governmental and civil society actors in its efforts of promoting dialogue and cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region, in view to bringing an interesting bottom-up perspective in tackling the current challenges, always in close coordination with the governments concerned.

Cooperation with civil society will notably be enhanced around the organisation of the Day of the Mediterranean, to be held on 28 November 2022, as the celebration will provide the opportunity to organise events across the region with a view to promoting intercultural exchanges and dialogue among the people of the Mediterranean region.

4. Digital transformation:

Leveraging on the memorandum of understanding signed with Mobile World Capital (MWC) in 2021, the UfM Secretariat will enhance its action on digital transformation in 2022.

It will notably co-organize a Conference on Digital Transformation to tackle, inter alia, the digital divide between and within both shores of the Mediterranean, as well as the huge skills gap in the sector that has been growing steadily over the past few years.

The Secretariat will also continue to offer national seminars on digitalisation to the Southern Mediterranean countries, after the success of the one held with Algeria.

5. Civil Protection:

The Covid-19 Pandemic and the recent fires or natural disasters across the region have proven how urgent Mediterranean cooperation in civil protection remains. It made it clear that no country in this area, no matter its size and capacity, could resolve such crises on its own.

In response to that, the UfM has called for greater cooperation and continue to do so, with the end of the PPRD South III and the launch of the new PPRD Mediterranean. Building on the progress achieved in the last years, the UfM will work on framing a roadmap for Mediterranean Civil Protection in preparation of the Meeting of Directors-General, to be held in 2022.



6. Transport & Urban Development

Further to these five priority areas, and as the 2017 Roadmap for Action remains the comprehensive strategic framework for the work of the UfM, the Secretariat will continue promoting its action in the areas of transport and urban development, paving the way towards the next Ministerial meetings in these sectors. In 2022, it will notably kick-start the implementation process of the UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040 and its Housing Action Plan.

7. Partnerships

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

As a platform for dialogue and cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region, the UfM depends on the partnerships and cooperation that it can establish and develop with other institutions. This intertwined network of stakeholders allows for a small and agile structure such as the UfM Secretariat to actively work on a wide range of fields, promoting a deeper dialogue on a regional scale and supporting the implementation of projects of cooperation to the benefit of the peoples of the region.

On the other hand, the Secretariat will further consolidate its capacities through the enhancement of its working tools, by 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 2022 Work Programme has been drafted under the assumption that some activities will be held “physically”, if the epidemiological situation allows. Depending on the evolution of the Covid-19 pandemic in the region, 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 account the current and expected 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 and 2021), the UfM Secretariat's work in the area of Economic Development focuses on further supporting regional and sub-regional initiatives to:

- improve trade and investment flows and strengthen value chains,
- 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 Economy, Digital Economy, Digital Transformation and Creative Industries.

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

2022 specific objectives

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

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



UfM Trade and Investment Forum

- Following the holding of the third edition of the UfM Trade and Investment Forum on 11 November 2021, 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 2021 edition of the Forum provides 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 2021, 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.

➤ Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives

Development of handbooks and conducting of workshops for Rules of Origins (RoO) schemes in the Agadir Agreement Signatory Countries

- As announced during the UfM Business Forum held on 18 June 2019 in Cairo, Egypt, technical trainings and capacity-building activities directed to ministries, customs authorities and businesses alike have been offered to the Agadir Agreement Signatory Countries in the area of trade policy, under the partnership between the UfM Secretariat and GIZ.
- Following the holding of these trainings in Jordan in 2019 and in Egypt on 25-29 July 2021, further trainings were implemented in Palestine and Lebanon. In addition, RoO handbooks were developed to provide long-term support to these national stakeholders. Similar activities may be carried out at a later stage to public and private sector representatives in other interested UfM Member States. 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, in particular in North Africa.

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 and the launch of the UfM Progress Report on Regional Integration in the UfM Region on 27 May 2021, which brought together representatives of different regional integration processes, free trade areas, as well as regional and international organizations and think tanks, the UfM Secretariat will co-organize a conference dedicated to economic regional integration together with the German Development Cooperation



(GIZ/BMZ), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the Centre for Mediterranean Integration (CMI).

- The Conference comes as a concrete follow-up to the recommendations emanating from the launch event and the proposed course of action included in the UfM Report on Regional Integration, and is meant as part of a series of activities dedicated to promoting regional integration in the UfM region.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- Anchored to the findings and recommendations of the UfM Progress Report on Regional Integration, the UfM Secretariat will explore cross-regional collaboration with other regions like the ASEAN and the African Union 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 stimulate better political and technical cooperation among the countries concerned and strengthening their mutual dialogue on trade and the setting up of regional initiatives.

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

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

UfM Workshop on Green Energy

- The UfM Secretariat will pool the expertise of its Divisions to hold a Workshop on Green Energy, potentially in Algeria, to tackle regional thematic that range from a green post-pandemic recovery to integrating circular economy principles into the business culture in the region and promoting green jobs.

UfM Conference on Digital Transformation

- Following the identification of digital transformation as one of the specific areas of priority outlined by the Statement of the UfM Co-Presidency emanating from the V UfM Regional Forum held in 2020, the UfM Secretariat, leveraging on the 2021 memorandum of understanding signed with Mobile World Capital (MWC), will co-organize a Conference on Digital Transformation to be held in Barcelona in 2022.
- The Conference will tackle, inter alia, the digital divide between and within both shores of the Mediterranean, as well as the huge skills gap in the sector that has been growing steadily over the past few years.

UfM Regional Platform on Industrial Cooperation

- The UfM Secretariat will engage actively in the UfM Regional Platform on Industrial Cooperation to:
 - follow up on the Ministerial Declaration mandate
 - take stock of the recommendations developed by relevant UfM events and fora



- organize meetings, alternating with the Commission, of the UfM Regional Platform on industrial cooperation in view of the preparation of the work programme after 2021.
- Reflect on the possibility of a Ministerial after consultations with the relevant partners
- Integrate green and circular economy, digital transition and supply chain resilience 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 2022, 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.

Objective four: Supporting MSMEs in the region

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

UfM Conference on addressing challenges facing Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in the South and East Mediterranean region

- Following the UfM Conference on addressing the challenge of access to finance for Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in the South and East Mediterranean region which took place on 23 June 2021, the UfM Secretariat will organize a second edition in 2022 (potentially in Cyprus), focused on other challenges facing MSMEs in the UfM region, including access to markets and to information, regulatory hurdles, digital disruption, etc.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- The “UfM Grant Scheme for employment promotion - Regional response to the COVID-19 pandemic” which entered into the implementation phase in 2021 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 present their results in 2022.



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.

2022 specific objectives

1. Broadening and intensifying action on employment and labour with a focus on vulnerable groups, including youth and women
2. Developing the 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

Implementation of the 2022 UfM Ministerial on Employment and Labour

- The agreed focus of the fifth UfM Ministerial on Employment and Labour, to be held in Spring 2022, is "Employment and Employability of the most vulnerable, especially youth and women" as adopted by the UfM Senior Officials.

UfM Regional Platform on Employment and Labour

- The UfM Secretariat will contribute to the regular meetings of the UfM Regional Platform on Employment and Labour in order to follow up on the Ministerial Declaration mandates and implement the recommendations developed by relevant UfM events and fora.

III UfM Med4Jobs Stakeholders Dialogue



- Following the first two editions of the UfM Med4Jobs Stakeholders Dialogue (2018, 2020), the third edition will take place in 2022 to take stock of the progress made under the Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs (Med4Jobs), the UfM flagship initiative for job creation that has become a pipeline of projects that benefit young people and women in the UfM region. The 2022 edition will bring project promoters, partners and beneficiaries to share best practices and successful stories that can be scaled up and/or replicated.

➤ **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” which entered into implementation phase in 2021 actively supports 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, the Grant Scheme supports 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. The awarded projects under the Grant Scheme will present their results in 2022.

Promoting economic diplomacy in the UfM region

- The UfM Secretariat will explore the possibility of holding trainings in 2022 for young diplomats on key economic issues in the region in collaboration with specialized schools and institutes, with the aim of promoting economic literacy and economic diplomacy as a driver of co-creation of value in the region.

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 third quarter of 2021.

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.

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

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

The UfM Ministers of Employment and Labour agreed in 2019 to focus actions on four regional priorities:

- 1) supporting decent job creation and entrepreneurship,
- 2) mobilizing public and private stakeholders to create partnerships and synergies,



- 3) building inclusive labour markets to integrate potentially vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and
- 4) investing in quality education systems and training, skills and employability in a changing world of work.

To foster a result-oriented approach, the Ministers asked that a UfM regional framework will be created to share information on labour market trends and promote a culture of monitoring and evaluation. The Ministers also asked to look at the creation of a Community of Practices to promote peer-to-peer exchange as well as knowledge and experience sharing within the region.

State of play

A Matrix has been developed jointly by the UfM Secretariat, the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission (DG EMPL) and the European Training Foundation (ETF) and approved by both the UfM Regional Platform on Employment and Labour representatives and the UfM Senior Officials. The Matrix is built around the four priorities of the 2019 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Employment and Labour (pillars) and related thematic areas (dimensions), completed with a list of agreed qualitative and quantitative indicators.

To date, 11 UfM Member States are currently volunteering in this monitoring exercise: Algeria, France, Greece, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestine, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey. The process remains an open process, whereby UfM Member States may still decide to join at a later stage.

The findings of the monitoring exercise will feed the regional political dialogue, while providing technical input to analyse trends and policy progress and country developments.

The steering and coordination of the political dialogue remains a responsibility of UfM Secretariat and DG Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion, while the European Training Foundation coordinates and supports the technical process.

A first cross-country report of this pilot phase will be presented at the occasion of the fifth UfM Ministerial on Employment and Labour to be held in Spring 2022.



1.3. HIGHER EDUCATION: Improving youth employability and academic mobility

Being cross-cutting issues, regional cooperation efforts in the fields of higher education, as well as technical and vocational education and training, play an essential role in achieving the UfM overall objectives related to human development, intercultural dialogue, prevention of extremism, migration, sustainable development and the promotion of a Mediterranean youth positive agenda. Regional cooperation can be a powerful tool in supporting Higher Education Institutions transforming the current challenges posed by pandemic into opportunities for a positive change.

Drawing on the UfM Roadmap for Action (Barcelona, 2017), and the Ministerial Declarations on Research and Innovation (Valletta, 2017), Employment and Labour (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 at the core of its agenda. The Secretariat will also actively seek synergies with relevant dialogues such as with the follow-up of the 5+5 Declaration on Research, Innovation and Higher Education (Rome 2019), foreseen for 2022 in Mauritania (TBC).

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 (science, technology, engineering and math) careers, for example, will be a constant concern.

As a main highlight for 2022, the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference is scheduled to be held in Barcelona on 18-20 May. The event will provide an important space to present and discuss the regional recommendations of the UfM Report on the Internationalisation of Higher Education in the Mediterranean (2021). The feasibility and relevance of convening a new Ministerial meeting on Higher Education and Research will also be explored, under the guidance of the Co-Presidency.

In 2022, the UfM Secretariat will focus on two main objectives:

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

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

Building on the outcomes of the 3rd Regional Meeting on Higher Education Internationalisation, which was held in Cairo in December 2019, the regional recommendations of the UfM Report on the Internationalisation of Higher Education in the Mediterranean (2021), as well as other meetings held in the framework of this regional dialogue (e.g. UfM – CMI workshop), the UfM Secretariat will organise in partnership with other institutions and university networks (e.g. AUF, EMUNI, ESN, GUNi, Téthys, UNIMED) several activities:

- Supporting the 3rd UNESCO World Higher Education Conference on “*Reinventing the role and place of higher learning for a sustainable future*” to be held in Barcelona on 18-20 May 2022. A Partnership Agreement will be signed with the local organisers, ACUP/GUNi (Global University network for innovation), in the framework of the MoU signed in 2018.
- Organising the 4th Regional Meeting on Higher Education Internationalisation as a Side-Event of the 3rd UNESCO World Higher Education Conference. Around the Conference, a space will be created for a proper Euro-Mediterranean dialogue on promoting regional mobility initiatives, particularly through the recognition of qualifications, and to discuss on the recommendations of the UfM Report on the Internationalisation of Higher Education in the Mediterranean (2021), paving the way for a possible Ministerial on Higher Education and Research.
- Organising a seminar on the recognition of qualifications and quality control.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

Capitalising on the existing academic networks (e.g. Association of Arab Universities, Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, EMUNI, Erasmus Student Network, GUNi, International Association of Universities, Téthys, UNIMED), the UfM Secretariat will be supporting academic mobility through scaling-up labelled projects.

- To assist EMUNI University in its mission of contributing to academic dialogue in the region and training citizens open to cultural diversity, the UfM Secretariat will support the institution’s annual conference and study visits for students.
- Encouraging synergies between EMUNI University and the Euromed University of Fez (UEMF), as two flagship UfM-labelled projects.
- In order help high-achieving students finding jobs matching their skills and qualifications, supporting the HOMERe network organising an event aimed at attracting new companies, as well as at strengthening the commitment of those already involved in the internship programme.
- To enhance regional cooperation aimed at implementing response mechanisms for higher education in emergencies, the UfM Secretariat will support the newly UfM-labelled Euromed-RRM project.



- In order to diversify and increase the number of networks with whom the UfM Secretariat collaborates in a more regular basis, new MoUs should be signed (e.g. AUF, UNIMED).
- Following-up the activities of the network of Schools of Architecture and Planning of the Euro-Mediterranean region being created under the UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Urban Development to explore possible synergies with the Regional Dialogue on the Internationalisation of Higher Education.

Objective two: Promoting access to quality education for all in a context of growing digitalisation as well as green transition, 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. A public presentation of the results of a study on this issue will be organized in association with the European Training Foundation (ETF).
- In order to evaluate the impact the current pandemic is having on the digital transformation of higher education and on the digital readiness of Higher Education Institutions, a specific workshop will be organised, in the continuity of the activities of the previous years.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- The UfM Secretariat will promote through regional projects and initiatives the linkages between academia and the private sector in order to develop the skills needed for the digital and green transition.
- The UfM Secretariat will support the EuroMed University of Fes (UEMF) engaging in activities related to the improvement of the institution's career services, entrepreneurship awareness, and a training of trainers on debate skills.
- In order to foster the socio-professional integration of young people, particularly of those who are not in education, employment, or training (NEETs), through cooperation among stakeholders, especially second chance schools, the UfM Secretariat will continue to support the Mediterranean New Chance network (MedNC).
- With the purpose of helping the EMIS international school promoting peace and sustainability in the Middle East, the UfM Secretariat will support an event such as YOCOPAS, the annual conference aimed at inspiring youth to take action and change the reality of the region.



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

In 2022, UfM Secretariat will continue fostering regional cooperation on Research and innovation by supporting actively existing political mandate, the UfM Regional Platform on Research and Innovation, and structuring dialogue and capacity building on the nexus between innovation and employability.

Research and Innovation are central in tackling common challenges requiring innovative solutions, as it has been proved during the COVID19 pandemic, which saw the rapid development of new health tools. Mindful of the need to increase resilience in Mediterranean societies, the UfM Regional Platform on Research and Innovation has approved new Theories of Change/Impact Pathways on Climate Change, Renewable Energy and Health in July 2021.

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, Innovation and Higher Education (May 2022 TBC), the UfM Secretariat will be strengthening regional sectorial dialogue and paving the way for a proposed UfM Ministerial Declaration on Research and Innovation (first half of 2022 TBC), under the guidance of its Co-Presidency. Additionally, coordination will be ensured with thematic dialogues where Research and Innovation play a significant role, including Environment and Climate Action, Employment and Labour, Blue Economy, Water, and Energy.

In line with the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Employment and Labour (2019), which called for the mainstreaming of employment and decent work objectives in sectorial areas including research and innovation, the 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. This through a special focus, including in partnership with GIZ, on the academia-business interconnection, open innovation, and on skills and employability of researchers and graduates.

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

In 2022, the UfM Secretariat will focus on two main objectives:

1. Supporting sectoral dialogue and priorities on research, innovation and science, in the areas of climate change and environment, health, renewable energy, agri-food systems, blue economy, migration and integration.



2. Reinforcing the innovation-employability nexus in the Mediterranean, including academia-business interconnections, open innovation and skills.

Objective one: Supporting sectoral dialogue and priorities on research, innovation and science, in the areas of climate change and environment, health, renewable energy, agri-food systems, blue economy, migration and integration.

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- Organizing preparatory meetings (ad-hoc Senior Officials Meetings) aimed at laying the ground for a Ministerial on Research and Innovation.
- Organizing a Ministerial Meeting on Research and Innovation, under the leadership of the Co-Presidency of the UfM Regional Platform on Research and Innovation.
- Participating to the envisioned 5+5 Dialogue Ministerial Conference on Research, Innovation and Higher Education (foreseen for May 2022 in Mauritania), ensuring a linkage to the broader UfM region and being actively involved on actions relevant to UfM mandate, including workshops.
- In order to support the implementation and visibility of the UfM RP R&I agendas, the UfMS will propose the coorganisation, with its Copresidency, and the Bureau of the Platform, of a public presentation of the agenda and of the Horizon Europe program in the Southern Mediterranean (second half 2022), with the possible support of a technical assistance focused on the UfMS role on the Implementation Plan.
- Supporting Science Diplomacy in the Mediterranean by partnering with relevant networks (e.g. EU Science Diplomacy Alliance), paving the way for a conference and strategy on science diplomacy, by focusing on spreading best practices, capacity building actions and the establishment of dedicated centers on Science Diplomacy (eg. through the initiative Pontine PRIMA Med).

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- Participate actively in the regional dialogue on Education for Sustainable Development, taking part to the meetings and ensuring interconnection with existing UfM axes of Higher Education and Research and Innovation.
- Continue promoting the role of the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean (PRIMA), including its projects and best practices.
- Continue promoting dialogue on Research and Innovation on Blue Economy by being actively involved in the BLUEMED initiative.
- Working actively with FAO and CIHEAM and relevant partners, such as PRIMA, on the establishment and follow-up of an interinstitutional platform on Sustainable Food Systems, highlighting the contribution of research, science diplomacy, skills and careers to the sustainability of food systems in the Mediterranean.
- Supporting the UfM-labelled project “Higher Education on Food Security and Rural Development”. In 2022, UfM Secretariat will participate in events connected to the 60th Anniversary of CIHEAM, especially on activities connected to the labelled project, such as the Mediterranean Forum of CIHEAM PhDs (Doctoral Platform). A participation in the CIHEAM Ministerial Conference is envisioned, as well as the active involvement in the Third World Conference on the Mediterranean Diet.



- Supporting the participation of Southern Mediterranean 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) in partnership with International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion (IMISCOE) Euro-Mediterranean Migration Network (EuroMedMig) is envisaged.

Objective two: Reinforcing the innovation-employability nexus in the Mediterranean, including academia-business interconnections, open innovation and skills.

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- 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, the UfM Secretariat, through all its available resources, including in possible partnership with the German Development Agency (GIZ), will continue delivering on the development of strategies, studies, trainings and capacity building actions linking Research and Innovation with employability, with a special focus on the academia-business interconnection, open innovation, skills and employability of researchers and graduates. This may include support through a technical assistance ensuring the follow-up of the indications received by the high-level seminar on the Innovation-Employability nexus (November 2021 TBC), and the indications received on Higher Education and Vocational education and training, plus dedicated actions at regional and national levels.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- Promoting the innovation and employability nexus in the Mediterranean by increasing awareness and best practices on academia-business interaction in regional thematic events (e.g. the University-Business Forum or similar venues).
- UfM Secretariat will coorganise a kick-off event promoting the UfM-labelled project StartUp Europe Med. The event will introduce the project to the broader stakeholder and project communities of the UfM, fostering synergies and increasing knowledge about the potential of the project among UfM partners.
- Supporting the UfM-labelled project BlueSkills with a focus on the development of actions connected to internships, entrepreneurship, and environmental diplomacy through education. UfM will continue providing knowledge during classes through lessons held by UfM experts, and promoting the project through UfM networks. For 2022, the project will advance its synergies with Mediterranean blue-economy clusters and providing specialized training. UfM Secretariat will promote the project as a positive example of triple helix (academia, business, policymakers) in an applied field, providing knowledge, research, and career opportunity.



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

2022 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 2022, 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 2022 the UfM Secretariat aims to:

- **Implement the Ministerial Follow-up mechanism on *Strengthening the Role of Women in Society***
 - Based on the outcomes and recommendations identified in the Regional Progress Report to be adopted in December 2021, the UfMS will organise 2 online Ad-Hoc Working Group Meetings, one or maximum two regional dialogue meetings and the needed Ad-Hoc SOM (Senior Official meetings) in a physical format if the Covid-19 pandemic situation permits, with the following objectives:
 1. Develop policy recommendations for countries based on the progress made and the identified challenges. (SDG 16)
 2. Continue the discussion with the national statistics institutions towards building a gender data framework for the Ministerial follow-up mechanism taking into account work conducted under the EU-funded regional statistical programmes. (SDG 16)
 3. 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...), taking into account work conducted under EU funded statistical programmes. If the Covid-19 pandemic situation 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.
 4. Prepare for the 5th UfM Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society. Should the Covid-19 pandemic situation allow, the Ministerial Conference scheduled for the second semester of the year will be organised in a physical format, provided that one of the UfM Member States offers to host it.
 - a. The 2nd UfM regional Progress report endorsed in December 2021 by the UfM Regional Dialogue Platform will be reviewed by the UfM Co-presidency and circulated to UfM Member States. The findings and policy recommendations of the report will serve as supporting aid document for the preparation of the 2022 Ministerial Declaration.



- b. The Ad-Hoc SOM on Women will be organized in the first quarter 2022 to discuss, and approve (at technical level) the Ministerial Declaration, taking into consideration the outcomes of the regional progress report. Following the ad hoc SOM, the reviewed draft Ministerial Declaration will be shared with UfM Member States for their approval by silence procedure. The Ministerial Declaration will be circulated and approved by the SOM in June (at the political level) before the UfM Ministerial Meeting in September/October 2022
 - c. Following the approval of the Ministerial Declaration, a tentative road-map to ensure its implementation will be drafted by the UfMS, reviewed by the UfM Regional Dialogue Platform and circulated to the SOM for approval by December 2022
- Following five successful editions, the UfM Women Conference (Women4Med) is considered to be one of the major regional platforms for exchanging experiences on gender equality. The event brings together hundreds of participants from all UfM Member States to discuss women's roles as catalysts for change and leaders in the region, and tackles in depth the four priority areas of the 2017 Ministerial Declaration. In 2022, the UfM Secretariat will hold its 6th edition of Women Conference back-to-back to the Ministerial Conference. The focus of the event will be closely linked to the key recommendations of the Ministerial Declaration.
- **Fostering women economic participation:**
 - Each year, the UfMS organises, the Women Business Forum to promote women entrepreneurship and business development. The 2022 edition of the Forum will be organised in a physical or hybrid format should the Covid-19 pandemic situation allow. 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's agenda generally includes B2B networking and matchmaking; product and business concept exhibitions: business tours; and specific panels, training sessions 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). The specific focus of the event will be identified as a result of a needs' analysis to be launched in the first quarter of 2022.
 - Organising specific training activities for women entrepreneurs. (SDGs 4, 5 and 8). Also in this case the thematic areas and the specific target groups will be identified as a result of a needs' analysis to be launched in the first quarter of 2022. Potential topics could include among others green, blue and circular economy, sustainable food systems, fintech.
 - Provided that additional funds from international donors will be available, organising capacity building activities (*including the production of thematic factsheets, launching of surveys and organisation of workshops*) focusing among others on developing digital tools for online business incubation, facilitating access to innovative finance solutions for



women entrepreneurs in the MENA region, supporting women's transition to the formal economy and promoting social entrepreneurship (SDG 4, 5 and SDG 8).

- **Combating violence against women and girls (VAWG)**
- Organising networking and capacity building activities with the support of projects' promoters such as the Euromed Feminist Initiative (EFI), WHO as well as experts from other networks such as the WAVE Network (Women Against Violence Europe) in the UfM regional dialogue platform on women empowerment. (SDGs 3 and 16).
- Follow-up of the Action plan of the MoU with **WHO**, on women's access to health, and on preventing VAWG. The Action plan will include the possibility to use WHO gender data, and the development of joint regional projects (among other actions). (SDG 3). By implementing the joint UfM-WHO Action plan, this will support UfM countries to develop national strategies to strengthen women access to health and to prevent violence against women and girls. (SDGs 3 and 16).
- **Women, Peace and Security Agenda**
- Support the implementation and the monitoring of Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan (NAP) as stipulated by the UfM Cairo Declaration 2017. As Focal Point of the WPS network, the UfM will join the exchange of practices among the MENA countries to overcome the challenges of the NAP implementation (SG 5 and 16).

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- Monitoring the implementation of the labelled projects and other initiatives supported by the UfM Secretariat. In line with the recently updated labelling guidelines, periodic reviews of each of the labelled projects will be undertaken to assess their progress.
- Continue working with the promoters whose project activities have been completed in order to work on their sustainability and explore the possibilities of their scaling-up and/or extension to other UfM Member States. Funding availabilities will constitute a key element in this exercise.
- Building on the work that has already been conducted in 2020-2021 in promoting the relevance of the UfMS work on women's empowerment among key regional stakeholders, based on the partnership opportunities explored in the last years, while scaling-up the scope and impact of UfM actions in gender equality and women empowerment through the development of new operational partnerships. In particular:
 - Ensuring the follow-up of the exchanges with UNDP, UN Women, European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), CIHEAM, Anna Lindh Foundation, Euro Med Feminist Initiative, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), European Training Foundation (ETF) and DG ESTAT on their possible support to the UfM reporting exercise on gender data both in terms of data providers as well as technical assistance for the capacity building at country level.
 - Working on the possible development of specific initiatives focusing on women in rural areas and food security in the context of post- Covid-19 pandemic in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)



- Co-organise with the Swedish Institute for Dialogue in the MENA region a more regular networking events in the MENA region on the Nexus Water, Energy, Food, Ecosystems but also on access and management of natural resources, sustainable consumption, blue economy, and others related.
- Drafting a gender mainstreaming agenda and practices for the UfM as requested by Sida and the European Commission: how to embed a gender dimension in all the relevant UfM policy frameworks and activities, Dialogue platforms (monitoring mechanisms) and MoU/Joint Action Plans.
- Deepening the current UfM work on women empowerment in rural areas (access to resources, food security, gendered digital transformation in agro-food sector) in cooperation with CIHEAM, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Ensuring the follow-up of the the technical exchanges with the “UfM Regional Platform on Employment and Labour” to check and explore the possible synergies between the two monitoring mechanisms currently in place on Gender and Employment.
- Monitoring the implementation of the partnership agreement with Sida in the field of gender equality and women’s empowerment. (SDG 5) and the preparation of the Work Programme after 2022 based on the new Sida strategy.
- Monitoring the implementation of UNIDO’s pilot project "Promoting Women Empowerment for Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development in the MENA region - Phase II (PWE II)" launched in Tunisia in January 2021. The goal of the pilot project is to strengthen market access for women-owned businesses specifically in the natural cosmetics and parapharmaceuticals value chain. The project is co-funded under the framework of tripartite agreement with Monaco (SDGs 8 and 10).
- Coordinating the fundraising phase of the UfM 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.¹ (SDGs 3, 4 and 16).
- Monitoring the implementation of the ONCE pilot project in Morocco on promoting employment for women and youth with disabilities, funded by AECID. The project aims at supporting skills’ development and job integration for women and youth with disabilities and to overcome social inequalities. In the agreement with AECID, following the implementation of this pilot project it is foreseen to extend the project to other UfM countries provided that funds are available. (SDGs 8 and 10).
- Coordinating the fundraising phase and monitoring the implementation of WHO project on preventing violence against women labelled in 2020. This regional project aims to support countries in improving their strategies of response against violence against women and girls. (SDGs 3 and 16).

¹ <https://ufmsecretariat.org/project/engagement-preventing-violence-and-extremism/>



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

- **Technical Expertise**

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

- 1) collecting and analysing country and partners' data as outcomes of the follow-up of the reporting exercise launched in 2021;
- 2) preparing the policy recommendations for countries based on the progress made as well as the identified challenges;
- 3) co-ordinating with all the stakeholders for the preparatory actions and ad hoc meetings for the next Ministerial meeting;
- 4) developing capacity building actions for the UfM Member states in specific areas related to the implementation of the Ministerial follow-up mechanism (reporting, gender data production, statistics analysis, using indicators...).

The engagement of temporary external technical assistance is key to the work on the whole reporting exercises and on the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration.

B. Setting-up a technical assistance (Long-Term Expert) to the UfMS in order to facilitate the implementation of the UfM core activities on women empowerment including regional dialogue process and promoting regional projects.

- **Empowering women and girls with disability**

- Organising the joint regional event on promoting gender equality for women and girls with disability, including that related to the tourism sector, co-organised with ONCE, that will take place late January 2022 in a hybrid format.
- The Conference on Disability and Social Inclusion in the Mediterranean will, in the space of two days, present three blocks of interactive seminars – round tables, dialogues- followed by practical workshops. Civil society and institutional participants will be able to network, share good-practices and/ or present project proposals on the themes discussed.
- The thematic areas of the conference and the ensuing workshops will focus on:
- **1. Social Inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Mediterranean Countries:**
 - 1.1. Human Rights and Accessibility limitations and challenges in a post-COVID era;
 - 1.2. Employment of persons with disabilities
- **2. Disability and Gender Equality: Intersectional approaches.**
 - 2.1. The gender perspective within the regional and national disability agendas and recovery programmes.
- **3. Persons with disabilities in the Tourism sector:**
 - 3.1. Accessible tourism and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Tourism socioeconomic sector: A solution for the crisis recovery in the Mediterranean.



1.6. YOUTH: EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE AS ACTORS FOR CHANGE

2022 specific objectives

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

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

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

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

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

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

(UfM Youth Strategy 2030).

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



In 2022, the UfM will continue focusing on regional integration, bearing in mind that the future of the Mediterranean region will be shaped through the inclusion of its youth.

Objective: Implementing the UfM Youth Strategy 2030

➤ Promoting Regional Dialogue

UfM Youth Strategy

- The 2030 UfM Youth Strategy is a shared vision targeting the main challenges that young people are facing in the region. It is the result of an inclusive process of committed actions and consultations with several partners concerned about the inclusion and the full participation of youth, taking into consideration the existing disparities of the region.
- This strategy aims to contribute to and support the achievement of the objectives of all international and regional strategies of the UfM Partners (*the United Nations' Youth Strategy, the European Union Youth Strategy, the Council of Europe's Youth Sector Strategy, Cairo's Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening the role of Women in Society and Anna Lindh Foundation's strategy Working Together Towards 2025...*)
- More concretely, the 2030 UfM Youth strategy identifies human development and sustainable development as the two necessary dimensions for the inclusion of Youth and their full participation in the region.
- Based on the Strategy adopted by the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) in 2021, the UfM Secretariat will establish the very first Youth Working Group on Youth with national focal points of all Member States.
- Still to be determined and specified, the Working Group on Youth will cover the six following priority areas identified by the Strategy:
 1. Climate and Energy: Actions will focus on raising awareness among young people about climate change and energy issues and by involving them in the promotion and adoption of sustainable behaviours.
 2. Environment and Water: Actions will focus on effective local solutions that provide the necessary skills to integrate the green and circular economy.
 3. Urban and rural development: Actions will focus on providing the necessary support to existing platforms working to reduce the negative impact of urban and rural displacement on young people.
 4. Economic development: Actions will focus on promoting innovative youth entrepreneurship, facilitating access to financial support for project leaders and raising awareness of the importance of the jobs of the future.



5. Education and training: Actions will focus on supporting the development of skills, access to information, the reduction of inequalities and the introduction to communication and digital technologies.
 6. Social inclusion and participation: Actions will focus on reducing cultural gaps, actions to fight racism and extremist discourses.
- Once set-up, the Working Group on Youth will gather, to discuss and draft the Youth Action Plan to start implementing the Youth Strategy on a regional level.
 - Within these six (6) priority areas discussed within one Working Group on Youth, the UfM will engage and advocate for expanded and meaningful youth participation in intergovernmental fora at the regional level, particularly those related to the SDGs, including through extensive and streamlined support to youth delegates and representatives.
 - The conception as well as the implementation of the Youth Action Plan calls for a stronger implication. To this end, the Division will need to be strengthened by means of technical assistance.
- **Subject to the evolution of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as subsequent budgetary reconsiderations, the following activities are foreseen:**
- Once the Strategy is endorsed, organizing the first Youth Working Groups Meeting in person. Should this not be possible, it is organized virtually.
 - Organizing during the second half of 2022, the 3rd UfM Youth Forum, during which the UfM Youth Strategy and its Action Plan are presented to youth representatives from the Euro-Mediterranean region.
 - Identifying new partners from the Euro Mediterranean civil society and reinforcing cooperation with our current partners (*ALF, North South Centre of the Council of Europe, CMI, OECD, UNFPA, UNDP, UNIDO, Injuve, FEMISE, NTA Egypt etc.*), by organizing events targeting youth, both in physical or virtual format.
 - Promoting UfM activities in the Youth sector by participating in, and contributing to, partners' or potential partners' events on youth, by co-organizing with them, planned side-events or sessions in the context of major events.
 - Focusing further on youth voluntary work, due to the social crisis created by COVID-19, by working and collaborating with relevant organizations and partners.
- **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.
 - Focusing more on subjects and thematic that interest Youth the most, through organizing, together with other UfM Divisions, quarterly virtual or physical Table-Ronde on:
 1. Youth and Digitalized education
 2. Youth and Employment
 3. Youth and social perspectives in the Mediterranean



4. Youth and Art

- For these activities, synergies can be established within the UfM Structure itself, with the support and collaboration of other divisions. UfM partners are also key to the success of these activities such as UNDP, Anna Lindh Foundation, ...
- Following-up on the UfM Model organized in Egypt in December 2019 and organizing its 2nd Edition in the framework of the next World Youth Forum 2022.
- Enhancing the collaboration with National Training Academy (NTA) of Egypt to concretize the recommendations made via the UfM Model in the World Youth Forum, held in Sharm Sheikh in December 2019.
- Subject to the evolution of the Covid-19 pandemic, organizing DIAMED 2021 (*Les Dialogues pour la Méditerranée de Barcelone*). The event is foreseen to take place after the first quarter of 2022. As the event involves young college students and should the evolution of the Covid-19 pandemic permits, it will be organized in a physical format.
- Organizing UfM Youth Model(s) with the UfM labelled Universities: The Euro-Med University of Fes of Morocco and The Euro-Mediterranean University of Slovenia. The event, foreseen after the first quarter of 2022 will be organized in physical format should the evolution of the Covid-19 pandemic allows. Otherwise, it will be held online.
- Identifying and promoting strategic projects/initiatives focused on enabling youth empowerment in the region, including youth labs on youth policies as well as other youth related issues.



SECOND PART: STRENGTHENING REGIONAL INTEGRATION THROUGH CONNECTIVITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



2.1. TRANSPORT: Facilitating transport connectivity and mobility

The 2013 UfM Transport Ministerial Conference declared the UfM objectives in the sector, building on the progress achieved within the Euro-Med process. Those objectives were incorporated into the UfM 2017 Roadmap for Action. A Common Approach was thereafter developed with the Co-presidency to implement this mandate. In October 2018, the UfM also took over the organization of the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum and its working groups.

The UfM's overall aim in the field of transport connectivity is gradual, but solid progress towards developing an integrated, multimodal, efficient, interoperable, sustainable and resilient, as well as cleaner and more inclusive, transport infrastructure network in the Euro-Mediterranean region, with the ultimate goal of achieving deeper regional integration.²

In 2022, the UfM Secretariat will continue to implement the mandate set out in the 2013 UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport, under the guidance of the UfM Co-presidency, and in close consultation and cooperation with the European Commission, while laying the groundwork for the next UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport, which is planned to be held in 2022 (*date and venue TBD*), in principle, as an in-person or hybrid event.³

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

2022 specific objectives

More concretely, in 2022, the UfM Secretariat will focus on:

1. Preparing the groundwork for the next UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport, particularly by finalizing the key deliverables of the implementation of the 2013 ministerial mandate,⁴ 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.

² OECD (2021), Regional Integration in the Union for the Mediterranean: Progress Report, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/325884b3-en>.

³ If public authorities in the host country were to declare mobility restrictions preventing the attendance to the Ministerial Conference, the meeting would be held online, as appropriate.

⁴ Alongside the new UfM Ministerial Declaration on Transport, the next Ministerial Conference will endorse the new regional transport action plan, as well as the Evaluation report of the Regional Transport Action Plan for the Mediterranean Region (RTAP-2014-2020). The new regional Transport action plan is being developed for the UfM area of action as a whole, whereas the previous version had been elaborated with and for the Mediterranean Partners in EU's Southern Neighbourhood (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, and Tunisia). The Ministerial Conference will also mark this transition.



2. Co-organizing joint activities with relevant IGOs and NGOs, building on established and consolidated UfM partnerships, also participating in and contributing to significant events at regional and global level.
3. Building strategic partnerships with other key international stakeholders with a view to engaging with them in joint activities including, among others, through their participation in the UfM regional policy dialogue on transport and the preparation of regional projects.

Objective one: Preparing for the next UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport

➤ Promoting Regional Dialogue

- Organizing, in coordination with the UfM Co-presidency, one or two rounds of meetings of the UfM Thematic Working Groups (WGs) on Land, Air and Maritime Transport and Logistics to continue laying the groundwork for the next UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport, possibly in the second or third quarter of 2022, depending on the finalization of the planned deliverables, particularly the new regional transport action plan.

The new regional transport action plan will provide comprehensive guidance for action, compile a toolbox, and indicate how to mobilize finance for UfM Member States.

- Convening two meetings (one per semester) of UfM-IFIs Transport Finance Committee to discuss the UfM pipeline of projects emerging in relation to the new regional action plan.
- Elaborating and finalizing the planned deliverables of the upcoming Ministerial Conference.

In accordance with the agreed UfM working methodology and governance arrangements, recommendations of the thematic WGs on the deliverables of the next UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport will be fine-tuned by the UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity.

Therefore, following the meetings of the WGs, the UfM Secretariat, on behalf of the UfM Co-presidency, will be:

- Convening a meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity to validate the outcomes of Thematic Working Groups, particularly the new regional action plan, to be eventually conveyed to UfM Senior Officials with a recommendation for a decision on its adoption.
- Similarly, under the guidance of the UfM Co-presidency, *Ad hoc* SOMs will be convened to prepare, discuss, and provisionally approve the draft Declaration of the next UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport, before conveying it to UfM Senior Officials (regular SOM) for adoption.

Ad hoc SOMs could be organized 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 and convened once its planned deliverables are adopted by UfM Senior Officials.

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

- Organizing two or three workshops back-to-back with the meetings of the UfM Thematic Working Groups.



Workshops will also be open to the participation of IGOs, NGOs and other key stakeholders, including academia and private sector, and aim to develop recommendations that could be incorporated into the new regional transport action plan.

- Participating in the Trans-European Transport Network (TENT-T) Days 2022 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), 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 regional transport action plan.

➤ Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives

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

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

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

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

➤ Promoting Regional Dialogue

- Contributing to the 2022 Summit of the International Transport Forum (ITF/OECD) on “Transport for Inclusive Societies” (18-20 May 2022, Leipzig, Germany), as well as in the ITF Consultation Day with International Organizations (January 2022, Paris, France), for the preparation of the Summit. Known as the “Davos of Transport”, the Annual ITF Summit is the premier global transport policy event. It gathers transport ministers from around the world, key international organizations, IFIs, and the private sector, as well as parliamentarians and academics.
- Co-organizing the 11th edition of the MARLOG International Conference on Maritime Transport and Logistics (20-22 March 2022, Alexandria, Egypt), titled “Towards a Sustainable Blue Economy”.
- Participating in the 2022 World Ports Conference – WPC (*date TBC*, Vancouver, Canada), organized by the International Association of Ports and Harbours (IAPH). WPC is the premier



world-class event assessing the indispensable role of ports in global maritime trade, and bringing together key international stakeholders in the sector for learning, information sharing, networking and collaboration.

- Contributing to the 35th Session of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe – UNECE (*date TBC in September 2022, Geneva, Switzerland*), under the agenda point “Development of transport networks and/or links: (e) Transport in the Mediterranean Region”.
- Participating in the 2022 edition of the MENA Transport Congress (6-8 February 2022, Dubai, United Arab Emirates) under the theme “Building the Future of Mobility”, jointly organized and hosted by the *Union Internationale des Transports Publics* (UITP) and RTA Dubai. The congress will bring together key international and regional stakeholders and renowned expert voices to move forward the debate in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries on advanced and sustainable urban mobility solutions, which are at the core of the global transition towards a “new normal” in a post-pandemic world.
- Participating, with observer status, in the Expert Group meetings of the GTMO 5+5 Policy Dialogue on Transport (*dates and venues TBC*).
- Participating in the 2022 PIDA⁵ Week (*date and venue TBC*). The PIDA Week is the flagship advocacy event for the PIDA programme. It provides an opportunity for taking stock of progress in PIDA’s implementation, and particularly, for joining efforts to mobilize finance needed for key PIDA projects. The event brings together delegates from a wide range of stakeholders involved in the implementation of PIDA, including the African Union Commission (AUC), the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NEPAD Agency), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Regional Economic Communities, Member States, development partners, financial Institutions, private sector actors and financiers, consulting firms, banks, civil society, academia and members of the media.
- Continuing to liaise with and participate in the Africa-Europe Transport and Connectivity Task Force, to follow up work on the Task Force’s Final Report “Towards an enhanced Africa-EU Cooperation on Transport and Connectivity” and contribute to the discussions on a future EU-Africa Action Plan on Transport Connectivity, building upon the recommendations of the report.

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

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

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

⁵ PIDA: Plan for Infrastructure Development in Africa



disaster risk prevention and management etc., particularly to help mobilize investment in sustainable transport infrastructure and services.

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

- Participation in / co-organization of other possible activities (*dates and venues TBC*) with relevant IGOs, NGOs, IFIs, international donors and the private sector, including UNCTAD, UN DESA, UNDRR, UNECE, UITP, MEDports Association, EIB, GIZ, etc., particularly to help ensure that gender mainstreaming, energy efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster risk prevention and management, as well as sustainable financing of transport infrastructure and services, are promoted in the preparation, design and implementation of projects of common interest in the Transport sector.
- Participation in and contribution to possible major events to be organized by key IGOs and NGOs to pave the way for the upcoming in-depth reviews, amongst others, of SDG 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals) in the run-up to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) to be held in July 2023 under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).



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

Urbanization is one of the megatrends that shape our world.⁶ Human-induced pressures have been on the rise in the Mediterranean region, especially within the last three decades. These pressures mostly accumulate in the coastal zone. About seventy per cent of the Mediterranean population live in urban areas, one-third of which is concentrated in the coastal zone. Also, the Mediterranean Basin is one of the most prominent hotspots of climate and environmental change in the world.⁷ Urbanization relates to all Sustainable Development Goals, directly or indirectly.⁸ It can either reinforce geographical/spatial inequalities or stimulate more balanced social and economic development. For a more sustainable Mediterranean, collective policy responses and actions for systemic and steady adaptation to changing circumstances need to be mobilized.

The UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040 and its Axis of Intervention, the UfM Housing Action Plan, which were adopted by UfM Senior Officials on 1 July 2021, will be the key deliverables, along with the Ministerial Declaration, of an upcoming Third UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development. The two action plans provide guidance and direction for the implementation of the “Union for the Mediterranean Urban Agenda” (Cairo, Egypt, 22 May 2017), as well as the upcoming Ministerial Declaration, along with other key global and regional policy frameworks, such as the 2030 Agenda,⁹ the New Urban Agenda, the Urban Agenda for the EU, the New Leipzig Charter,¹⁰ the European Green Deal, the New European Bauhaus,¹¹ and the Agenda 2063,¹² in view of lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.¹³

In 2022, under the guidance of the UfM Co-presidency, the UfM Secretariat will continue preparing the groundwork for the organization of the Third Ministerial Conference, and kick-start the implementation of the action plans with the support of the Delft University of Technology

⁶ Report of the UN Economist Network for the UN 75th Anniversary: Shaping the Trends of Our Time, UNDESA, 16 September 2020.

Global Trends to 2030: Challenges and Choices for Europe, ESPAS, 5 April 2019.

⁷ The 2020 edition of the State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean (SoED) report, UNEP/MAP, 2 December 2020.

⁸ SDG 11 Synthesis Report 2018 on Sustainable Cities and Communities, UN-Habitat, 11 July 2018.

⁹ [Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)

¹⁰ The New Leipzig Charter- The transformative power of cities for the common good, 30 November 2020.

¹¹ New European Bauhaus: new actions and funding to link sustainability to style and inclusion, European Commission, 15 September 2021.

¹² [Agenda 2063](#): The Africa We Want

¹³ Cities and Pandemics: Towards a more just, green and healthy future, UN-Habitat, 30 March 2021.



academic team. The UfM Secretariat will continue joining efforts with the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM), along with other key stakeholders, to engage as appropriate, local and federative regional governments in the promotion and implementation of the action plans. Seaport authorities will also be included in relevant activities.

2022 specific objectives

In 2022, the UfM Secretariat will focus on:

Objective one: Preparing the groundwork for the organization of the Third UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development

➤ Promote Regional Dialogue

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

- *Ad hoc* Senior Officials' Meetings (*Ad hoc* SOMs) on Sustainable Urban Development to hammer out the draft Declaration of the upcoming Ministerial Conference. This process will be initiated at least five months prior to the Ministerial Conference.
- A high-level side event relating to the implementation of the UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040, back-to-back with the Ministerial Conference.
- Ministerial Conference.

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

➤ Promote Regional Dialogue

The UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Urban Development will be convened to follow up on the mandate of the Third Ministerial Conference and review the tasks of the UfM Working Groups (WGs) accordingly.

In order to organise the implementation process of the Actions plan, UfM Thematic Working Groups (WGs),¹⁴ the UfM Permanent Working Group on Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting Systems on Sustainable Urban Development, as well as the UfM-IFIs Urban Project Committee, could be reconvened for this purpose in the course of the year.

Under the aegis of the WGs and the Committee, and depending on the availability of resources, events, workshops and capacity building activities will be organized in support of the implementation process of the UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040 and its Housing Action Plan. The areas of activity based on the 6 actions framing the action plans are detailed below.

In this context, the UfM Secretariat will help explore, within available means: how to widely disseminate and raise awareness about the two action plans; how to compare and upgrade curricula of schools of architecture, urban planning and design; how to harmonize and future-proof national urban policies (NUPs), integrated city development strategies (ICDSs), and national

¹⁴ Currently, the two UfM Thematic WGs are the UfM Working Group on Urban Regeneration and the UfM Working Group on Affordable and Sustainable Housing. Following the Third Ministerial Conference, the UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Urban Development could either retain these WGs, or set up two new ones in their stead.



housing strategies; how to improve investment planning, and enhance access to external finance;¹⁵ and, depending on resources, possibly how to develop other axes of intervention of the UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040.

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

WGs will continue mapping trends, risks and challenges for national and local urban planning (e.g. hotspots of climate emergency, environmental degradation, and other disaster risks) for inclusion of such challenges into NUPs, ICDSs and national housing strategies, while promoting dialogue between planning authorities to harmonize NUPs with the UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040 and evaluate/monitor this harmonization. Work will aim to promote, in particular:

- (i) Mapping of key cultural heritage in towns and cities across the region to ensure that ICDSs protect and value the cultural heritage of places (including historic city centres); that they build on inherited building practices and identity; and that they integrate heritage conservation with sustainable urban development plans.
- (ii) Revision of gaps in heritage reuse, redevelopment and protection in urban legislation, in coordination with the UNESCO World Heritage Center. Preparatory work may include field visits, as necessary.
- (iii) Introduction in urban legislation of innovative land policy tools to promote the provision of affordable housing (e.g. land re-adjustment, land value recapture, land-use zoning or regulated planning obligations).
- (iv) Mapping and reinforcement of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) through effective multi-level and multi-scalar governance, including by incorporating IWRM into NUPs and ICDSs, to ensure the sustainability of and access to water and freshwater resources.
- (v) Setting up or revision of NUPs to prepare for and integrate national housing strategies.

The UfM Secretariat will continue working with key stakeholders to promote sustainable management of coastal zones of UfM countries through identification and inclusion in NUPs and ICDSs of effective legal and regulatory land management instruments. A cross-national learning capacity building programme could be set up, in collaboration with UN-Habitat, UNEP/MAP and OECD (TBC), to promote adoption of more effective urban policy and urban legal-regulatory instruments that are necessary to meet the challenges of coastal sustainability and resilience in the face of climate emergency.

The UfM Secretariat will also support events that aim to connect municipalities, that help municipalities exchange experiences while developing ICDSs, and those that promote partnerships for further local capacity building.

¹⁵ OECD (30 July 2021), Mobilising institutional investors for financing sustainable development in developing countries: Emerging evidence of opportunities and challenges, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Financing Sustainable Urban Development, INTPA INFOPOINT Conference, EIB, 28 June 2021.
https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/2021_06_28_jun_infopoint_un_habitat_-_eib_gerry_muscat.pdf

Financing sustainable urban development | UN-Habitat, 28 June 2021.



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

The inaugural session of the Annual Conference of Heads of Schools of Architecture and Urban Planning will be organized to set in motion the process of review, updating and convergence of curriculums of those Schools, with a view to enhancing skills development in higher education, while facilitating youth employment, and promoting links between academia, students of architecture and business enterprises active in the region. Heads of Schools will thus be encouraged to commit to working towards the review, updating and convergence of curriculums, as well as organizing training and capacity building courses, programmes, and summer schools. This activity is being conducted in coordination with the UfM Regional Dialogue on the Internationalization of Higher Education. An international conference on port cities in the Mediterranean will be organized in collaboration with TU Delft and the Association for the Collaboration between Ports and Cities (RETE).

A network of Urban World Heritage cities in the Euro-Mediterranean region (Mediterranean Heritage Knowledge Hub) will be developed, in collaboration with the UNESCO World Heritage Center, to mainstream the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape in ICDSs, as well as projects, in line with the UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040. The Hub will enhance heritage protection, and promote peer-to-peer learning and exchange of experiences for local, regional (sub-national), and national policymakers on the financing and management of the conservation and re-use of heritage in cities in view of circular economy models. It will enable better management of heritage, and encourage better integrated city development strategies (ICDSs). Study visits and exchanges could provide training, mobilize knowledge and foster innovative and tailored solutions.

Contemporary relevance of traditional building knowledge, skills, materials and natural cooling solutions in the region will be sought and promoted. Workshops will be organized to sustain and develop traditional building knowledge skills.

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

A comparative analysis (including contextualization) of spatial planning governance models across the region will be promoted at WG meetings and/or as part of possible results of the collaboration among Schools of Architecture and Planning in the region.

In coordination with the OECD, Housing Europe and UNECE, the UfM Secretariat will plan for the organization of a meeting to encourage the creation of housing observatories at national level to disseminate information about quality, affordability, financing and other issues concerning housing.

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

In anticipation of the upcoming MedECC Special Reports,¹⁶ particularly that on coastal risks, and in view of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, as well as the EU's Floods

¹⁶ As a follow-up to "The First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) on Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin – Current Situation and Risks for the Future" (released on 2 November 2020), the network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change ([MedECC](#)) has



Directive (2007/60/EC), projected impacts of climate change on coastlines and coastal (seaport) cities through sea-level rise and coastal flooding, and on hinterland cities through droughts, floods, and other changing water and environmental patterns, will be overviewed in UfM events with the aim to raise awareness about, and to improve resilience to climate-induced coastal disasters. The process will pave the way for the adaptation of NUPs, ICDSs and national housing strategies to the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, for the promotion of nature-based solutions in spatial interventions, and for the consolidation of energy efficiency and urban resilience measures. Representatives of cities and regions that are expected to be significantly affected by sea-level rise and coastal flooding will also be invited to take part in the preparatory work to be launched towards this end.

Sustainable solutions will be explored and promoted to rise up to environmental and health challenges of air, soil, noise, and water pollution in human settlements, in particular, those caused by elevated levels of greenhouse gas emissions in seaport cities. To this end, best practices in efficient multi-level and multi-scalar governance between national, local and seaport authorities in charge of housing, urban development, land administration, environment, public works, energy, transport, health, education, culture, social policies, and emergency management will be encouraged and showcased.

Also, healthy city indicators for human settlements, especially for seaport cities, will be promoted, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), for incorporation of those indicators into NUPs and ICDSs, as well as policies applied by seaport authorities.

In continuation of the work started in 2021, two online webinars will be co-organized with the WHO Regional Office for Europe, one on “Ecology and Health of Ecosystems and People”, and the other on “Policy impact: Good lessons and Practices”, with the aim to continue exploring sustainable solutions and environmental and health challenges of air, soil, noise, and water pollution in human settlements.

The new cooperation agreement with EU Program Copernicus has an indicative list of concrete activities in the field of Urban Development that could also contribute to monitor health indicators and to foster better resilience in cities in case of natural disasters. Synergies with Climate Action activities will be sought as relevant.

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

Sustainable, resilient and integrative urban development initiatives or projects underway in the region, in particular those with the UfM label, will be identified, recognized, and promoted, as appropriate, as examples of tools to reach the agreed objectives of the UfM action plans.

A process will be initiated, with the support of national and local governments and academia, for classifying and creating an inventory -for selected cities in the region- of integrative strategic initiatives or projects under the nine axes of intervention in the UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040.

embarked, as of 15 May 2021, upon preparing the Special Reports on “Coastal risks”, “The climate-water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus”, and that on “Environmental change, conflict and human migration”.



WG activities will continue promoting and consolidating the energy efficiency process underway in the region (e.g. through improvement of building codes, introduction of natural cooling systems, retrofitting and energy renovation programmes, and energy poverty alleviation measures etc.), in co-ordination with the EU-funded project titled “Mitigation Enabling Energy Transition in the Mediterranean Region (meetMED)” and the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH* (GIZ).

The UfM Secretariat will plan for the organization of a gathering of Euro-Mediterranean Housing Cooperatives with a view to facilitating the exchange of project experience.

Training workshops will be considered for public officials to raise awareness about funding opportunities, in collaboration with key financial/funding entities, such as the EIB and meetMED.

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

The UfM Permanent WG will continue elaborating on available cooperation frameworks, facilitating capacity development for better SDG monitoring, promoting the adoption of common definitions and methodology, and coordination of national statistical systems, with the support of the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) and Joint Research Centre (JRC), as well as EU agencies, such as the Eurostat and ESA (with regard to Earth observation data, tools and toolboxes).

➤ **Promote Regional Projects and Initiatives**

The UfM will continue monitoring and following up on the developments regarding the implementation of UfM-labelled urban development projects, which are currently as follows:

- UPFI-ERI, Urban Projects Finance Initiative - Economic Resilience Initiative (Regional). This initiative will be phased out at the end of 2021.
- Euro-Mediterranean Smart City Innovation Centres (Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia)
- UPFI Development Project for Phase 3 of the Bouregreg Valley Development Plan (Morocco)
- UPFI Sfax Taparura Project (Tunisia)

Efforts will be made towards identifying, recognizing and promoting exemplary regional initiatives or projects underway in the region. Key IFIs, as well as international development cooperation agencies, will be kept abreast of the emerging project ideas and proposals in the UfM project pipeline, and encouraged to support bankable projects within the UfM governance set-up. Trainings on funding opportunities for public officials could also be organized under the aegis of the UfM-IFIs Urban Project Committee.

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

The UfM Secretariat will aim to implement this objective as an essential vehicle for mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, and to engage key regional stakeholders in the implementation of the UfM action plans.

In this context, the UfM Secretariat will participate in relevant activities of key stakeholders, including, in particular:

- 11th edition of the World Urban Forum (WUF11), with the possibility of organizing a side event on this occasion, 26-30 June 2021, Katowice, Poland.
- 4th Arab Ministerial Forum on Housing and Urban Development (*date and venue TBC*).
- International Social Housing Festival, 14-17 June 2022, Helsinki, Finland.
- UCLG World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders (*date and venue TBC*).
- Medcities Annual Conference (*date and venue TBC*).



- Main EU events on urban development, such as the European Cities Forum, or the European Week of Regions and Cities (*dates and venues TBC*).
- Meetings of the OECD Regional Development Policy Committee, the Working Party on Territorial Indicators, and the Working Party on Urban Policy (*dates and venues TBC*).
- Meetings of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management of UNECE (*dates and venues TBC*).



2.3. ENERGY: Enhancing energy connectivity and sustainable energy supply

The UfM energy-related activities are in line with the global agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), they contribute particularly to the achievement in the Mediterranean region of SDG 7 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all; as well as to SDG 9 Industry Innovation and Infrastructure, SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities and SDG 13 Climate Action.

The UfM energy agenda is also aligned with the European Union energy and climate objectives and priorities, namely the European Green Deal. It is as well in line with the promotion of an inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this framework, the UfM Secretariat will pursue:

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

2022 specific objectives

Following the approval of the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Energy on 14 June 2021 (and in line with the climate objectives set by the 2021 UfM Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Action), the UfM Secretariat will focus its efforts to implement the mandate of the UfM Ministerial



Declaration on Energy and support regional cooperation to address the region's energy challenges towards a low-carbon transition, and to promote a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. For this purpose, the UfM Secretariat will support and facilitate the operations of the UfM Gas Platform, the UfM Regional Electricity Market Platform and the UfM Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Platform.

The objectives for 2022 will focus on:

1. The implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Energy and its Roadmap for Action.
2. To support local authorities in their energy transition as well as the promotion of capacity building and a stronger involvement of the private sector.
3. The promotion of flagship initiatives and projects as well as institutional partnerships.

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

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

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

Under the framework of the 2021 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Energy, the annual meeting of the UfM Energy Platforms will follow up on the implementation of the Ministerial mandate. The meeting will be the opportunity to finalise (if not done by the end of 2021) and/or present the Roadmap for Action mandated by the Declaration and establish a calendar of actions and activities in order to implement it. The annual work program of each of the 3 UfM Energy Platforms (UfM Regional Electricity Markets (REM) Platform; UfM Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (REEE) Platform; UfM Gas Platform), in line with the mandate of the Declaration and the Roadmap for Action, will be presented and discussed.

Taking into account the new phase established by the 2021 Ministerial, if other gatherings of the platforms are needed, they will be organized (either physical or online).

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

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

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

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

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**



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

Peer-to-peer dialogue session(s) will be foreseen in 2022 back to back with capacity building/ad hoc training(s) for local authorities' representatives, mainly on governance and financing aspects to support their efforts on the implementation and development of renewable energy projects, energy efficiency, and climate mitigation and adaptation actions; as well as on housing/public buildings energy efficiency solutions. If the situation prevents physical meetings to take place and if technical means allow it, the peer-to-peer dialogue session(s) and the capacity building training(s) might be organized online. These activities are foreseen for municipalities and local governments' officials who are in charge of implementing local actions and measures in the fields of renewable energies, energy efficiency and climate action; their profiles might be technical as well as political.

– **Efficient Street Lighting Exercise**

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

Following the 2021 advancements, in 2022, the UfM and the Copenhagen Centre on Energy Efficiency will continue exploring potential partnerships with IFIs and other potential funding institutions in order to implement a second phase of this exercise that would allow putting in place the identified energy efficiency measures for the participating municipalities. This activity will be coordinated with others of the Climate Action's portfolio, in particular with the operationalization of the Climate Finance strategy.

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

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

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

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

In 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 and youth involvement in this activity, by involving and highlighting projects and initiatives led by women and youth.

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

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

➤ Promoting Regional Dialogue

– Explore new partnerships

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

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

➤ Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives

– South-South and North-South interconnection facilitation.

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

➤ Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives

– Follow-up of labelled projects

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

In 2022, the UfM Secretariat will confirm 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) as well as the results of the project achieved so far.

The UfM Secretariat will continue following up on the implementation of the SEMed Private Renewable Energy Framework “SPREF” project and the projects developed under its frame. Due to the pandemic situation, EBRD and UfM Secretariat decided to postpone the planned co-organized side-event to shed the light on the accomplishments of SPREF and to showcase the different



projects developed under its framework, highlighting the lessons learnt and the positive impacts in different UfM countries. If the pandemic situation allows, this meeting could be foreseen to take place in 2022. The UfM Secretariat will continue to support the communication actions to give visibility to the projects under SPREF (and update accordingly the promotional leaflet prepared in 2021, if needed).



2.4. CLIMATE ACTION: Addressing the challenges of climate change

The UfM climate action activities are in line with the global agenda and the United Nations SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) namely SDG 13 Climate Action; SDG 7 Affordable and Clean energy; SDG 17 Partnership for the Goals; SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities. The UfM climate agenda is also aligned with the European Union climate objectives and priorities, namely the European Green Deal.

To progressively refine, adapt and consensually steer the implementation of the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Action (October 4, 2021), the UfM Secretariat will continue animating the dedicated regional dialogue platform for climate action, the UfM Climate Change Expert Group; and ensure the implementation of the Climate Action Roadmap 2021-2025 declining it in the following goals:

- Strengthen and institutionalize the **Science-Policy interface**;
- Support MENA States improved ambitions to be reflected in **NDCs**;
- Provide factual **training and capacitation** for mitigation and especially adaptation, with a focus on South Rim communities;
- Provide **adaptation and resilience services for weaker groups**, in particular women and children;
- Provide **user friendly adaptation oriented factual information** for urban, rural, economic and infrastructure planning, and for disaster risk management;
- Mobilize **climate finance** and facilitate access to existing climate finance;
- Identify hotspots and dynamics of **climate induced instability and migrations** and scalable mitigation patterns.

2022 specific objectives

In 2022, in line with the mandate issued from the 2nd UfM ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Action (4 October 2021, Cairo), the UfM Secretariat will work following this new Ministerial mandate and will develop the UfM Climate Action Roadmap (2021 -2025).

The main climate related objectives for 2022 will focus on:

1. The support to the Science – Policy – Society interface;
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; this will include more particularly the development of the UfM CCCB Hub;
3. The promotion of regional information on climate finance and its access for SEMed countries;
4. The support to youth and gender 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**

– **Preparation and dissemination of the first 2 thematic reports of MedECC**

Following the finalization, promotion and valorization of the 1st Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) on the impacts of climate and environmental changes in the Mediterranean Basin and its Summary for Policymakers, the UfM will support the preparation of thematic report.

The UfM will also seek to consolidate, in partnership with UNEP MAP and Plan Bleu, the future of MedECC to ensure an even more sustainable network that can initiate 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.

The activities foreseen in 2022 include further communication of MAR1 findings to stakeholders and the broader public; the development of 2 of the 4 foreseen Thematic Reports (one on “Coastal Risks”, one on the “Climate-Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems nexus”) and their Summaries for Policy Makers (to be discussed and approved in a plenary session to be co-organised with UNEP MAP and Plan Bleu).

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

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

On the basis of the MoU signed at COP24, and the Work Plans implemented in 2020-2021, the UfM Secretariat and the WMO will develop common activities in 2022. An assessment, led by the UfM, in consultation with WMO, to identify the most pertinent WMO programs for the Mediterranean region has been conducted in close cooperation with WMO and will serve as guidelines in this regard.

– **Partnership with Copernicus**

In full alignment with WP11 of the MoU with WMO, the Secretariat has developed a new specific cooperation agreement with EU Programme Copernicus, on the basis of an internal consultation with all interested divisions. Following the signature of the related MoU and the workshop organized on October 25-26 to identify with stakeholders the most useful and requested services, in 2022 the following actions will be pursued:

- i. ECMWF to ensure that expertise is made available to the UfMS so that the purpose of this MOU is fulfilled;
- ii. UfMS to ensure that it makes the best use of the products, services and tools developed or made available within the Copernicus Services implemented by ECMWF;
- iii. UfMS to maximise the uptake of Copernicus data and information in relevant regional and international initiatives of the UfMS in support of the implementation of relevant EU and UN policies;



- iv. **ECMWF to support UfMS in the development of a data portal, indicators and information for the benefit of users in the Mediterranean region. Synergies with other UfM divisions will be enhanced as relevant and when cross-cutting issues arise**
- v. **ECMWF expects to support with targeted training material and training sessions in scope of skills training, knowledge transfer and capacity building;**
- vi. **UfMS and ECMWF to carry out joint actions to increase uptake, impact and user satisfaction, including workshops, small scale studies and demonstration cases;**
- vii. UfMS to provide input on user requirements collection activities for further use in service evolution on CAMS and C3S;
- viii. UfMS and ECMWF to facilitate visits and short-term exchanges of officials and experts.

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

➤ **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 meetings of the UfM CCEG will be centered on the mandate adopted at the 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Action for the UfM in the field of climate action, and will take stock of the first development of the recently adopted UfM Climate Action Plan 2021-2025.

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

Following the publication (shared with UNDP), of the Report “2021 Regional Analysis on NDCs”, that analyses how SEMed countries enhance their ambitions included in their NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions) as well as in their NAPs (National Adaptation Plans), some specific activities for developing supporting actions will be developed. As for the previous Technical Assistance, these activities will be interconnected with the development of the Hub (see below).

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: Cooperation on Climate Finance

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

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

The RCFC main meeting will be organized back-to-back with the UfM CCEG meetings. Other ad hoc RCFC meetings will be organized in relation with Climate finance activities (see below).



– **UfM Climate Finance Study Technical Assistance**

The new technical assistance will be developed for a period of two years, on the basis of the three 2021 reports. It will include a 2020 Climate finance flows report, as well as thematic reports (including approaches related to adaptation and economic opportunities related to green recoveries), as described in the terms of reference to be developed in the beginning of 2022.

The 4th 2021 Climate finance report - “The **Handbook**” - will be updated in close cooperation with IFIs and other financial institutions.

Furthermore, the “set-top box” on climate finance has been developed on the UfM website, and will be updated, in aiming at strengthening the information on climate finance information and opportunities, this activity is planned to facilitate a regional dialogue among coalitions active in the Euro-Mediterranean region to address climate change.

– **Cooperation Agreement with R20**

Within the R20 – Subnational Climate Fund – SCF Global, seven UfM Members (Albania, Lebanon, Jordan, Mauritania, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia) have expressed their support. This activity is ongoing, with the countries preparing the action plan, and the technical assistance led by IUCN launched in 2021.

Following up on this success of SCF Global with the support of GCF, the personal encouragement of President Macron within the framework of the One Planet Summit in general, the "Plan Exemplaire Mediterranean 2030" (PAMex) approved at IUCN Summit on 3 September 2021 in particular, first development for the preparation of SCF-Med has started, taking into account that the dossier will aim to be complementary to the SCF-Global.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

– **Labelled project CLIMA MED**

The Secretariat has focused its follow-up on the financing and implementation of cities’ SEACAPs (“Sustainable Energy Access and Climate Action Plans) in the 8 countries of the project. It has also emphasized to the promoter the need to have the same structure of coordination in all countries.

– **Climate for Cities (C4C) in Southern Neighborhood**

This call (which budget is nearly 20 M€) is organized and managed by DG NEAR. Interactions with the UfM Secretariat are important to ensure the best possible synergies with the UfM Climate agenda.

– **Development of a Regional Climate Hub**

In order to support countries in their decision-making processes, the facilitation of access to climate finance and the engagement of private sector, local authorities’ efforts towards the energy transition 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 supports the



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

expressed engagement to host and incorporate the facility by the Foreign Minister of Morocco;

expressed engagement to host activities by the Government of Italy

expressed interest in partnership by crucial international actors

the recommendations included in the Summary for Policy Makers of the 1st Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) of the MedECC network, as well as the other related activities (on NDCs and Climate finance): in this perspective, the Hub will also serve as one of the main common base for Science-Policy dialogue orientated towards implementation of the recommendations of the MedECC report.

In 2022 the preparatory phase should be completed to bring to full functionality a Euro-Mediterranean Climate Change Capacity Building Hub – “EuMed Climate Hub” – so far planned in cooperation with the Euro Mediterranean University of Fez as a physical location and online web resource to bridge regional knowledge and best practices and provide pragmatic training to in field actors at all levels, aiming at speeding up sustainability through widespread pragmatic capacity building. In addition to this capacity building component, there is an innovation research Unit on major climate issues in general and climate change in particular. On site and online activities will host:

- a) THE EUMED CLIMATE SEMINARS - pragmatic trainings on adaptation, resilience, and mitigation through adaptation, for central and local administrations, private sector and CSOs;
- b) THE EUMED ENERGY FOR CLIMATE SEMINARS - pragmatic training on SDGs oriented energy efficiency, renewable energy transition, and system integration;
- c) THE EUMED TECHNOLOGY COMPENSATION CHAMBER - a virtual and on-site meeting space to share, compare and integrate diverse know-how and foster reciprocal technology transfer, based on the awareness that technology also includes all the fruits of millennial experience detained in the South in managing drylands urban and rural landscapes, infrastructures, construction, energy efficiency solutions, etc.
- d) THE EUMED PLATFORM FOR CLIMATE SCIENCE-BASED IMPLEMENTABLE POLICIES – responding to data, information and science-based solutions pragmatic needs emerging from central and local institutions, based on the contribution of existing science networks, including MEDECC;
- e) THE EUMED CLIMATE PORTAL - a web portal assisting the coordination and communication of the above-mentioned activities but also serving as a separate engine for capacity building and accessing climate finance, especially for local administrations and stakeholders.
- f) AN INNOVATION RESEARCH PLATFORM on themes of high importance on climate responding to central issues on climate change in all its facets, ranging from: Biochemical Cycles of Greenhouse Gases, Urban and Regional planning for a Sustainable Society, Environmental Economics, Continental Hydrology and Water Resources, Climate Change-Meteorology and Environment, • Biochemical Cycles of Greenhouse Gases, Energy and Environment, New energy-Biomass-Bioenergy and emerging market, Environmental Modeling and Monitoring, Human-Environment



Interactions, Water and Waste Engineering, Ecology and biogeochemical cycles, Sustainable energy systems.

On the basis of the concept-note of a Climate Change Capacity Building Regional Hub been developed in partnership with the EuroMed University of Fes, UfM will assess the legal consistency of the Climate Hub, the first search for funding and the organizational shaping of the Entity. This coordination with the Co-presidency, UNDP and other partners will further be reinforced.

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

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

– **Mediterranean Youth Climate Forum**

In 2022, the UfM will continue its support to the Mediterranean Youth Climate Network (MYCN), in line with the UfM support to youth engagement in climate action in the Mediterranean region. Specifically, the UfM 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 with the 2022 UfM Climate Week. As well, the UfM and MYCN will assess the organisation of a second Mediterranean Youth Climate Forum.

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

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

To ensure equitable results, all aspects of climate action must promote gender equality and women's empowerment in climate responses. This requires integrating gender into the design, implementation and monitoring of climate projects and programmes and taking women's differentiated needs into account, ensuring women's participation and access to decision-making. In 2022, we propose to further develop on our mandate to work on gender in climate action as approved by the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Action (October 4, 2021).

In this regard, one workshop and/or conference in the remit of Climate Finance focusing on the nexus between Climate Change and Gender is foreseen.

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

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

– **Promotion of the Mediterranean region in the UNFCCC agenda**

The 22nd Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) granted the observer status to the UfM in 2016. This enables the UfM to participate at COPs and to make contributions to the work of the UNFCCC secretariat.

In 2022, the UfM Secretariat will be present at COP27 (Egypt) in order to continue ensuring the voice of the Mediterranean region is being heard in this key global forum.



Organisation of side-events at COP27 is of great importance, and will be designed as follow-ups of the 2nd UfM Ministerial conference on Environment and Climate Action.

In that context, the UfM Secretariat will also continue 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.

– **Joint UfMS-OSCE project**

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 to security issues. The project will be open for all interested UfM members to join.

After the approval and presentation in 2021 of the full draft project document (including a detailed logical framework, multi annual work plan and budget), the appraisal of funds and mobilization of resources will be reinforced in 2022 (the first cost estimates of OSCE were around 3 M€, for a duration of 4 years).

Moreover, the UNDP Regional Bureau for the Arab States has been associated to some coordination meeting, in order to find complementarities to its specific project on the matter.

– **“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. It is now included as a top-priority project of “PAMex” (see above).

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 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

The UfM will center its work around the implementation of the UfM “2030 Greener Med Agenda”, shaped over more than two years as tool for operational cooperation at regional level by UfM ENV Task Force level and adopted at political level by the UfM Ministerial on Environment and Climate Change in Cairo on the 4th of October 2021. The “2030 Agenda for a Greener Med” structures its specific activities around three main 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.

Socio-economic aspects – education for sustainable development; green jobs and skills; gender and youth; environmental related migration; integration between the regional, national and local dimensions etc. – are fully integrated in the GreenerMed Theory of Change. Management and adaptation to climate change are dealt as cross-cutting challenges due to its direct environmental impacts on the Mediterranean region, recognized as biodiversity and climate hotspot. Scientific findings and proposed priority areas of action as underlined by the IPCC Report, including the August 2021 one, and Medecc, will be duly taken into account for decision-making and follow up.

Around 100 projects supporting the above mentioned GreenMed Axes and funded by different donors, have been identified, compiled, and agreed as common, shared package of operational activities to boost actions as well as capitalize, upscale, transfer knowledge, capacity, technologies, practices to the whole region as appropriate.

So, based on its 1) Theory of Change; 2) project monitoring and reporting framework; 3) 2021 baseline assessment, the GreenerMed Agenda will aim at monitoring ongoing and future projects/programmes over time as part of an integrated regional agenda, and tracking progress and contribution to the SDGs - 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 - up to 2030.

Furthermore, GreenerMed is serving as guidance and reference tool for coordination and future joint programming on environmental matters by partners, donors, IFIs and stakeholders at regional level.

GreenerMed is also closely connected and coordinated with the environmental part of the UfM Blue Economy Agenda (see UfM Blue Economy chapter).

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

At international level, the GreenerMed agenda reflects the 2021 milestone engagements and decisions connected to the launch of the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration, the UN Food Systems Summit, COP 15th to the Convention on Biological Diversity, COP 26th on Climate Change, and COP 22th of the Barcelona Convention, UNEA 5, among others.



2022 specific objectives

The specific objective of 2022 will be to focus on supporting and interlinking actions on the ground based on the GreenerMed Agenda and related implementation plan, as agreed by countries and stakeholders within the UfM Environment Task Force (as part of the UfM Working Group on ENV and CC) with the political blessing of the 2nd UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Action (tbc). The specific objectives of the UfM Secretariat will be structured as follows:

1. *Regional dialogue*: Put in motion and progressively update the GreenerMed Agenda framework mechanism, based on the agreed *Theory of Change* and the *Framework for project monitoring, reporting and evaluation*, intended to 1) track progress over time and up to 2030, based on the *2021 baseline assessment*, 2) contribute as far as possible to link the financial and operational efforts to progress in SDGs achievement at regional level;
2. *Regional portfolio of projects, programs, initiatives associated to GreenerMed*: Reinforce, coordinate, integrate, upscale - as appropriate and based on the UfM available budget - the projects/actions identified/associated to the GreenerMed portfolio, compiled by thematic Axes and related priority actions in the *Annex for Implementation of the GreenerMed Agenda*;
3. *Communication, dissemination and partnership*: Maintain, refresh, strengthen the UfM communication and dissemination tools to ensure networking and regular/updated information flows among stakeholders through the UfM Environment Community and website (<https://ufmsecretariat.org/ufm-environment-agenda/>); consolidate the existing - and promote new partnerships - in the region to maximize new opportunities for collaboration within the “2030 Greener Med Agenda”.

Objective 1 - Put in motion and progressively update the GreenerMed Framework Mechanism

➤ Regional Dialogue

- Organization of two meetings of the UfM ENV Task Force - one as ENV Task Force and possibly one as part of the UfM Working Group on ENV and CC - involving UfM member countries and relevant stakeholders, including regional partners and local authorities.
- Progressive update for circulation, discussion and adoption by the UfM ENV Task Force, of the GreenerMed Agenda, in particular the Theory of Change (*continuous finetuning of qualitatively and thematically relevant indicators, if available for the region*) and the ‘Framework for project monitoring, reporting and evaluation’ (*compilation of project information over time and related analysis*);
- Take stock, absorb, link as far as possible the critical elements of the new global and regional agreements (COPs Biodiversity, Climate Change, UNEA, Barcelona Convention etc) to the GreenMed Agenda;
- Launch of the multiannual assistance to UfM Environment dossier to support the GreenerMed Agenda implementation;
- Finalization, dissemination, presentation of Policy/Action papers produced on marine litter and wetlands as nature based solution;



- Preparation of other thematic policy/action/information and communication papers, as part of the UfM environmental series of thematic papers and organization or co-organization of thematic meetings/conferences (forestry/landscape restoration; wetlands; marine litter; marine protected areas; green, circular economy; nature based solutions, etc), in person or online as per sanitary conditions and partners' agreement.
- Participation to relevant UN Summits and COPs, as well as regional conventions and frameworks meetings (*COP 15th Convention on Biological Diversity; Mediterranean Forestry Week and World Forestry Congress; UNEA; Conference on the Mediterranean Diet; etc*) and co-organisation, if feasible, of Mediterranean focused sessions.
- Ensuring, integrating and fostering operational links of the GreenerMed Agenda and its implementation plan with other related UfM agendas, in particular with: sustainable blue economy; climate adaptation; water; transport; urban development (see respective sections);
- Dedicated ad hoc missions to countries of the region, as appropriate.

Objective 2: Reinforce, coordinate, integrate the GreenerMed portfolio of projects, programs, initiatives

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- Progressive update for circulation and adoption by the UfM ENV Task Force of the GreenerMed work plan, in particular:
 - *Annex for Implementation* of the UfM “2030 Greener Med Agenda” in the form of living document, updated on annual basis, in order to ensure an overview and coordinated implementation of ongoing and future projects, programs and initiatives – labelled and not labelled - funded by different donors (EU, SIDA, GIZ, etc); linking and quantifying as much as possible, the contribution to the different SDGs, holding as reference the *2021 baseline report*;
 - Set up an *online mechanism/database for the compilation of information on projects supporting GreenerMed*, to be able to track progress in the implementation of actions at latest every two years
- Promotion and matchmaking of programs/activities related to the GreenerMed priorities; 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;
- 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; integration of regional activities; policy papers, studies and reports; communication and dissemination activities; etc) and/or other actors/donors to cover such gaps/needs through direct support and/or integration in future programming or technical assistance for fund raising;



- Keep track of all the activities carried out to provide a regular, possibly annual, monitoring brief of GreenerMed at the UfM Environment Task Force Meeting;
- Organize or co-organise a max of six thematic online (if possible, in person) workshop/s or webinars around priority topics and regional actions;
- Plan ahead to prepare and collect information for the intermediary evaluation of the UfM Agenda 2030 for a GreenerMed, set for 2025 and 2030.

Objective 3: Promote communication, dissemination, and partnership

- Promote access and maintenance of the UfM Environment webpage (<https://ufmsecretariat.org/ufm-environment-agenda/>); Consider the reinforcement of the information and communication strategy, either through a regular UfM environment bulletin or online update to be posted on the UfM ENV page;
- Disseminate UfM-related and UfM partners-related relevant information on environmental activities via the UfM Environment Community and social media;
- Periodic reviews and presentation in a catchy/synthetic modality to the WG on ENV and CC/ENV Task Force Group of the status of advancement of new projects and particularly relevant deliverables;
- Support capitalization, upscaling, dissemination, integration of the policy messages on green/circular economy; pollution prevention; forestry/landscape restoration; marine litter; nature based solutions, in particular wetlands and marine protected areas;
- 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.
- Continue the plan of joint activities and events with the existing donors/partners (EU; GIZ; SIDA; FAO/CIHEAM; UNCCD; UNIDO; UNDP, UNEP MAP, etc);
- Identify new strategic partnerships and develop them further, including:
 - Maximize the existing, successful partnership with Interreg Med Joint Secretariat and CBC based on MoUs and on concrete projects (InterregMed Communities, Governance Axis, projects; CBC new programming projects);
 - Detail the annual EU funded WES support (Water and Environment Support) to the UfM GreenerMed Agenda, including on waste management, marine litter and green economy; activate and disseminate the repository on best practices in achieving waste reduction in the Mediterranean, developed jointly by WES-UFM and the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable development)
 - Based on the MoU on the Food Systems Platform and outcomes of the 2021 UN Summit on Sustainable Food Systems, operationalize the FAO-UfM Secretariat-CIHEAM food system platform in close partnership with PRIMA and One Planet, with a view to hold joint CB activities, webinars/events, support projects, and foster investments;
 - Reinforce the partnership with the League of Arab States, including the annual gathering;
 - Identify concrete collaboration and analyse TA needs with the Alliance of international organizations for Mediterranean biodiversity conservation,



(Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet); Mediterranean Protected Areas Network (MedPan); Mediterranean Small Islands Initiative (PIM); Tour du Valat; The International Association for Mediterranean Forests (AIFM); The IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN-Med made up of MedWET, MedPan;

- Reinforce strategic partnership with IFIs, emphasizing the aspects related to pollution prevention, sustainable consumption and production and resource efficiency, to make the best use of the opportunity offered by the investment package launched by the EU for the Southern Neighbourhood;
- 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 within the wider shift to green, circular economy.
- Relaunch the partnership with BLUEMED within the wider Ocean Mission, set up within the 2022-27 EU Programming ;
- Explore further opportunities for publications on green economy/fiscal measures; blue, circular economy; and nature based solutions, among others.



2.6. BLUE ECONOMY: Promoting blue economy

The 2nd UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy was adopted by the 42 Euro-Mediterranean countries on the 2nd February 2021. The objective of this ambitious declaration is to reinforce the existing process and to call for new joint actions to speed up recovery of the blue economy sectors in the Mediterranean as well as to ensure its long-term sustainability. A sustainable Blue Economy allows society to obtain value from the sea, whilst respecting its long-term capacity to regenerate and endure such activities through the implementation of sustainable practices. This implies that human activities must be managed in a way that ensures the health of the oceans and safeguards economic productivity, so that the potential they offer can be realised and sustained over time.

Compared to 2015, the 2021 declaration aims at a much closer cooperation among the 42 UfM member countries, in many more areas of joint interest:

- governance and the future of sea basin strategies in the Mediterranean region
- marine research and innovation, skills, careers and employment:
- sustainable food from the sea: fisheries and aquaculture
- sustainable, climate-neutral and zero-pollution maritime transport and ports
- interactions between marine litter and the blue economy
- coastal and maritime tourism
- Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management
- marine renewable energies
- maritime safety and security of blue economy activities
- sustainable investment in the blue economy.

The mid to long term expected impact is that Blue Economy becomes a solid pillar of the Mediterranean regional agenda, thus helping UfM member countries in:

- developing an enabling environment - including institutional, technical and business related– for sustainable blue economy mainstreamed into government policies, strategies and action plans;
- ensuring a convergence of efforts towards relaunching crucial sectors of the economy of the entire area (tourism, fisheries, aquaculture, renewable energies, etc..), boosting investments in infrastructures and research/innovation results within a sustainable approach respectful of the environment and related targets, to support sea-basin activities, including small and medium size enterprises, and coastal communities; and
- actively promoting skills development and employment opportunities, both in terms of new green/blue jobs and hiring adequately trained people (requalification and relaunch of job offer) as well as in terms of investments and business.

Reaching the above, requires joint, concerted and coordinated actions at cross-border level with a very wide geographical coverage of a broad range of stakeholders.

The structure of the UfM process, which includes institutional and operational partners, ensures enhanced ownership, sustainability and multiplier transferability effect through the UfM Blue



Economy Working Group and the Mediterranean Blue Economy platform, which builds on solid networks of external partners and stakeholders.

The 2021 declaration is available at <https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Declaration-UfM-Blue-Economy-EN-1.pdf>, together with the leaflet <https://medblueeconomyplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/file-library-6a65882258329c143c28.pdf> and an extraordinary video summarising past achievements and the way forward can be watched at <https://medblueeconomyplatform.org/vkc/news/video-a-sustainable-blue-economy-for-the-mediterranean-region-749c9796a1/>.

The UfM has just released its 2021 edition of the report ***Towards a Sustainable Blue Economy in the Mediterranean region – 2021 Edition***. The report is a milestone reference on Blue Economy in the region. It assesses the state of the art in blue economy at Mediterranean level by Ministerial priorities (10 priorities, as per reference above) <https://ufmsecretariat.org/publication-speech/blue-economy-mediterranean-2021/> and <https://medblueeconomyplatform.org/vkc/news/reports-leaflets-towards-a-sustainable-blue-economy-in-the-mediterranean-region-ab32cebb6b/>, emphasizing socio-economic crosscutting aspects such as employment, research and innovation, investments related to the sectors particularly affected by the covid crisis (i.e. *tourism, maritime transport, fisheries....*) as well as operational tools for future development such as initiatives, programmes and projects.

The UfM blue economy related activities contribute directly to SDG 14 «*Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*» as well as to SDG 12 «*Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns*». Issues related to gender equality and women empowerment (SDG 5) and reducing inequalities in the region (SDG 10) are regularly taken into account throughout the UfM Secretariat action in this priority area. Specific training webinars on 'Women in Blue Economy' were run at the end of 2021 with the specific objective of integrating more and more the issue in the overall dossier.

2022 specific objectives

During 2022, the UfM Secretariat will focus on the following areas of action:

1. Support the elaboration and follow-up implementation, together with countries and relevant stakeholders, of the roadmap to support the implementation of the 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Sustainable Blue Economy, together with an easy-to-handle monitoring and evaluation system;
2. Follow up on the Ministerial decisions and set the path towards the post 2020 work program on sustainable blue economy; ensure wide communication and dissemination of blue economy information;
3. Consolidate the existing - and promote new partnerships - in the region to maximize new opportunities for collaboration.

Objective one: 1. Support the elaboration and follow-up implementation, together with countries and relevant stakeholders, of the roadmap to support the implementation of the 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Sustainable Blue Economy, together with an easy-to-handle monitoring and evaluation system



- **Regional Dialogue**

- Through a dedicated technical assistance, assisting the Co-Presidency and countries with the preparation of the Roadmap for the implementation of the 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting. The Roadmap will aim at:
 - Preparation of a state-of-the-art document by thematic priority and related compilation and analysis of the joint needs, gaps and opportunities, with a view to set the main steps towards future support, funding and implementation; in particular, sketch out promising pathways, processes, actions (programmes and projects) that can be launched, scaled-up, promoted as immediate follow-up to the adoption of the 2021 UfM Ministerial Declaration on SBE as well as on the medium and longer term;
 - Development of a basic, easy-to-handle-and-to-understand monitoring system, also according to the ToRs of the launched contract, with few simple (2-3 max) outcome and process indicators to monitor overall progress of the ministerial declaration by thematic priority.
- Holding one meeting (and if needed, two meetings, possibly in person) of the UfM Working Group on Blue Economy as main channel of regional dialogue, covering the policy and technical aspects;

- **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- Supporting the follow-up implementation of the BLUEMED Initiative, within the new Horizon Europe mission on 'protecting our oceans', thus linking with Sustainable Blue Economy and the Environment/H2030 Greener Med Agenda;
- Supporting WestMed and EUSAIR (European Strategy of Adriatic Ionian Region) advancements and WestMED Technical Groups (on Transport, Tourism and Aquaculture), which developments are relevant for the entire region;
- Further develop the very fruitful collaboration with EU Programs to identify possible areas of funding/financing, in particular InterregMed, its Communities and Governance Axis, and Cross Boarder Cooperation (CBC);
- Promote the alliance on sustainable blue finance/investments and support IFIs in shaping new investment programs/initiatives.

Objective two: Follow up on the Ministerial decisions and set the path towards the post 2020 Work Program on Blue Economy; ensure wide communication and dissemination of blue economy information.

Regional Dialogue

- Actively mobilize either the UfM Secretariat technical assistance (facilitating the development of programs, projects or activities to fill gaps; leveraging funds and financial engineering needed by thematic axes; upscaling to other countries; studies and reports; etc) and/or other actors/donors to cover such gaps/needs through direct support and/or integration in future programming or technical assistance for fund raising;



- Maintaining operational and active the Med Blue Economy Platform as support tool for information sharing and networking; further disseminating information through the UfM web tools, namely social media, the UfM website, the Blue Economy mailing list.
- Attending/co-organizing other relevant Blue economy fora and event/s .

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

- Keep on managing and maintaining the Platform as a tool for *networking and information sharing within the Mediterranean Blue Economy Community*; and consolidate its role as a key digital hub on Sustainable Blue Economy;
- Disseminate broadly the GIZ financed UfM 2021 edition of the report *Towards a Sustainable Blue Economy in the Mediterranean region – 2021 Edition* and, based on its main findings, further promote actions on the mainstreaming and actions on Blue Skills, Careers and jobs, with a focus on women, youth and digitalization;
- Follow up in terms of dissemination and capacity building activities, the Operational Handbook on *'Social and economic regeneration of the Mediterranean after the crisis: shared methods and tools for relaunching a sustainable post COVID-19 tourism model'*, in close coordination with CPRM as main partner;
- Develop further the links between the Med Blue Economy Platform and the new Black Sea Virtual Knowledge Centre (BSVKC);
- Bring to light at wider regional level, the studies and findings of the UfM labelled MedCoast4BG; look into the possibility of a regional publication;
- Participating in the WestMed Steering Committee meetings, events and activities;
- Participating in the BlueMed GSO meetings;
- Participating in the Panoramed meetings, events and activities; chair the Sounding Board of the Blue Bio-project;
- Supporting the extension at regional level of the UNESCO work on maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management;
- Further promote maritime clusters as lever for public-private partnership, research, innovation and jobs;
- Assessing relevant regional blue economy projects and/or initiatives for potential labelling and any other relevant initiative for future cooperation;
- Produce and disseminate through the Med Blue Economy Platform and other UfM channels the six-monthly bulletin/newsletter ;

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

➤ **Regional Dialogue**

- Consolidate the plan of joint activities and events with the existing donors/partners (EU, EIB, EBRD, WORLD BANK, AFED, WWF, CPRM, UNESCO, regional and national Maritime Clusters, etc);
- Explore with the Co-Presidency the possibility for a Med Blue Finance event in 2022 if resources are available.
- Identify new strategic partnerships and develop them further.



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

2022 specific objectives

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 2022 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 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.

2022 specific objectives

In 2022, 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 and enhancing the Economic value of the water sector by focusing on youth and women employment and entrepreneurial in the water aspects
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 2022 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 resources management and advance the implementation of the recommendations agreed upon by the Ministers in the Ministerial Declaration on Water of April 2017.

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

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 recommendations 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 the UfM and the Water partners in Mediterranean Youth and Water, as a structural and systematic approach for youth engagement in achieving the Agenda 2030 in the water sector, with emphasis on employment opportunities in the water sector, promoting water youth networks as awareness raising instruments, and disseminating knowledge products –studies, analyses – from the MedYWAt network towards consolidating more synergized approach on youth.

d) Continue the efforts to institutionalize the water and jobs in the water sector and creation of the UfM water Youth strategy.

e) 4th edition of the Technical Project Preparation Workshop for Transformational Climate Resilience GCF Water Project Concepts in the Mediterranean

f) Water, employment, and migration (WEM): organization of WEM labs in association with UNESCO, Global Water partnership- Med (GWP-Med) and WEM Task force participants

g) Workshop to disseminate the publication of the *Gateway to the future of the Mediterranean: Water, Energy, Food and the Environment*

➤ **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' (aka 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.

Working at the intersection of water engineering and crop cultivation science towards income generation, the Project intervention in Wadi Al-Aroub, Palestine, will demonstrate in 2022 the technical and economic feasibility of the WEFE Nexus approach coupled with low-cost and low-energy Nature-based Solutions for water treatment such as constructed wetlands, to upgrade the quality of treated wastewater prior to be reused in farming while contributing to the local water budget, thus decreasing consumption of potable water needed for domestic uses

- 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 respond to several requests to label projects that provide real opportunities for preserving natural resources mainly Water resources both conventional and non-conventional, enhancing job creation and improving the socioeconomic situation in the region. Meanwhile not to forget 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

The UfM will be targeting a series of several activities and initiatives during 2022. The UfM Secretariat will also continue its engagement with UN agencies, regional organizations, as well as member states in order to involve in the Global efforts of implementation of the monitoring schemes for 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 the financial strategy's last chapter.

➤ Promoting Regional Dialogue

- 3rd edition of the UfM High Level Regional Forum on Financing and Investments.
- The water outlook will be launched in February 2022
- Following up of the workshop on SDG 6 and related SDG for the Mediterranean region with the support of UNESCO, UNECE and ESCWA, the launch of the project on “Achieving SDG6 and related SDGs in the Mediterranean Region and SEMED countries” will take place on May 2022.

➤ Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives

- a) Technical Assistance to support the Development and Implementation of water policies and project identifications.
- b) Technical Assistance on the Water AECID cooperation on political framework.



- c) Technical Assistance on the Water related finance and Investment, Nexus and Water youth and entrepreneurial

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

➤ **Promoting Regional Dialogue**

- a) The UfM will seek to enhance and foster 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.
- b) The UfM Secretariat will cooperate in the preparations for the next 9th World Water Forum – Water Security for Peace and Development, scheduled for 22-27 March 2022 in Dakar, Senegal, in particularly through the co-organization of the Mediterranean regional process.
- c) Technical Assistance to support the continuation of the institutionalizing the water entrepreneurial in the Mediterranean region.
- d) Technical Assistance to support the UfM instrumental publication on WEFE Nexus Manual, Identification of water and climate investment in South and east and North Med region. And to integrate the support producing and updating the UfM water agenda and its policy framework of action from a content and design point of view.
- e) Role of Women in water and water Diplomacy and cooperation. The UfM will continue its endeavours to promote the role of women in water diplomacy after a series of successful events held respectively in 2020 and 2021. The UfM will aim to emphasize the critical role of women in the contribution of water diplomacy in building bridges across the diversity of the Mediterranean mosaic.

➤ **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**

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



with UfM Secretariat support, on March 20, 2018, and during the Donors session held on April 2019.

Throughout the next period, the UfM Secretariat will continue to exercise its facilitation role among parties, especially in promoting and coordinating efforts at political and financial level through the international coordination committee, 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 2022 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.
- c) 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.



THIRD PART: REINFORCING UfM CAPACITY FOR ACTION



3.1. BUILDING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

i. INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

Given the important role that partnerships have in the promotion of the UfM as a platform for regional dialogue and cooperation, and 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 put on:

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

2022 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 2022 on strengthening strategic institutional partnerships with a set of keys 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 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 European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), as well as with other economic and social councils (ESCs) of the region.
- The Council of Europe (CoE) on important themes, such as gender equality, youth, civil society, and intercultural dialogue. A special attention will be given to the development of joint actions with the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe (NSC).
- 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.
- The International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) continues to be reinforced in several sectors, particularly through the divisions of Water, Environment and Blue Economy, Energy and Climate Action and Economic Development and Employment, to potentiate the synergies and the impact of the actions developed by the two Institutions.
- The Center for Mediterranean Integration of the World Bank (CMI) to collaborate in joint initiatives in order to advance the cooperation to promote the integration and development of the Mediterranean region in the areas consistent with their mandates. The signature of a new MoU is foreseen in 2022 following the integration of the CMI in the UN structures.

➤ **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 2022, 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 2019 to implement the agenda approved in the Second UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development in Cairo in May 2017.
- United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), 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 2022, the UfM Secretariat will continue working with UNEP/MAP to promote activities on pollution prevention and control in Mediterranean coastal and marine waters, especially in the framework of the UfM-labelled project “Plastic Busters for a Mediterranean Free from Litter”. Joint programmes are under development with FAO/GFCM and UNCCD on blue economy, and drought policy and land restoration respectively.
- The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), where the UfM Secretariat was granted observer status, and actively participates in the Conference of Parties (COP) as well as in its Standing Committee on Finance. 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 several initiatives, notably on women, youth and the prevention of violent extremism. The signature of an MoU to further structure the partnership is foreseen in 2022.



- 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. This cooperation is key notably in the organisation of the Day of the Mediterranean.

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, notably to allow their outputs to feed its strategy and work programme.

Cooperation with the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), with who the UfM Secretariat is in continuous coordination, will be notably enhanced, in view of the recent strengthening of capacities of the IEMed:

- Following a successful first structured consultation meeting with the Euromesco programme in 2020, that helped identifying relevant issues, priorities, and main events on the agenda to support the programme in calibrating its annual work programme, the UfM has foreseen a new coordination meeting on 16 November 2021 to coordinate actions and synergies between respective work programmes for 2022.
- As each year, the UfM Secretariat will co-organise in 2022 the Annual Forum of the Medthink 5+5, a network of think tanks and public diplomacy institutions promoting regional integration and cooperation in the Western Mediterranean, as well as participate in their exchanges and works throughout the year.
- The UfM Secretariat will explore avenues of cooperation with the Young Researchers Lab, notably in the framework of the launch of its Youth Strategy.

Cooperation will be reinforced with other research programmes and institutes from the UfM region, among them PRIMA (see section on Higher Education), but also the EPLO Institute for the Mediterranean of Greece, ISPI, the Policy Center for the New South and West Asia - North Africa (WANA), with whom the UfM Secretariat has already close contacts.

During 2022, 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.

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

Reinforcing partnerships with financial institutions and bilateral and multilateral donors

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

- **Swedish International Development Agency (Sida):**
 - In 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. Close consultations have started between the UfM Secretariat and Sida for an extension of the cooperation agreement beyond 2022.
 - Furthermore, the global amount of the cooperation agreement has been increased by 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 2022, the UfM Secretariat will implement the 2022 work plan, formulated in coherence with the 2022 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 2022, the UfM Secretariat will closely monitor the implementation of the UfM labelled projects funded under the agreement.
- **“UfM Hub for Jobs, Trade and Investment”, financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and commissioned to GIZ**
 - From February 2022 to January 2025, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) will continue its ongoing support to the UfM Secretariat under the project “UfM Hub for Jobs, Trade and Investment”. Under this project, to be implemented by GIZ, 6,5 Mio EUR will be provided to support the activities of the UfM in the area of regional economic integration as well as employment and investment promotion in the UfM region.
 - The project objectives for the priority areas of employment, trade and investment are:
 - Capacity Development for the UfM Secretariat



- Development of recommendations for enhanced regional integration via UfM multi-stakeholder dialogues, regional exchanges and training formats
- Development and implementation of measures in UfM Member States, particularly in North Africa and Middle East
- During 2022, the UfM Secretariat will implement the 2022 work plan formulated according to the priorities jointly defined with GIZ and in coherence with the UfM Secretariat Work Programme.

As part of its funding strategy, the UfM Secretariat will intensify bilateral exchanges with potential financial and Development partners, such 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 INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Background

Tourism is considered to be a key sector for supporting inclusive development goals as it can generate productive employment and decent work, especially for women, youth and persons with disabilities.

As laid down in the UNWTO Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics, the sector has a duty to promote the rights of the most vulnerable groups such as women, indigenous people and people with disabilities (UNWTO, 2020).

Unfortunately, since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Euro Mediterranean region suffered the largest drop in tourist arrivals, in absolute terms, with over 500 million fewer tourists travelling in 2020. The crisis has put between 100 million to 120 million direct tourism-related jobs, many of them in small and medium-sized enterprises, at direct risk.

Following the recovery measures recommended by the UNWTO, an inclusive tourism strategy aims at approaching a post-Covid 19 recovery by using a cross-cutting method to address the negative impact on vulnerable communities, particularly persons with disabilities and women. In all, they represent 54% of the workforce worldwide and who, in their large majority, occupy low-skilled or informal work.

This commitment is in line with the UfM Roadmap for Action which, *inter alia*, underscores “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”.

To this end, in the area of Tourism, the UfM Secretariat will contribute to the implementation of SDGs 5, 8 and 10.

In 2022, also as follow up of the UfM Conference on Disability and Social Inclusion in the Mediterranean, which takes place in January 2022, the UfM Secretariat will focus on promoting regional dialogue as well as promote concrete projects and initiatives in the field of tourism, as follows:

- **Promoting Regional Dialogue**
 - Pending on the pandemic evolution, a hybrid event with regional partners and relevant stakeholders will be organised to exchange views, practices and possible recommendations in mitigating the massive socio-economic impacts caused by the pandemic, both on women and young people with disabilities and their access to a decent job in the tourism sector.
- **Promoting Regional Projects and Initiatives**
 - Through its horizontal activities and meetings, the UfM Secretariat will engage in identifying, developing and labelling, regional projects related to the tourism sector, in particular those initiatives or projects that address the challenges of accessible tourism and social inclusiveness.



ii. CIVIL PROTECTION

Specific objectives

The global landscape is covered 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 increase in 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 increasingly needed 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 the availability of human resources, depending on the prevention, preparedness, regional coordination and capacity to implement timely and effective response.

Managing emergencies and disasters is a growing challenge, notably in the context of climate change, when natural disasters are becoming more complex. 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:

1. Engaging citizens in disaster risk management,
2. Civil protection volunteers,
3. 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.

Regarding the two other Groups on “Engaging citizens in risk management” and “Volunteers in civil protection”, respectively preparatory and follow-up meetings were organized on:

1. 19th and 20th October 2020.
2. 26th and 27th October 2021.

Objective one: Framing a roadmap for Mediterranean Civil Protection in preparation of the Meeting of Directors-General in 2022

❖ Promoting Regional Dialogue

The Covid-19 pandemic, the recent fires, flash floods or natural disasters across the region, have proven how urgent Mediterranean cooperation in civil protection remains. It has become clear that no country in this area, no matter its size or capacity, could resolve such crises on its own. In order to address this, solidarity must prevail and cross-border interactions should be further developed.



In response to that, the UfM has called for greater cooperation and will continue to do so. The end of PPRD South III and the launch of the new PPRD Mediterranean, will allow for concrete follow up of the working groups on volunteers, engaging citizens and mutual assistance, as well as the lessons learned from PPRD South III and several ongoing subregional projects. It will aim at defining and consolidating a robust and coherent regional strategy, building on the progress achieved in the past years. The UfM will work on framing a roadmap for Mediterranean Civil Protection in preparation of the Meeting of Directors-General, to be held in 2022.

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 exercise 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 two WGs, engaging citizens in risk management and Volunteers in civil protection, on their last meeting in October 2021, focused on elaborating a concrete action plan for the Mediterranean Civil Protection. This meeting served as a way-forward to prepare the next Civil Protection UfM Directors-Generals meeting to be held, most likely on the first quarter of 2022.

Depending on the pandemic situation, it is foreseen that the two WGs will convene in 2022 in physical format, to discuss further the regional implementation of the Action Plan.

❖ **Preparing the new PPRD Mediterranean:**

- 2022 will mark the launch of the new PPRD Mediterranean. The process of launching this new program has already started but there is still long way to go (*Consultations, discussions*).
- Most likely, the new program will be launched in the second half of 2022.
- In this context, the UfM Secretariat will continue relying on the work of the two WGs and the experts, before and after the launch of the new PPRD Mediterranean.
- Their work will concentrate mainly on conducting the consultations on the Terms of Reference (ToR) for new PPRD Med program as well as supporting the work of DG ECHO.
- Indeed, once set-up, the new program will also include the work of the WGs to define priority actions and to set a Mediterranean CVP Action Plan.
- The Action Plan, according to the new PPRD Mediterranean, underlines that:
 1. Whilst Member States have primary responsibility for national disaster risk management,
 2. 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**

- With the rise of forests fires, health scourges, 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.
- Indeed, the cooperation between the UfM and the EU Co-presidency (namely DG ECHO) should be widened with both sides, highlighting a real need to have a long and strategic vision on Mediterranean CVP.
- In this context and taking into consideration the multidimensional character of the UfM, the Secretariat will look for synergies that can be made between different UfM areas of actions (marine protection, climate, water, environment...), as well as the partnership on CVP with the EU Co-presidency.



iii. **“Day of the Mediterranean”, celebrating the diversity and the cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean area**

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Union for the Mediterranean have decided at the Fifth Regional Forum in 2020 to mark for the first time the ‘Day of the Mediterranean’. They decided that this day shall be observed on the 28th of November every year. The celebration’s aim is to foster a common Mediterranean identity and raise awareness about the efforts undertaken by all the stakeholders who work daily to enhance cooperation and integration in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

In line with the above, the Secretariat will organize an institutional presentation of the Day of the Mediterranean in Barcelona, combined with a communication campaign using, among others, a dedicated website and accompanied as appropriate with a cultural event (i.e concert, exhibition, poetry evening, etc...) to mark the celebration of this important Day, which could possibly be organized on the margin of the UfM Regional Forum. For doing so, the Secretariat will strive to establish relevant partnerships with organizations in the Mediterranean community as a showcase of the synergies in our region.

In this respect, the organization of this celebration will depend on the budget availability in order to cover the logistics and services needed including the ones related to a possible cultural event (i.e - rental cost of equipment and musical instruments; fees for artists/performers etc). Hence, the UfM Secretariat contemplates for the purpose of optimizing the costs that a part of the activities could be financed by the WP, while the other part, especially for the cultural event, will be provided free of charge through the partnerships mentioned above with other international organizations and/or public institutions of UfM Members States.

Partnerships may be also foreseen with private sector, which will take the form of in-kind support based an open call for sponsorship. This possible sponsorship will be properly framed to ensure that nature and activities of the private Sponsor is in line with the principles, values and commitments of the UfM and does not entail a possible conflict with the mission and objectives of the UfM. The arrangement with the private operator will be in written in accordance with best practices including that only contributions in-kind can be accepted and that no active marketing of commercial brand can be allowed.



3.3. OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

i. PROJECT PROCESSES

The UfM Secretariat will continue to maintain, consolidate and improve the Project Monitoring System, as the reference tool for validated information and coherent and horizontal output on projects. Continuous 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 2022 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

2022 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, 2022’s main objectives will focus on the following directions:

- strengthen the internal mechanisms for business continuity, adaptation of internal processes and pivoting capabilities to respond to disasters and high exposure disruption.
- reinforce the internal capacities of the Secretariat to meet requirements and challenges derived from its role of platform and focal point of multisource funding. Therefore, strengthening mechanisms of funds management and channeling resources to final recipients as well as reporting activities will continue to represent a key area of 2022 action plan.
- streamline the Secretariat processes and working methods both in terms of financial, operational and resources management and in terms of corporate and logistical support in order to better implement its activities and fulfil mandates given by the Member States.



- sustain a sound internal and financial management in order to ensure compliance with applicable rules and regulations, in particular following the internal legal update approved by the Senior Officials in July 2018 and its first years of enforcement (2019-2020-2021) 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 and pursued in 2021, UfM Secretariat services will continue in 2022 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 when needed 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 Director of Cabinet, 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 50% of staff at the same time at UfM premises with two teams A and B.
- stage 3: most of the staff retuning on site except cases with underlying conditions and cases where health conditions and precautionary measures might not temporarily ready in the premises. 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 remain subject to adaptation when need arises and in accordance with evolution of measures decided by the Host country and international best practices.
- 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 2022, the UfM Secretariat will focus its efforts to:

- Monitor and follow up the implementation of new telecommunications services with enhanced and optimized solutions for UfM both sites for which the tendering procedures are currently (2021) in process.
- Continue and strengthen the sustainability of management of its ICT assets, in terms of i) reinforcing the pair system in its main applications with a functional focal point (dealing with functionalities) of the system and a technical focal point (dealing with IT administration of the application); ii) enlarging the technical support to guarantee this pair system, the maintenance, the incident management of its applications.
- Take necessary steps to put into operation a helpdesk and IT expert capacity to support UfMS in managing its IT infrastructure and related installations. The technical specifications and terms of reference currently under preparation for tendering under public procurement procedures for after a short term solution was put in place for helpdesk services with package of hours during 2020-2021.
- To move to a further stage with a more comprehensive protection and security package with an upgrade of its firewall/security solution following the second phase made in 2021 in terms of optimization of IT solutions and infrastructure put into operation for the UfMS staff to work into two sites, in terms of servers and VPN management, firewalls set up and systems of data use and sharing.



- To enlarge and optimize the use update version of Microsoft 365 capacities including possible training and tutorials, One Drive functionalities as well as VPN and team-viewer resource which was launched in 2021 to enhance further UfM internal capacity. This optimization will be coming after of sharing data and VPN have been further developed during 2020 owing to urgent needs generated by the covid-19 outbreak and subsequent teleworking requirements.
- 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 (BPM-Bizagi) and the Accounting System application (Microsoft NAVISON) via an appropriate interface. This integration will ensure more security for the transactions along with confidentiality, availability and integrity with data finally stored in the accounting system in the sense that accounts are only affected by authorized transactions processed in the financial system. It will support the reduction of manual processing and reduce transactions' time especially in terms of issuing payments through bank transfers.
- Pursue the ongoing internal project of documents' management application in order to better manage, use and safeguard all documents of the Institution in terms of working documents, technical, legal and administrative documents, studies and analysis papers in an organized manner. The documents' management is a second phase following electronic filing allowed by the financial system (all documents of technical nature and administrative nature are saved in the expenditure cycle in the financial system) that will enable an optimized use of available documents and institutional memory. At another level, the documents' management solution will ensure security and integrity of available data as it will allow the use of copies while safeguarding originals. The exploitation of documents capital of the Institution will be made easier and optimized through the interface of the documents' management application.
- Finalize the action plan covering assessment of systems and ICT assets. In this context,
 - finalize the assessment part of the IT Governance Consultancy: process initiated to align the UfM to international IT standards in terms of infrastructure, security and best practices. In this respect, the blocks 1 and 3 concerning Communications & Security (internet connections, Wi-Fi, firewall configurations, etc.) and Basis User Services (printing, DHCP, DNS, Active Directory, filing service & remote access VPN) have been concluded during 2020-2021. The block 2 concerning the use and management of Applications will be finalized during November 2021- Early 2022.
 - pursue the corrective and upgrade action plan derived from the assessment part. Therefore, critical actions set, required actions



set and recommended action set for block 1 have been implemented during the period April-September 2021 and corresponding set of corrective actions as per block 1 are planned for the period December 2021 to February 2022.

- Start the third part of this endeavor which correspond to implementation of ITIL ((Information Technology Infrastructure Library) and includes: a) initial preparation, b) introduction to ITIL4, c) assessment, d) improvement plan.
- Finalize the upgrading of the Intranet and start implementation of the SSO (single sign on): authentication scheme that will allow UfM staff to log in with a single ID and password to any of several related, yet independent, software systems currently in use. This is a continuation of the Internal Portal/Intranet put in operation in 2018 and stabilized in 2019 notably to enlarge its functionalities to include on one hand more capabilities of devices allocation, inventory and management and on the other hand more functionalities such as the creation of a unified database for the management of institutional external contacts asset, with the scope of insuring the persistence of data, the control of rights and the organization of the external contacts lifecycle.

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

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

➤ Investing in internal capacities and optimization of resources

During 2022 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:

- Conclusion of the public procurement procedure for framework contract of event organisation already launched in 2021 to ensure business continuity for the operational activities of the Secretariat as the current contract is due to end during 2022.
- Finalisation of the preparation of new guidelines for several components of event/conference and platform meetings in line 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.

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, 2020 and 2021, necessary actions were taken to accompany the re-allocation plan and putting in place support actions to facilitate work into two sites.

During 2022, the UfM Secretariat will focus its action to:

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



etc. An action plan will be established following best practices and taking into account the nature of its activities and characteristics of its sites.

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

In this context, the update of the Secretariat's legal framework was finalized in 2018 in line with best practices in similar institutions and inter-governmental organizations following a long process of preparation during 2016-2017 and covering its Statutes and Staff Regulations and introducing Implementing Rules for the Staff Regulations as well as a Code of Conduct and an Anti-Fraud and Anticorruption Policy, aiming at aligning the legal framework with the current Secretariat's profile in terms of portfolio activities growth and simplifying and harmonizing the regulations for the better 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 2022, the UfM Secretariat will:

- Initiate the first steps for HR processes digitalization with focus on HR database and platform for talent acquisition. This activity will be using the support of appropriate consultancy services to be contracted through public procurement procedures.
- Continue the process of implementation and related actions i.e. 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.
- 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 scheduled during 1st quarter 2020 but was prevented by the circumstances of covid-19 outbreak and the work was resumed in 2021 with UfM-OC visit to the UfM Secretariat in July 2021. Other sessions are foreseen for the committee to start and get acquainted with the institution functioning.



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

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

This sound management is continuous. In this respect, auditing processes covering the Secretariat's financial statements prepared under IPSAS (International Public Sector Accounting Standards) and expenditure verifications have been further enhanced during 2019 and 2020 through dedicated audits as per grant and cooperation agreements as well as by fostering a comprehensive approach of its accounting system under IPSAS, allowing thus a full picture of its resources and financial situation. In this respect, during 2020, the accounting system has been updated and a module to follow up specific funds has been settled, in order to have control of the budget of these funds (i.e. Sida, GIZ, etc.) and how they are expended. This way of working allows to isolate from all the entries, the ones related to these specific funds and will allow us to get better control on the development of the activities.

During 2022, 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 2022 the UfM Secretariat will more specifically:

- Work to start developing tools in order to enforce methodologies of Result based management in its financial and accounting systems.
- Further reinforce its funds management policy with a more detailed standards operating procedures for grant management and sub-granting in line with European Union standards and procedures and in compliance with the Financial Regulations to meet requirements of funds channeling to final recipients. 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 and Sida.
- Work toward starting a formal process of pillar assessment following tests made in previous years and follow up actions that took place during 2018-2019, financial and system audit commissioned by the European Commission in 2020-2021 the system audit conducted by Sida in 2019.
- Strive to align its procedures and practices with Internal control standards and management of risks recognized methodologies notably EU-based ones and COSO ones'



through updating and upgrading its internal manuals and policies. In this regard, mechanism of segregation of duties and avoidance of incompatibilities will be strengthening between the authorizing officer and the accounting officer duties. In this respect, during 2020, charters of authorizing officer, accounting officer and code of professional standards of financial actors have been prepared and put in place.

- Propose an internal audit scheme to be put in place in UfM in line with EU financial regulations and international best practices and taking into account the size of the Secretariat and its resources
- Work with the governance mechanism established notably the oversight committee and provide needed support and information to facilitate the performance of its duties
- Enhance the accountability and transparency schemes through making available more documentation on its use of funds to its MS and to the public notably through its website.
- Initiate process for putting in place a data protection policy with needed assessment, benchmarking and external technical support.

iii. COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The UfM Communication & Public Affairs Unit will focus on giving the spotlight to the 2022 initiatives, activities, and achievements of the UfM Secretariat, increasing the visibility, awareness and overall understanding of the organization's mission and role to public. Communication on its activities will be tailored to reach out to all its target audiences:

- 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 2022, 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 as we build back from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In that regard, the Secretariat will put an emphasis on communicating the developments of projects, notably the Grant scheme, but also the concrete positive results of the several Ministerial meetings held in 2021.

As the Day of the Mediterranean will have had its first edition, the Communication Unit will build on that knowledge to further strengthen its strategy to raise visibility and awareness around the Day, and it will also constitute a priority for the year 2022.

Furthermore, one of the main concern of citizens across the region is the impact of climate change. Armed by the recent UfM Ministerial on environment and climate change, regional high-level



events, as well as the UN 2022 year of “Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture”, the Communication Unit will put special emphasis on raising awareness on the fight against climate change, including shedding a light on the positive impact and initiatives developed in the region for climate action. A particular focus will be given to plastic pollution and its devastating effects on the marine biodiversity.

In 2022, 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

2021 was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the media sector suffered budgetary restrictions. Most coverage obtained by the UfM was due to more in-depth interviews of experts or UfM representatives since fewer physical events were hosted, changing the relation with the press. On top of that, the successive Ministerial and High-level events on the environment and the economy, have allowed the UfM to further identify influential journalists specialised in these topics in the region.

2022 will be dedicated to consolidating those relationships and to further secure the UfM’s position as expert on these topics. Through the regular follow-up with journalists, the Unit will highlight the Secretariat’s actions following a Ministerial declaration and how it translates into concrete activities.

Pending on the media results of the first edition of the Mediterranean Day, an analysis will be conducted to identify the media who have covered the event, and further develop an updated list of media in all Member States for the 2022 edition.

It is with all of this in mind that in 2022, the Secretariat will continue identifying and targeting selected renowned and influential journalists from the region with the aim to raise awareness, increase visibility and foster engagement for a better in-depth coverage in all fields tackled by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat will also seek to identify partnerships with relevant media groups that can lead to impactful communication towards UfM target audiences via their participation to the Mediterranean Day or via the organisation of debates and events with the participation of the UfM SG, DSGs and/or experts depending on the theme.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS/DIGITAL

Having successfully identified the communication counterparts of the main UfM target audiences, these efforts will continue throughout 2022 in order to keep these audiences’ data up-to-date. This will also include further engagement with new partners and stakeholders known thanks to the first celebration of the Mediterranean Day, in particular in the cultural sphere as well as within local authorities.



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.

Finally, the Communication Unit will also identify potential partners for the implementation of communication actions aiming at raising awareness on the effects of climate change in the Mediterranean and in particular on our marine biodiversity, in line with the 2022 UN thematic on artisanal fisheries and aquaculture.

➤ **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 2022. 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 developing new pedagogical and audio-visual content, as well as awareness campaigns
- The publication of articles, op-eds and interviews with UfM representatives and UfM partners in renowned media across the region
- The arrangement of informative meetings with relevant media 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 further develop a series of documents with pedagogical information. On top of that, resources to raise awareness on the impact of climate change and biodiversity in the Mediterranean region will be developed. 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 working methodology.

The Secretariat will organise specific media activities as a tool to 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.
 - *As part of a press trip, the UfM plans to co-organise a session for journalists to be trained by regional experts on the impact of the climate change in the Mediterranean*
- ***UfM Regional Forum:*** The organisation of the UfM Regional Forum will lead to a specific media planning including a press visit to ensure regional coverage of the UfM key messages



- **Mediterranean Day:** The first edition of the Mediterranean Day would have taken place, a full detailed media plan will be prepared including a press announcement, a press release, and encourage visibility towards Mediterranean initiatives and projects.

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

A strong digital strategy is critical in order to drive truly successful engagement amongst UfM priority audiences. The UfM website is key to disseminating UfM content and engaging with target groups. It is at the centre of the UfM Secretariat's digital communication as it centralises all the information about the institution and showcases its different activities, initiatives, and projects. The website is updated daily in 3 languages (English, French, and Arabic) and has over 20K visitors per month.

The year 2022 should see some new developments to the website. The website supports three languages, and full translation of key pages and news was improved in 2020 and 2021. In 2022 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.

The website is also fully adapted to its mobile responsive version. The site's mobile version, navigation and internal links are adjusted to improve both the user experience and visibility. The Communication Unit audits major pages yearly to be adapted to mobile format (font sizes, images, buttons, etc.) and 2022 should see the continuation of this task by adapting all new pages to mobile view.

The year 2021 saw the creation of new landing pages on specific topics, such as Mediterranean Jobs Page, Environment Agenda, Grant Scheme for Employment or Urban Action Plan. The year 2022 should also see the design and development of new ad-hoc landing pages on key regional platforms, studies or main UfM events. These news pages benefit from having its own adapted design, more visual adaptations, infographics and even animations and are promoted throughout the website (homepage slider, menus, sidebars, etc.), resulting in more cross-embedded content between UfM social media channels and the UfM website.

Another area of continuous improvement is the Search engine optimization (SEO), the process of making changes to our website design and content to make your site more attractive to the search engines, especially Google. At the UfM, already one third of the total website traffic comes from Google. Therefore, the improvement of SEO in posts, pages and images is an ongoing task and should continue throughout 2022, 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 continue 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.

New website: Day of the Mediterranean

The year 2021 saw the development of full new website for the Day of the Mediterranean, a platform updated in English, French, Arabic and Spanish. This website gathers information and download materials around the Mediterranean Day and receives around 1k views a month (data from Sept. of 2021) and will be further developed in 2022. Among others, it is foreseen to improve its SEO positioning and mobile version to become the hub of Mediterranean activities and initiatives around the international day.

Mailing / Emailing

Email campaigns are indispensable to the UfM's communication's strategy, as many of the Secretariat's partners and stakeholders are informed of UfM activities through the regular diffusion of newsletters and sectorial bulletins. In 2020 and 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the UfM intensified its online communications and doubled the number of newsletters to ensure new webinars and activities reached wider audiences. The general newsletter database gathers over 27,000 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 2022 to amplify the knowledge provided on UfM Secretariat's activities to its stakeholders. The year 2021 saw the increase of positive stories around the region and the year 2022 will also feature human stories from the ground from different projects, as well as featuring political dialogue events, platforms, and other news. Also, as every year, specific sectorial emails will be sent to key audiences on key UfM activities and topics such as women empowerment, climate change, economic development, etc.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS, PUBLICATIONS & INFO TOOLS

The UfM Secretariat Annual report, the UfM Secretariat leaflet, the UfM Secretariat press kit, the UfM Secretariat newsletters, and UfM Secretariat presentations, as well as the sectorial reports, newsletters, leaflets, brochures and videos are valuable tools to present the UfM Secretariat activities to external stakeholders. UfM publications will continue to be regularly updated in 2022, as to reflect the newest endeavours of the UfM Secretariat.

The **2021 UfM Annual Report** will showcase the major highlights and milestones reached in 2021, including a special focus on the first celebration of the Day of the Mediterranean.



The UfM Secretariat will also continue to create **audio-visual material** on UfM projects and initiatives, as short videos are a great way to share multiple messages in an entertaining way for the viewers. Moreover, videos will also be developed in the framework of the **Day of the Mediterranean** to showcase the Mediterranean diversity while reinforcing the Mediterranean Day narrative aiming at strengthening a sense of regional unity.

If the situation allows, and building on the newly UfM-labelled projects as well as the recently launched UfM Grant Scheme for Employment, the UfM Secretariat will conduct in 2022 **field trips** to UfM Member States to meet with the people behind each project, interview beneficiaries and record images of the projects' day-to-day, with the aim to showcase the positive impact on the ground of UfM endeavours.

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

Furthermore, in 2022 the Communication Unit aims to align part of its endeavours with the **annual UN thematic of interest**, this year being focused on artisanal fisheries and aquaculture. The UfM Secretariat positioned itself as a major regional actor and expert in Climate Action. To further develop this narrative, the Communication Unit will bridge the UN annual thematic with its own climate change expertise, to produce several editorial and audio-visual material aiming at **raising awareness** on the devastating effects of climate change in the Mediterranean region, with a special focus on plastic pollution and the danger it poses to the marine biodiversity. This will also include seeking partnerships with other regional institutions with a similar interest in climate and biodiversity conservation awareness, thus building synergies with mutually beneficial outreach and visibility actions. These actions will also be developed for the account of the Mediterranean Day.

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

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.

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

- **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 long-term challenges. For this reason, the UfM will further develop its efforts in producing engaging



media kit with audio-visual content to position the Secretariat as a structure tackling long term issues of the region.

Aiming at fostering engagement, and as travel restrictions are easing around the region, the Secretariat will arrange one-to-one meetings with relevant journalists from the region and 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.

As an ongoing activity, the Secretariat's communication unit will work in maintaining its activities' visibility in the media as a mean to raise awareness on the ongoing issues of the fight against climate change and plastic pollution for our region.

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

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

Social media

The UfM's social media platforms gather over 497,000 followers on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn and now, also on Instagram (data from Sept. 2021). These platforms are key vehicles to target the media, opinion leaders, stakeholders, policymakers, experts and professionals but also civil society, in particular youth. The UfM Secretariat also publishes photos, videos and other information on platforms such as Flickr, YouTube and Wikipedia. In 2022, 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 and the fight against plastic pollution, women's empowerment, or youth unemployment, as well as expand its reach, engagement and positive advocacy. In 2021 the UfM was granted the stamp of approval from Facebook and Instagram, to be added to the Twitter one, certifying the UfM as an influential actor in international relations. The UfM will continue in 2022 to develop new visuals and posts to showcase Mediterranean human-interest stories, UfM activities and the second edition of the Day of the Mediterranean. While consolidating and increasing its followers base, the UfM Secretariat will continue developing more attractive online products such as videos, infographics, and animations.

In 2022, the UfM Secretariat 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 Secretariat will improve the identification of these key social media accounts such as other international institutions (international organizations, mainly those related to the UfM working areas and the UfM ecosystem), project promoters, journalists and digital influencers. Once identified, the UfM Secretariat will seek to foster more engagement and quality interactions. Throughout all the platforms, the Communication Unit will also try to achieve more geographical balance amongst UfM Member States followers.



Furthermore, the UfM social media accounts will continue to highlight UfM and partners' activities around the second edition of the Day of the Mediterranean and will support the 2022 campaign on the fight against climate change and plastic pollution in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

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.

In 2022, 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:

- **7th UfM Regional Forum:** as every year, the UfM Secretariat will organise in 2022 its 7th 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.
- **Day of the Mediterranean:** following the first celebration of the Mediterranean Day, the UfM Secretariat will keep building awareness around this celebration, while looking for synergies with partner organisations under its framework. In particular, the Communication Unit will seek to build partnerships with stakeholders working in the field of environment, fisheries, biodiversity, and food systems, to be in line with the 2022 UN thematic focused on artisanal fisheries and aquaculture. The UfM Secretariat will also keep pushing for Mediterranean Day celebrations with stakeholders from the cultural sphere, aiming at fostering a Mediterranean identity and a sense of belonging. Finally, other engagement actions will also be implemented with influencers and opinion-leaders who have a far-reaching audience.
- **Regional conferences and webinars:** 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 2022, the UfM Secretariat will secure the presence of UfM experts as speakers for webinars and digital conferences that will take place. In order to reinforce the UfM position as expert in Mediterranean matters, the UfM Secretariat will continue to organise joint debates and closed briefings, notably with experts from renowned think tanks and academic institutions, 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.



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



4. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: GLOSSARY

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



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



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



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