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Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Blue Economy

17 November 2015, Brussels

Declaration

The Ministers and other Heads of Delegation, gathered at this Conference for the promotion of blue economy in the Mediterranean region in Brussels on 17 November, 2015, under the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Co-Presidency of H.E. Mr. Ayman Hatahet, Minister of Transport, for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and of H.E. Mr. Karmenu Vella, Commissioner in charge of Environment, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs for the European Union,

recalling

- the Joint Declaration of the Summit for the Mediterranean held in Paris on 13 July 2008, the Marseille Declaration of November 2008 and relevant UfM Ministerial Conferences and notably:
 - the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Research and Innovation in Barcelona on 2-3 April 2012;
 - the UfM Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society in Paris on 11 and 12 September 2013;
 - the UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport in Brussels on 14 November 2013;
 - the UfM Ministerial Conference on Energy in Brussels on 11 December 2013;
 - the UfM Ministerial Conference on Industrial Cooperation in Brussels on 19 February 2014;
 - the UfM Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Change in Athens on 13 May 2014, jointly adopted with the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development;
 - the UfM Ministerial Conference on Digital Economy in Brussels on 30 September 2014;
- the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (the “Barcelona Convention”), its protocols and decisions; as well as the Mediterranean Action Plan and Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development;
- the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and as well other related international conventions and customary international law, relating to activities in oceans and seas, including for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources;
- the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the new global development agenda for the period 2015-2030 adopted in New York on 26 September 2015 "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".



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taking into account

- the outcomes of the 12th and 14th Conferences of the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) held in Athens on 18-19 April 2013 and in Naples on 30 October 2014, and their initiatives;
- the outcomes of the UfM stakeholder conference "Towards a Roadmap for Blue Investment and Jobs in the Mediterranean" held in Athens on 27 May 2015;
- the on-going implementation of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region endorsed by the Representatives of the participating Countries¹ on 18 November 2014;
- the review process of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development;
- the work of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM).

stressing the need for the Mediterranean region to make the best use of the potential of the blue economy, to promote growth, jobs and investments and reduce poverty, whilst safeguarding healthy seas and developing a clear vision for the sustainable and integrated development of marine and maritime sectors at national and sea basin level.

concerned by the impacts of uneven economic development, disparities in research and innovation capacity, skills mismatch of the labour force, slow uptake of clustering and networking and limited access to finance; having in mind that these issues affect both public and private sectors, and particularly Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) which play an essential role for economic growth and job creation.

aware of the:

- inter-connectedness of industries, human activities and the ecosystems centred on the sea; and
- the need to improve connectivity in the region;

stressing

- the growing environmental and climate-related challenges facing the entire region, which may be exacerbated by rapid population growth and urbanisation together with unsustainable use of marine resources, and **acknowledging** that, if not adequately addressed, taking into consideration the respective capacities and development needs, these may increasingly become a source of instability and prejudice of living conditions of current and future generations in the region;
- the need to protect the natural and cultural heritage of the Mediterranean region and promote sustainable consumption and production patterns;
- the need to enable all Mediterranean countries to fully enjoy the benefits of the blue economy according to international laws and building on existing best practices;

reaffirming

- that research and innovation investments are needed to address key challenges of the region and to provide tailor made solutions and create new business opportunities in the

¹ This Strategy focuses on Blue Growth, notably on marine research and innovation, marine environment and pollution, aquaculture, fisheries, maritime governance, tourism and transport and concerns Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania and Greece.



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blue economy;

- the need for adopting a more friendly business environment, promoting entrepreneurship, innovation and SMEs;
- the importance of science-policy interface in promoting interdisciplinary approaches and policy perspectives.

highlighting

- that coherent and efficient regional cooperation and coordination is necessary to deal with these challenges;
- the important role of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean in enhancing regional cooperation, supporting integration and partnership and the need to provide the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean with the adequate support and the necessary means to properly perform its function.

acknowledging the EU Twinning Technical Assistance, Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument (TAIEX) and Trans-national and Cross-Border Cooperation programmes (notably co-funded by the European Neighbourhood Instrument-ENI, the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance-IPA and the European Regional Development Fund), and any other relevant funding resources, as important instruments to establish concrete and sustainable cooperation partnerships generating mutual benefits and strengthened national policies and capacities.

As regards the further development of the Blue Economy,

Ministers **recognise**:

- the importance of reaching an agreed definition of the blue economy, which may include, inter alia, the set of human activities depending on the sea and/or underpinned by land-sea interactions in the context of sustainable development, and notably including industrial and service sectors such as aquaculture, fisheries, blue biotechnologies, coastal and maritime tourism, shipping, ship-building/repair, ports, ocean energy and marine renewable energy, including offshore wind, which are among the main traditional and emerging economic maritime sectors in the Mediterranean Sea basin;
- that clean and healthy seas are drivers and enablers for national and regional economies;
- the potential of shipping, passenger and cruising lines to boost trade, develop business and tourism throughout the Mediterranean basin;
- the need to ensure that the policies and actions required to promote the blue economy are clearly identified as priorities and reflected as far as appropriate in national strategies and also **call** on UfM members to make the necessary domestic reforms to create a more conducive environment for investments. In parallel, this will continue to provide a clear message to international, regional and bilateral donors and International Financial Institutions (IFIs)², and the private sector about the importance of their contribution, alongside national resources, to support the investments required;
- that increased and improved use of existing resources is required to address the challenges

² E.g. European Investment Bank, Islamic Development Bank Group, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, KfW, World Bank, International Finance Corporation, etc.



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specific to the Mediterranean Sea basin as well as a more strategic cross-sectorial approach, and planning of blue economy direct and indirect investments, and *invite* relevant IFIs and donors, as well as private investors to fully engage in existing and new sustainable project preparation facilities and to develop or strengthen other financial tools deemed necessary to promote such projects.

Ministers *reconfirm* the existing long-term objectives for sustainable management of the sea and for a cleaner Mediterranean by the year 2020 as far as agreed by UfM Member Countries, as expressed in particular by the Barcelona Convention, and including by:

- promoting sustainable production and consumption, and resource efficiency³, which play an important role in the efforts to reduce marine litter, and protecting and sustainably using marine environment by working towards good environmental status of the marine and coastal waters, including by the UfM Horizon 2020 Initiative for a Cleaner Mediterranean Sea;
- addressing the growing coastal urbanisation of the region and the related environmental and climate change challenges, notably through the UfM Urban Projects Finance Initiative (UPFI);
- promoting the implementation of the 2013 Memorandum of Understanding between the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Secretariat and the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP);
- improving maritime safety, in accordance with the Conventions of the International Maritime Organization, capacity to react against manmade and natural disasters and prevention of pollution from ships in cooperation and within the agreed legal framework, with relevant regional organisations and through regional initiatives such as the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and the SAFEMED III initiative⁴.

As regards investing on Blue research, technology, innovation, knowledge and skills.

Ministers *acknowledge*:

- the need to seize opportunities for growth and decent jobs creation in the blue economy by promoting research, technology transfer and industrial partnerships across the region, facilitating networking amongst maritime clusters and aiming to create new technological solutions and innovative products and services;
- the work done by some partners in developing the "BLUEMED Initiative - Research and Innovation Initiative for Blue Jobs and Growth in the Mediterranean Area"⁵, and its

³ Examples of regional actions/projects: Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, the Regional Climate Change Adaptation framework, the Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production under elaboration in the context of UNEP/MAP, the EU funded SWITCH Med programme, the UfM Labelled Med ReScp project (Supporting the adoption of Sustainable Consumption and Production and Resource Efficiency models in the Mediterranean Region) and RECP Net (Global Network for Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production)

⁴ <http://www.emsa.europa.eu/implementation-tasks/training-a-cooperation/safemed-iii.html>.

⁵ The BLUEMED initiative aims to: promote joint actions for research and innovation including coordination, planning and programming of relevant research and innovation priorities; and foster integration of the marine and maritime research industries and academia, to maximize the leverage effects of the research investments both commercially and with respect to public policy at regional, national and EU levels. It was developed



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Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda, and in identifying common key challenges for marine research and innovation in the region;

- the need to provide knowledge evidence support to policy decision making;
- the successful implementation of the UfM flagship Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs (Med4Jobs) towards the improvement of job creation through up-scaling and replication of best practices identified in the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean and of possible related projects of relevance for the marine and maritime sectors;
- the potential of shared and quality assured open data, systems and applications together with digital technologies to make data more available and accessible to both public and private sector users in compliance with relevant international and national regulatory frameworks so as to stimulate innovation and support a data-driven economy;
- the need to improve education, training and scientific capacity and skills development in the maritime domain and to increase the potential for cooperation on maritime and marine knowledge such as the work of the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport and the International Maritime Safety, Security and Environment Academy.

Ministers *welcome* the proposal to include UfM partners in the implementation of the above BLUEMED Initiative on a voluntary basis and to support the networking amongst maritime clusters in the Mediterranean.

Ministers *recognise* the importance of supporting human capacity building and students, researchers and workers mobility to promote the creation of blue jobs. Setting in motion a network/networks and/or reinforcing existing networks between relevant education, training and research institutions answering the needs of marine and maritime professions would be beneficial in terms of developing new curricula, academic programmes and professions in the blue economy, such as on new technologies and maritime security and safety of the seafarers, boosting skills and employability in the Mediterranean Sea basin.

Ministers *underline* the importance of reinforcing cooperation and exchange of best practices between stakeholders around the Mediterranean and *recommend* to the UfM Secretariat to promote the networking between maritime education and training institutions.

As regards maritime governance,

Ministers *acknowledge*:

- the work carried out under existing co-operation and coordination frameworks and *call* for further strengthening of synergies of projects and activities between the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat, the European Commission, the International Maritime Organization, the UNEP/MAP, and other agreed relevant regional executive organisations;
- the need to strengthening coordination and cooperation in the area of maritime affairs in order to improve maritime governance and for exploring the added value and feasibility of maritime appropriate strategies, including at sub-regional level (notably building on existing multilateral processes such as 5+5 dialogue, Agadir Treaty and EU Strategy for

under the Italian Presidency of the European Council (2nd Semester 2014) together with EU Member States bordering the Mediterranean and Portugal. Its vision paper was presented at the EU Competitiveness Council of December 2014.



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Adriatic and Ionian Region);

- the consultative role that civil society, including recognised and registered NGOs, social partners, academia, financial and research institutions, local and regional authorities, the private sector, and other stakeholders can play in achieving the blue economy objectives and **recognise** that steps are necessary to enhance the opportunities and capacity for them to participate in decision-making processes, including in policy design, implementation and monitoring as foreseen by the national legislation;
- the importance of implementing an ecosystem approach to the management of marine resources and of shifting towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns which can be a source of eco-innovation and blue-green economy interface.

Ministers **advocate** to strengthening coordination and cooperation in the area of maritime affairs in order to improve maritime governance and achieve a conducive environment for the blue economy in the Mediterranean Sea basin, in particular by:

- **tasking** the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat with the promotion of the regional dialogue on sustainable blue economy and cross-sectorial coordination of maritime policies, through the below agreed Forum on Blue Economy and the other existing relevant UfM frameworks of dialogue, together with the support of the new ENI project on supporting regional policy dialogue on integrated maritime policy and blue economy, and in cooperation with relevant regional organisations, such as UNEP/MAP, General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and others;
- **recommending** to seek coherence of on-going policies and initiatives in the field of blue economy;
- **endorsing** the establishment of a UfM Forum on Blue Economy⁶, which would annually bring together the Mediterranean countries to exchange information, views and best practices; create synergies among current initiatives; provide input to future actions and possible sea basin approaches/maritime strategies, without duplicating existing initiatives and bodies. This Forum should follow-up on this Declaration and assess the progress made. The Forum will be co-chaired by the UfM co-presidencies and the UfM Secretariat will act as its secretariat;
- **stressing** the importance of establishing appropriate networking mechanisms for blue economy stakeholders around the Mediterranean and **tasking** the UfM Secretariat to develop further the Virtual Knowledge Centre on marine and maritime affairs on the basis of the guidance and supervision of the above forum and **stressing** as well the need to provide appropriate resources;
- **inviting** the UfM member countries to promote and reinforce the cooperation and coordination between ministries, agencies, local and regional authorities, and private entities by **taking** the appropriate measures and to ensure that integrated and coherent approaches to maritime affairs and blue economy objectives are mainstreamed into sectorial policies and institutional structures by **establishing** as appropriate inter-ministerial level co-ordination schemes at national level.
- **promoting** the application of cross-cutting policy tools, such as maritime spatial planning

⁶ By building on and replacing the existing Working Group on Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) in the Mediterranean.



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and integrated coastal zone management, taking into account land-sea interactions through an ecosystem based approach and the importance to accelerate efforts in taking necessary measures to develop a coherent and well-managed network of marine protected areas to meet the objectives of the Mediterranean Action Plan;

Finally

Ministers **call** on the UfM Secretariat and the UfM to continue identifying and promoting projects in line with the relevant regional priorities and, in close cooperation with all relevant actors, to further enhance visibility, ownership and access to finance, including through financial tools (such as blending grants and soft loans mechanisms) and **recommend** relevant IFIs and donors, to take into due consideration such projects when programming and establishing their pipelines;

Ministers **call** on concerned Authorities for enhancing the synergies:

- between South-South cooperation initiatives, such as the Agadir Treaty;
- between the programmes concerning the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean, notably the Programme "Interreg Mediterranean (MED)" and the Programme "ENI Cross Border Cooperation Mediterranean Sea Basin (ENI-CBC-MED)" by ensuring the sharing of project results, as much as appropriate, and a sound coordination regarding the definition of the content of calls for projects.

Ministers **acknowledge** the importance of taking into account the key messages delivered by the UfM Stakeholder Conference "Towards a Roadmap for Blue Investment and Jobs in the Mediterranean" (held in Athens on 27 May 2015) as well in the implementation of this declaration and agree to annex the full list of key messages to this declaration (Annex I).

Ministers **agree** to hold the next Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Blue Economy at the latest in 2018, and **call** on the UfM Secretariat to report on the annual UfM Forum on Blue Economy to the UfM Senior Official Meeting.

Ministers would like to express deep gratitude to the Government of Greece for hosting the Stakeholders' Event on Blue Economy in Athens on 27 May 2015 and its warm hospitality and to the UfM Secretariat for helping to convene this meeting.



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ANNEX I

KEY MESSAGES FROM PANELS OF THE

UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE

"TOWARDS A ROADMAP FOR BLUE INVESTMENT AND JOBS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN"

27 May 2015, in Athens

Panel 1A - New Partnerships for marine Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean

1. Recognise that the notion of Blue economy is not yet firmly established in all the countries of the Mediterranean and this disparity should be reflected in funding streams, notably in the deployment of relevant EU instruments;
2. Acknowledge the need for more structured monitoring, facilitated sharing of the outputs of marine and maritime R & I activities as well as diffusion of technological innovation within the Mediterranean Sea;
3. Recognise the importance of relevant industries at an earlier stage, notably for the development of blue bio-technologies and namely when developing research and innovation agendas, which can help to accelerate growth and jobs creation in the blue economy, especially when actions are centred on and around maritime clusters and facilitate the participation of partner countries;
4. Call for establishing a network of Maritime clusters in the MED, driven by local stakeholders and industries;
5. Call for training/re-training of scientists, professionals, technicians and entrepreneurs with the potential and ability to tackle multidimensional ecological, economic and societal problems, within a holistic perspective that aims to new and qualified “jobs of the sea”,
6. Call on UfM Ministers to consider the possible inclusion of UfM Southern and Eastern partners in the implementation of the BLUEMED Initiative.

Panel 1B - Emerging knowledge-based business opportunities

1. Acknowledge the potential of shared data, open data and ICT technologies in terms of fostering innovation and support of a data-driven economy, by facilitating and ensuring the availability and accessibility of data to both public and private sector users in all member states of the UfM.
2. Acknowledge the importance and added value of on-going projects that engage a wide variety of actors such as Universities, research, governments, businesses, as well as the public in collecting marine and maritime data from multiple platforms and working to improve access to this data. The Blue Growth is already initiated (e.g. through the provision of Copernicus and EMODNET services) but needs to be accelerated.
3. Recognize the benefits that enhanced data accessibility along with sharing of scientific knowledge can bring to the fields of the shipping and port industry competitiveness, to the effective addressing of transboundary environmental concerns in the Med as well as the efficiency of public administrations. This can increase at the same time our knowledge of

activities at sea and our understanding of the marine environment and biological systems. Digital economy companies must become more aware of the availability of such data and invest in creating new knowledge.

4. Enhance capacity building in the countries belonging to the MENA region through appropriate technical assistance, technology transfer and fund raising in order to foster growth and sustainable development in the Blue Economy sectors, while at the same time taking properly into consideration any concerns that relate to Intellectual Property Rights.
5. Welcome the Virtual Knowledge Centre (VKC) as an effective mechanism to systematically catalogue the many marine and maritime initiatives in the Mediterranean and urge its hosting by UfM or UNEP/MAP to provide updates and continuity.
6. Make data available via web services or APIs (application program interface) that support machine-to-machine data access and enable users to request the desired subsets of the data.
7. As far as open and shared scientific data are concerned, the best known practices have to be followed in order to assure data quality and reliability.
8. Collaborations between research and industry as well as Public Private Partnerships (PPI) need to be encouraged with the purpose of accelerating the commercialization of ongoing research in exploring data and in creating new products drawing from marine and maritime data resources.

Panel 1C - Marine Litter

1. Within the wider environment agenda, as identified and discussed at the UfM Ministerial Meeting in 2014 and its follow-up actions, ML has been identified as an emerging priority. From a preventive point of view, strong commitments to Sustainable Consumption and Production are pivotal to address the problem.
2. Marine litter is a consequence of a linear economy with heavy economic implications; it's a symbol of a resource-inefficient society. The Regional Plan on Marine Litter (entered in force in July 2014) presents a binding legal framework for the Parties of the Barcelona Convention. Multi-disciplinary, multi institutional, multi stakeholder and regional collaborative efforts and enhanced synergies are much needed.
3. Address data needs and gaps on amounts, trends, sources and impacts of marine litter, with a particular focus on plastic/microplastic including the consequences on the food chain and human health; identification of hotspots; Creation/extension of a Mediterranean monitoring mechanism and network on marine litter; better understanding of the potential that different measures offer to address the problem, while avoiding a fragmented approach
4. Need for pilot demonstration activities/projects (“no regret measures” to verify effectiveness, costs/benefits, etc) promoting actions that aim to prevent, reduce and remove marine litter from the Mediterranean Sea, in line with the indications of the Regional plan on marine Litter, engaging a wide pool of stakeholders (private sector, civil society, national/local authorities, etc). Existing showcases for circular economy and sustainability could be expanded to the Mediterranean Region;

5. Enhance awareness on marine litter and carry out awareness campaigns in Mediterranean region/countries aiming to promote co-responsibility of all stakeholders and create ‘agents of change’ towards tackling marine litter, its impacts, and the need for prevention.
6. Communicating the issue: treat stakeholders as knowledge agents, and take a solution oriented approach which is more successful in triggering action.

Panel 2A - Maritime governance tools

1. Develop a clear vision and framework for the Mediterranean.
2. Cross-border cooperation, including adequate platform is a key driver.
3. Invite Mediterranean countries to explore the added value of possible Sea Basin Strategy(ies), including through a thematic approach.
4. Sea basin strategies can be driver for enhanced coordination at national level and should take into consideration the functional integrity of existing bodies/platforms.
5. A definition of and/or common language on blue economy is needed, it should be broad enough to allow all partners being well represented.
6. Call on relevant institutions to explore how MSP approach can be applied and or adapted to the different contexts of the Mediterranean basin.
7. Provide tailor-made capacity building and sharing and transfer of knowledge to allow equal point of departure.
8. Ensure investment certainty by having a Sea basin approach and applying MSP.
9. Any decision should be knowledge-based using appropriate planning tools, such as the Virtual Knowledge Centre.

Panel 2B - New technologies and skills for maritime transport, ocean energy and offshore wind

1. Set up strategies for modern technology in each country, effectively including the dimension of maritime education.
2. Encourage the countries to establish maritime clusters or platforms of cooperation and thus promote MED cooperation.
3. Train the operators of land and offshore activities to embrace modern technologies, develop new equipment and the required competencies and skills.
4. Develop Mediterranean maritime education institutions in various fields (LPG, LNG, oil tankers, smart port operation and maintenance).
5. Improve visibility and attractiveness of maritime careers to attract young people in the maritime domains.

Panel 2C - New tourism concepts for a sustainable Med

1. Coastal and maritime tourism is a significant economic sector, experiencing steady growth while presenting huge potential and big challenges.
2. The key aims should be long-term sustainability, and privileging quality over quantity.



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3. There are common problems that all Mediterranean countries are facing, as well as common challenges, namely how to develop new and better tourism offers, how to better share the benefits, the use of modern technologies, further development of cruise, diving, sailing tourism etc.
4. Cruise tourism is an important segment of coastal tourism and contributes to sustainable tourism in the Eastern Mediterranean. A well trained, professional personnel is key to success. At present, there is not a harmonization in place for training and education for maritime jobs in the cruise industry.
5. There are very promising developments in underwater archaeology tourism: An innovative museum for underwater heritage and a number of in-situ museum pilot initiatives are currently planned in Greece. They promise additional income but require safeguards to protect the antiquities through technologies like underwater cameras.
6. Regional cooperation is a prerequisite for sustainable tourism in the Med and should be pursued through tools such as joint projects, using also the macro-regional strategies, maritime connectivity etc.
7. Establish a permanent framework ('Cruise Med Forum') to develop a vision, enhance stakeholder involvement and boost regional cooperation.
8. Stakeholders to become more active in regional cooperation.
9. Promote comprehensive tourism packages involving Med cruising, diving, sailing etc. Further improve the image of Mediterranean tourism. Develop cultural routes, joint itineraries, networks of maritime activities.
10. Invest in capacity building where there is not sufficient knowledge on how to regulate, how to understand the impacts from licensing marinas and other leisure-related activities.
11. Invest in maritime education and skills.
12. Use Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Maritime Spatial Planning tools to contain excessive coast development, so as to factor-in environmental concerns and strike the right balance to achieve environmentally-friendly tourism.