



## PROJECT GUIDELINES

Guided by the Paris Declaration that initiated the process of the UfM in 2008 and in accordance with the Statutes of the UfM Secretariat, the Senior Officials adopted the following Project Guidelines.

Following the reflection process on the UfM label and the adoption, on 04<sup>th</sup> October 2018, by the Senior Officials of the recommendations for the update of the labelling process and content, these Project Guidelines are revised accordingly.

### I. PROJECT PROCESSING

#### Stage 1: Stimulation and Gathering of Potential Project Proposals and Initiatives

In this stage, the Secretariat may proactively gather initiatives for regional, sub-regional, transnational projects (or national projects in the framework of regional strategies or initiatives) from various sources such as sectoral ministerial meetings, national or regional authorities and institutions, private sector and civil society.

UfM Members are encouraged to propose for labelling national projects of regional dimension or with multiple partners in the region which are in line with agreed UfM priorities, thereby expressing their commitment to the achievement of these priorities, empowering the UfM, and capitalizing on the visibility provided to the project.

The Secretariat will envisage projects that:

- fall within the project priority areas identified by the Heads of State and Government in the Paris Declaration or those covered by the Secretariat's Work Programme;
- are consistent with the Union for the Mediterranean general political and development criteria;
- contribute to the implementation of regional strategies or initiatives.
- have a significant transformative regional impact, with high further replication potential ("flagship projects")

#### Stage 2: Registration of Projects

The Secretariat will establish an efficient and transparent system for receiving and registering of project proposals. In order to be registered and accepted for assessment by the Secretariat and be processed, a project submitted should meet three pre-conditions:

- a) it must be presented and duly signed by its promoters;



- b) it must include sufficiently informative description of the main elements of the project; and
- c) It must include a financial undertaking from the promoters to cover part of the initial development cost (preliminary feasibility study, market research etc.) and participate in funding subsequent implementation costs.

Recognizing the need to apply a variable approach, justification and timing to award the label is to be kept flexible and decided case by case, with clear selection criteria.

Considering that certain valuable activities, initiatives, networks deserve recognition and support but are not (or not yet) eligible for UfM labelling, the UfMS should provide such recognition or support in practice through association with its ongoing work, avoiding any confusion with the UfM label itself.

### **Stage 3: Appraisal and Assessment**

If the implementing organization is capable to carry out its own proper assessment of the project proposal, the secretariat only carries out a short plausibility assessment to assure that UfM criteria (see part II) are being met. The plausibility assessments are submitted to the SOM for decision. If the implementing organization is not capable to carry out a proper assessment, the Secretariat will carry out a proper assessment of the project proposal, requesting further information if needed, on the basis of evaluation criteria drawn from general or specific references (see II Project criteria), which may be amended over time, but without applying unduly strict or restrictive criteria, especially since the final responsibility for deciding on the certification of a proposal rests with the SOM. In the case of major projects, the Secretariat may circulate for information to Senior Officials a report summarizing the project initiative under consideration and ask for their guidance before further development.

Furthermore, given the development of UfM sectoral regional platforms, it is recommended that projects considered for labelling first be discussed within the relevant regional sectoral platform, when it exists, as a way of raising interest of and receiving feedback and support from all Member States. This could also encourage non-beneficiary countries to join (where relevant) and, more generally, to promote complementarity and avoid duplication with other ongoing activities in the region.

A stronger focus should be put on “flagship projects”, defined as projects that have a significant transformative impact, such as those promoting interconnections –whether physical or on knowledge projects- or projects that support specific regional policy agendas, and are either directly regional projects (i.e. directly involving several countries) or national projects with a regional impact. Such “flagship projects” would be expected to have a high further replication potential, helping the transmission of knowledge or innovative approaches across the region.



It is also recommended, when justified, to label “Initiatives” or “Programmes” (e.g. UPFI), 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.

In all these cases, the UfM will privilege projects involving a minimum number of partner or beneficiary countries -ideally 4 - in order to promote regional cooperation and ensure a broader regional impact. It will also continue to strive to the extension of projects to further beneficiaries during a project life-cycle.

#### **Stage 4: Labeling of Projects**

Following the completion of the project examination and assessment stage, the Secretariat submits to the SOM, on the basis of a collegial decision by the Secretary General and Deputies, the project(s) recommended to be labeled by the UfM. The SOM takes the final decision on the Secretariat’s proposal.

#### **Stage 5: Assistance with Promotion of UfM Projects**

Once the SOM has endorsed the labeling of a project, the Secretariat works to facilitate the promotion of the project, especially its financing needs, in collaboration and agreement with the project’s promoters. This requires contacting funding institutions and banks, whether public or private, by the Secretariat, as well as assisting in the removal of obstacles or impediments.

UfM Members should commit to bring to the attention of national development funding institutions, development banks, cooperation agencies or other relevant public or private financial partners, UfM labelled projects and assist the UfMS in engaging with them in order to enhance possibilities of obtaining financial support. UfM Members and the UfMS should work with project promoters to highlight projects at significant moments, such as-project labelling, project launch events, thematic days linked to project priorities, as well as at international events of significance.

#### **Stage 6: Monitoring Progress**

Once the financing arrangements have been finalized and the project launched, the implementing organizations are responsible to monitor the progress. Progress and status reports will be regularly submitted to the Secretariat. If the implementing organizations are not capable to carry out a proper monitoring process, the Secretariat monitors progress in its



implementation, ensuring at the same time that the criteria required for obtaining and keeping the UfM “project label” are being met. Progress and status reports will be regularly submitted to the SOM by the Secretariat.

In the context of an enhanced project follow-up, all labelled projects should re-assessed at three-year intervals in order to allow the SOM to determine whether the Label should be maintained or discontinued.

In certain cases, the Secretariat may follow a fast-track for some projects and omit some of the stages described above if the project has been already approved by Sectoral Ministerial or Senior Officials’ meetings.