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# UfM STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Results of the on-line UfM Stakeholder Consultation  
on post-2020 Environment and Climate Action priorities  
in view of the 2nd UfM Ministerial Conference



OCTOBER, 2020



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The views and suggestions set out in this study do not necessarily reflect the official point  
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in the consultation process and as such provided input to the content of this publication.

October 2020

# INTRODUCTION

In view of the upcoming 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Action, scheduled to take place in Egypt, a UfM [Online Stakeholder Consultation](#) was launched on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July and remained active till the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2020. The aim of the Stakeholder Consultation was to: provide the possibility to an even wider range of relevant actors to consult on the priority themes identified by the UfM countries that will feed the joint post-2020 Environment and Climate Action agenda; and maintain a meaningful participatory engagement of Mediterranean and other stakeholders in the formulation of relevant regional policy, common axes of work and joint actions.

The consultation's questionnaire (surveymonkey platform) and supporting documentation was available in English, French and Arabic.

Stakeholders were invited to view, prior to completing the questionnaire, the [introductory themes and priorities](#). For reference, the full version of the questionnaire is available [here](#).



# OVERVIEW

**197** people participated in the on-line UfM Stakeholder Consultation.

Of these, **165** completed all or most of the questions. **82** (49,7%) were female, **82** (49,7%) were male and **1** (0,6%) transgender. Participants from **29** countries contributed to the consultation. **110** replies were provided in English, **35** in Arabic and **20** in French.



Figure 1 Respondents per country

The participants represented a wide range of stakeholder groups: 25% were NGO representatives, 17% academia or research institutions, 9% ministries (environment, education, water, etc.), 9% international organizations, 7% other government agencies, 7% private sector, followed by donor institutions (2%) and



local authorities (1%). The remaining 23% were various other types of stakeholders: intergovernmental bodies, media, parliamentarians, protected area managers, international projects, experts, educators, etc.

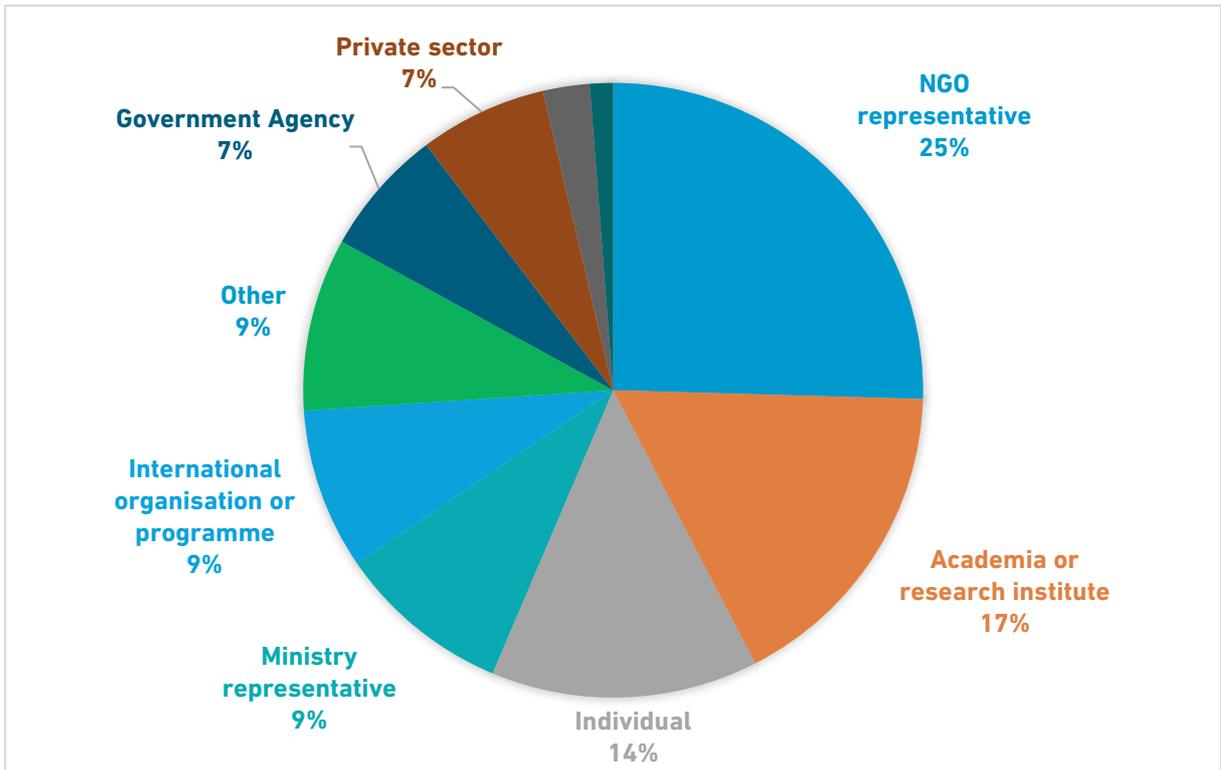


Figure 2: Respondent per Stakeholder group

The presentation of the results of the consultation follows the order of the questionnaire itself and includes the synthesis of the additional suggestions/comments provided by the respondents in the open-ended questions. The latter strongly indicated how interlinked the various issues addressed in the questions are.

# SUMMARY OF RESULTS

## QUESTION 1

RESPONSES RELATED TO “TOWARDS 2030: AGENDA FOR A GREENER MED – CONTRIBUTING TO ACHIEVING THE ENVIRONMENTAL SDGs IN THE MEDITERRANEAN” (2030GREENERMED)

The three thematic axes of the 2030GreenerMed are all considered as highly relevant. More specifically:

### **Thematic axis 1: Support the transition towards a Green, Circular and Socially Inclusive Economy**

All actions are considered as very important or important (with 90-100% of the stakeholders agreeing)<sup>1</sup>. Emphasis is primarily on the promotion of changes in education, behaviour and lifestyles towards sustainability; promotion of sustainable consumption and production; increased resource efficiency; mobilization of green finance and investments; eco-innovation and the adoption of innovative solutions and new business models along the value chain(s). Slightly lower rated but still high (89%) are ‘appropriate governance’ and ‘appropriate market incentives (e.g. green procurement, certification schemes, reforms and taxation favouring green investments and entrepreneurship, etc.)’. See Figure 7 for further details.

Stakeholders provided a wide array of additional topics and thematic actions for further consideration, most of which are already included in the more detailed 2030GreenerMed, co-developed with countries and a wide range of stakeholders during the 2018-2019 period. They can be clustered as follows:

- Align efforts with the EU Circular Economy Strategy and define priority sectors (such as Electronics, Vehicles, Packaging, Plastics, Buildings, Textiles....); link with the EU Circular Economy Monitoring Framework and support the development of relevant indicators on resource use, consumption and material footprints.
- Link more tightly sustainability policies with biodiversity conservation.
- Promote sustainable, inclusive and healthy agro-food systems.
- Promote green jobs and innovation opportunities.
- Promote social economy.
- Support ‘sustainable’ investments through reforms, efficient green taxes and fiscal policies.
- On the trade aspects – this agenda should not only promote sustainable trade policies, but should ensure effective streamlining of circular economy objectives in free trade agreements and bilateral, regional processes and agreements.

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<sup>1</sup> All percentages have been calculated based on the actual number of respondents for each question. If the overall number of respondents significantly differs from the total number of participants in the survey, it is specifically mentioned in the report.



- Develop action plans and programmes that incentivise the uptake of already existing green, circular and socially inclusive economy solutions, that can be adapted to the different regional contexts within the Mediterranean.
- Add cross cutting actions, such as synergies between circular economy and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

## **Thematic axis 2: Prevent and reduce pollution on land, air and sea**

All actions are considered as highly relevant, with between 92% and 100% of the stakeholders agreeing. The strengthening of mechanisms for pollution prevention and reduction from different sources, as well as the reduction of chemical pollution of rivers and lakes are those that rate highest. Prioritisation of plastic pollution and marine litter, as well as the promotion of nature-based solutions come immediately after. See Figure 8 for further details.

Also for this thematic axis stakeholders provided additional suggestions, again mostly in line with those included in the more detailed 2030GreenerMed, such as:

- Aim for more ambitious targets to make prevention meaningful.
- Ensure prevention actions are linked to circular economy objectives (Q1a)
- Create synergies with other relevant regional processes;
- Promote accession/ ratification/ enforcement of relevant multilateral environmental agreements.
- Promote successful and practical case studies for reduction of pollution in water/air/land.
- Promote low-cost alternatives and technologies to reduce pollution loads on ecosystems.
- Particular emphasis on having ambitious targets for plastic pollution.
- Focus on the agricultural sector, agro-food pollution and prevention of waste (food waste, organic/inorganic waste).
- Focus on tourism but also industrial pollution and hazardous waste.
- Support eco-design and innovation, and effectively improve waste management, as well as enhance control and prevention measures such as bans, incentives, taxes and extended producer responsibility schemes.
- Include energy efficiency.
- Enhance pollution monitoring and reporting.
- Enhance awareness and education (mostly targeting youth and media) for a shift to more sustainable behaviour (shift our 'social metabolism').



### **Thematic axis 3: Protect, preserve, manage and restore natural resources in the Mediterranean region within an integrated, ecosystem-based approach, including terrestrial, marine and coastal dimensions**

All actions are rated as very important or important with between 94% to 99% of the stakeholders agreeing. Actions considered as key include: actions that preserve, protect and/or restore terrestrial and marine/coastal ecosystems, natural capital and biodiversity; actions that promote an integrated, ecosystem-based approach to managing terrestrial, coastal and marine natural resources; actions that promote the sustainable management of landscapes, seascapes and coastal areas in the Mediterranean. See Figure 9 for further details.

Stakeholders provided many suggestions, the majority of which have been considered already by the more detailed description of 2030GreenerMed. Some aspects that have been emphasized by a number of respondents were:

- Prominently include a social dimension for reaching a just transition and more social cohesion.
- Further link the three dimensions, especially when it comes to circular economy and pollution prevention;
- Create further links with water and climate actions.
- Additional focus on aspects that are increasingly important due to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as medical waste or the inclusion of pandemics when speaking about disaster risk reduction.
- Give particular attention on the recovery of Mediterranean fish stocks.
- Promote nature-based solutions and restoration of degraded ecosystems.
- Evaluate risks and adaptive actions ex ante in order to direct green finance to correct actions.
- Enhance stakeholder engagement including at community level.
- Consider cultural heritage.
- Ensure alignment with relevant multilateral environmental agreements

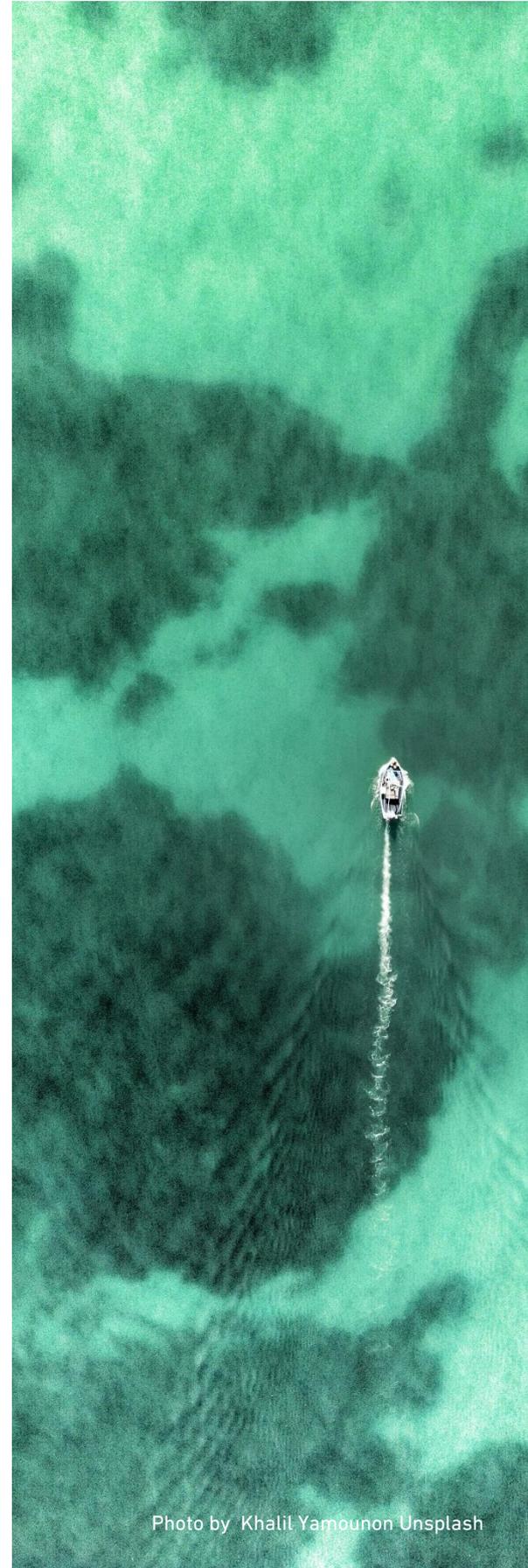


Photo by Khalil Yamounon Unsplash



## QUESTION 2

### RESPONSES RELATED TO THE UfM CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2021- 2025

All three activities included in the draft UfM Climate Action Plan 2021-2025 are considered either very important or important.

#### **Activity 1: Reinforce the Science – Society – Policy nexus, together with the MedECC network**

All actions are considered as very important and important (with between 96% and 98% of the stakeholders agreeing). The majority of the respondents agreed that identifying and addressing particularly important challenges is very important (e.g. adaptation to coastal risks, solution for mitigation, water-food-energy ecosystems nexus, conflict and migration). Although promoting the Summary for Policy Makers (SPM) of MAR1 as a basis for mitigating sustainable development needs, rated lower in significance compared to the other actions under this activity, it nevertheless was considered as important or very important by 88% of the respondents. See Figure 10 for more details.

Stakeholders provided a number of suggested topics and thematic actions, several of which are included in the draft UfM Climate Action Plan 2021-2025. Some additional aspects proposed were:

- Enhance awareness raising and education at all levels (also to counter scepticism about climate change) and capacity building.
- Ensure alignment with relevant multilateral environmental agreements, frameworks and initiatives.
- Promote change in the management of the commons; better governance; define approaches and tools to identify the trade-offs between ecological dynamics and socio-economic needs.
- Stronger linkages with the environment agenda (GreenerMed2030) and its three thematic axes will strengthen climate action.
- Consider nature-based solutions as effective measures for ecosystems function preservation, climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- Boost involvement of the scientific community, the private sector, civil society (including media) in designing and implementing adaptation strategies.
- Consider the migration and refugee challenge in the region.
- Mobilize 'sustainable' funding resources and investments through inter alia subsidies' reforms and efficient green tax collection.
- Consider investment finance risk.



## **Activity 2: Assistance to the Enhancement of the NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions) of the Paris Agreement**

Significantly fewer stakeholders answered this question (approximately 50% of the respondents)<sup>2</sup> almost certainly due to the fact that the topic requires expertise in order to provide an informed opinion. From those that did respond it can be deduced that all key actions are considered as important or very important. The enhancement of regional cooperation in the Mediterranean to achieve ambitious long-term, low greenhouse gas emission development strategies was considered as the most important action by the majority of the respondents, followed by the identification of solutions that fit well in the context of the region and promotion of those that will accelerate climate neutrality (Technology Transfer and Capacity Building). The development of broad adaptation and mitigation policies and more ambitious NDCs were also deemed important. See

Figure 11 for further details.

Additional elements proposed by the respondents that could be considered for the draft UfM Climate Action Plan 2021-2025, are:

- Strengthen the links between climate and biodiversity by giving more importance to nature-based solutions in NDCs (in particular ocean and coastal nature-based solutions.).
- Enhance north-south and south-south regional cooperation to support implementation and development of the new generation of NDCs.
- Support/promote synergies at national level among different sectors/agencies for enhanced co-ordination in implementation, monitoring and reporting.
- Design and implement common/joint projects.
- Include aspects such as food security and cultural heritage.
- Consider the migration and refugee challenge in the region.
- Strengthen data sharing on ecosystem response to climate change.
- Consider digital innovation for the UfM Climate Hub.

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<sup>2</sup> Based on an overall number of respondents of between 78 and 96.



### **Activity 3: Mobilise Finance, in the framework of a Mediterranean Climate Finance Strategy**

All key actions are considered as important or very important (with between 92 and 98% of stakeholders agreeing). As most important ranked the action to 'support countries in applying a climate and resilience lens to longerterm economic stimulus, boosting thus economic growth, creating good jobs, reducing emissions, ensuring clean air, and increasing resilience to future shocks'. Very close to this came the finalisation of the Mediterranean Climate Finance Strategy followed by the design of bankable projects to achieve climate neutrality that bring in also private sector investments (not just public) and the identification and promotion of innovative ways to attract climate finance. See Figure 12 for further details.

Additional aspects that were emphasized by a number of stakeholders include:

- Promote and enhance partnerships with global, regional and national climate finance resource partners, including the private sector.
- The strategy needs to be aligned with and contribute to the implementation of the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and Sustainable Development Goals.
- Reinforce financing mechanisms to support nature-based solutions, including protected areas.
- Consider the provisions within the relevant section of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (2016-2025).
- Consider investment finance risks.
- Consider socio-economic aspects.
- Promote well-being rather than economic growth.
- Integrate transparency and accountability aspects and climate justice.



### QUESTION 3 AND 4

#### RESPONSES ON POLICY ASPECTS

92% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that further mainstreaming of environment, climate change and sustainable development objectives into all other policy areas is still needed.

Suggestions on how to be more effective in mainstreaming mainly evolve around the following topics:

- Strong political leadership.
- Enhanced vertical integration.
- Development of regional clusters that can create synergies for specific topics.
- Focus on education at all levels, so as to increase awareness.
- Mobilization of accompanying finance and investments at all levels.

95% agree or strongly agree that policies should consider indicators of economic growth “beyond GDP” only, integrating human development, environmental, health and social aspects of wellbeing.

97% agree or strongly agree that policies should include socio-economic aspects (employment, gender equality and women’s empowerment, Youth, migration, urbanization, demographic growth, etc.) to promote a just transition

94% agree or strongly agree that policies should progressively eliminate all subsidies that are harmful to the climate and the environment.

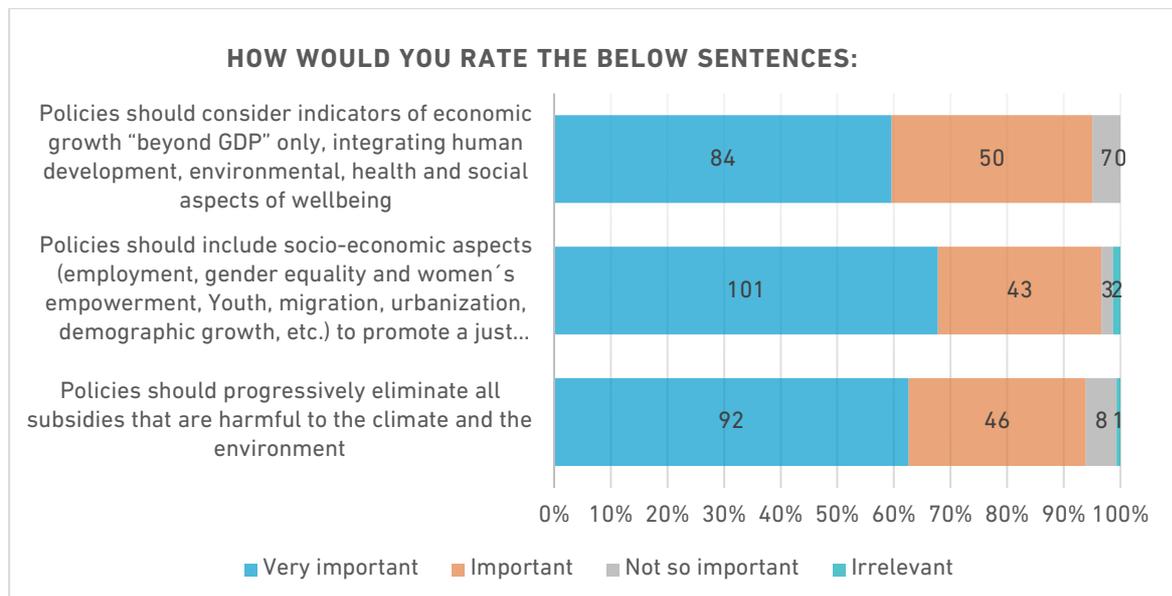


Figure 3: Responses to question 4



## QUESTION 5

### RESPONSES ON THE MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS

On the country level around 70% of the respondents agree that engagement of stakeholders has improved over the last years. Similar results are mirrored at the Mediterranean level with slightly fewer stakeholders (67%) feeling the same<sup>3</sup>. However, 90% of the respondents flagged that stakeholder engagement in decision-making, strategic planning, implementation, and monitoring of policies and projects affecting environment and climate remains insufficient.

Overall, there is a sense that both on the national as well as on the regional level, more coordination with and integration of civil society organizations and other stakeholders is necessary to reach environmental and climate change objectives. Aspects that have been emphasized by a number of stakeholders is the need to further integrate local stakeholders, the need to strengthen participation in decision making processes, as well as to increase collaboration and coordination on the regional level. The availability of funding for the integration of stakeholders is also an issue on the national, but especially on the regional level. The efforts of the UfM to improve coordination and stakeholder engagement have been mentioned as positive by a number of stakeholders.

<sup>3</sup> Based on an overall number of 113 respondents for the national and 93 respondents for the regional level



## QUESTION 6

### RESPONSES ON THE CHALLENGES THAT HINDER THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE AGENDA

While all challenges mentioned are rated as important or very important, there are some that are considered top priorities. These include challenges related to (a) lagging reforms (institutional, fiscal, economic, trade, etc.) urgently needed to enable sustainable investments (public and private) for the transition to a climate-neutral, green, competitive and inclusive economy; (b) bureaucracy and complexities in the administration; (c) not enough awareness among policy makers and (d) the fact that financial flows are not really following criteria of low greenhouse gas emissions and a climate resilient economy. Challenges related to the functioning of services and sectors in silo, insufficient media coverage and the indifference of the younger generation, are rated mostly as important rather than very important. See Figure 13 for detailed information.



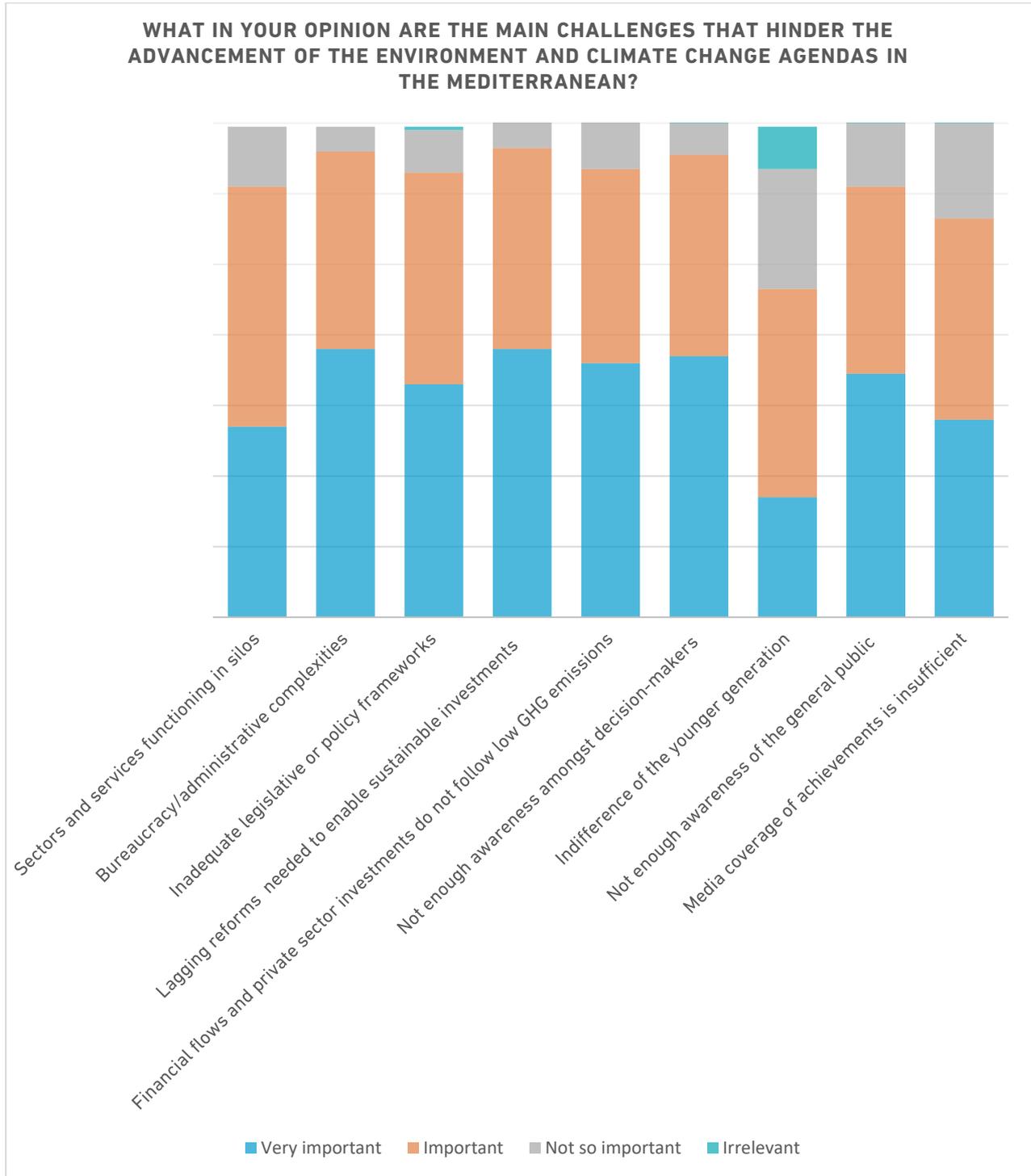


Figure 4 Challenges that hinder the advancement of environment and climate change agenda in the Med



## QUESTION 7

### RESPONSES ON THE WHAT THE NEEDED SYSTEMIC ECONOMIC, SOCIETAL (BEHAVIOR AND LIFESTYLE) AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES ARE TO TRANSITION TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE GREEN ECONOMY

In terms of reaching systemic change, the suggestions of the respondents can be clustered around the following:

- Increased awareness and education of the general public and of decision makers.
- Enhanced stakeholder participation (including the private sector) at all levels.
- Stronger political leadership.
- Mainstreaming of SDGs.
- Improved legislation and enforcement.
- Enhanced, transparent and sustainable financing.
- Decisions based on a strong evidence base.
- Shift from current consumption and production patterns.
- Emphasis on the community level and on youth.
- Make our systems more resilient based on healthy ecosystems without jeopardizing our natural capital.

Overall it is felt that the COVID-19 pandemic can indeed serve as a wake-up call to induce the necessary change.





## QUESTION 8

### RESPONSES ON ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING AND REPORTING SYSTEMS

Some 55% of all respondents are aware of existing Environmental Monitoring and Reporting Systems. 18% are aware but rarely use the reports. Some respondents attribute this mainly to difficulties in accessing them. 16% are not at all aware of such systems. Based on the qualitative comments, access to monitoring and reporting systems is rather restricted and complicated for those who are not working with such systems and reports on a daily basis. A point was made that the results and recommendations of such reports need to be made available and accessible as well as reflected in concrete policies and actions.

89% of all respondents are in agreement that tools such as smart phone apps, satellites, remote sensing etc., should be used more frequently. For details see Figure 14<sup>4</sup> and Figure 15<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Based on an overall number of 108 respondents.

<sup>5</sup> Based on an overall number of 111 respondents.

## QUESTION 9

### RESPONSES ON THE IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

85%<sup>6</sup> of all respondents agree or strongly agree that the post-COVID-19 economic recovery and the transition to a sustainable, socially just, resilient and climate-neutral economy can and should go hand in hand.

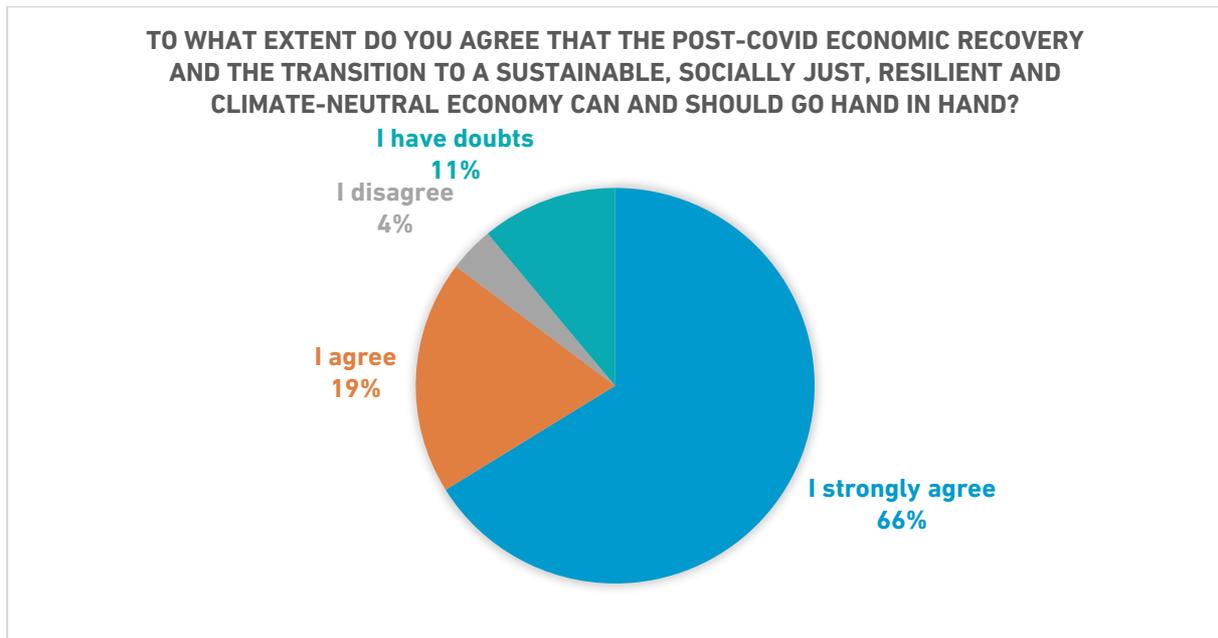


Figure 5 Q9 Post-Covid economic recovery and transition to a sustainable, socially just, resilient and climate neutral economy

With regards to sustainable practices that have been used during the COVID-19 pandemic, participants feel that it is most important to further increase the use of virtual meetings followed by the use of smart working practices (flexible working, remote working, etc.). At the same time, the replacement of air travel by more sustainable alternatives is perceived as less important, indicating that the prevailing perception is that live interactions and meetings can be replaced by virtual ones only to a certain extent. See Figure 11 for details.

On how the Post-COVID-19 recovery can be linked to a more just, resilient and climate-neutral economy in the Mediterranean region, answers are wide-ranging and manifold and echo most of what has already been presented in previous sections. There is concern that the economic recovery will be prioritized over any social and environmental impacts and, as such, jeopardize the transition. Short-term environmental gains vs a complete rethink of the economy in terms of making it more sustainable and green, are feared to be more likely.

<sup>6</sup> Based on an overall number of 104 respondents.

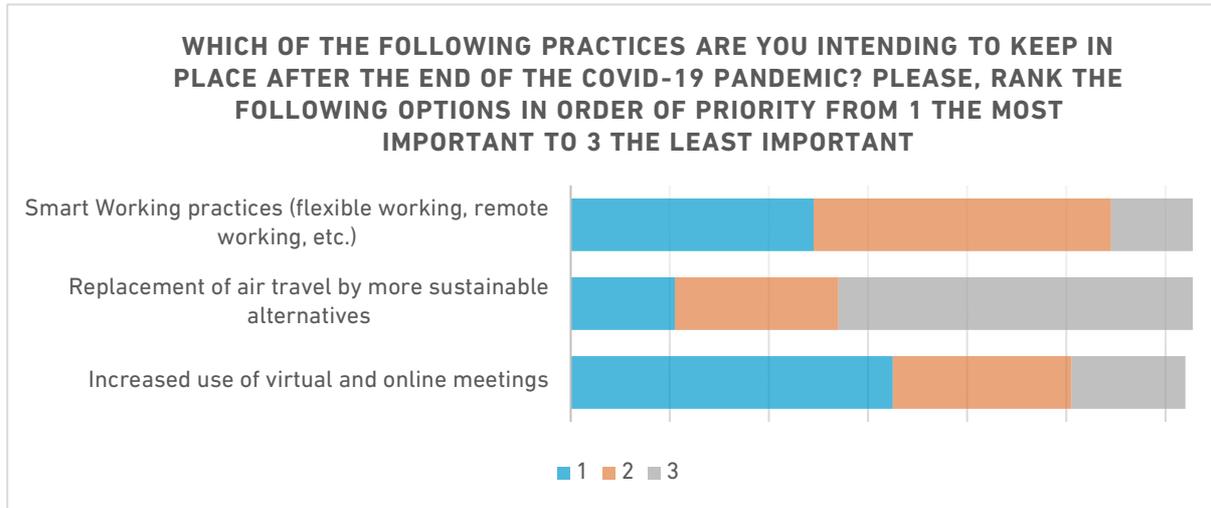


Figure 6 Q9 Practices for work environment post COVID-19 pandemic

Some aspects that emerge as part of a possible solution:

- Link recovery plans, subsidies and other incentives to environmental impacts and make sure to include green economy principles.
- Make clear to everybody that there was in fact no “normality” before, but rather a series of accepted unsustainable conditions, some of which were directly or indirectly responsible for the COVID-19 crisis and its consequences.
- Focus on Blue, Green, Circular and Digital Economy in the economic recovery.
- Rethink our consumption and production models and link support to shifting to new sustainable ones particularly at local economy level.
- Use the strengths of the region: renewable energy sources.
- Highlight the recent climate benefits.
- Try to establish positive habits developed during the pandemic as part of new lifestyles.
- Focus on cooperation between Mediterranean countries for mutual learning and reduce the gaps related to knowledge, capacities, social inequalities and access to finance.
- Make our systems more resilient to pandemics without jeopardizing natural capital and ecosystems. Encourage integration of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the European Green Deal in the Mediterranean.
- Reconcile environmental protection and climate resilience with inclusive economic development. In the context of COVID-19 crisis, the One Health concept is of paramount importance to progress in that direction.
- Quality education for all is a key leverage to achieve all the sustainable development goals.

# ANNEX OF FIGURES

Figure 7 Q1(a) Thematic axis: Support the transition towards a Green, Circular and Socially Inclusive Economy

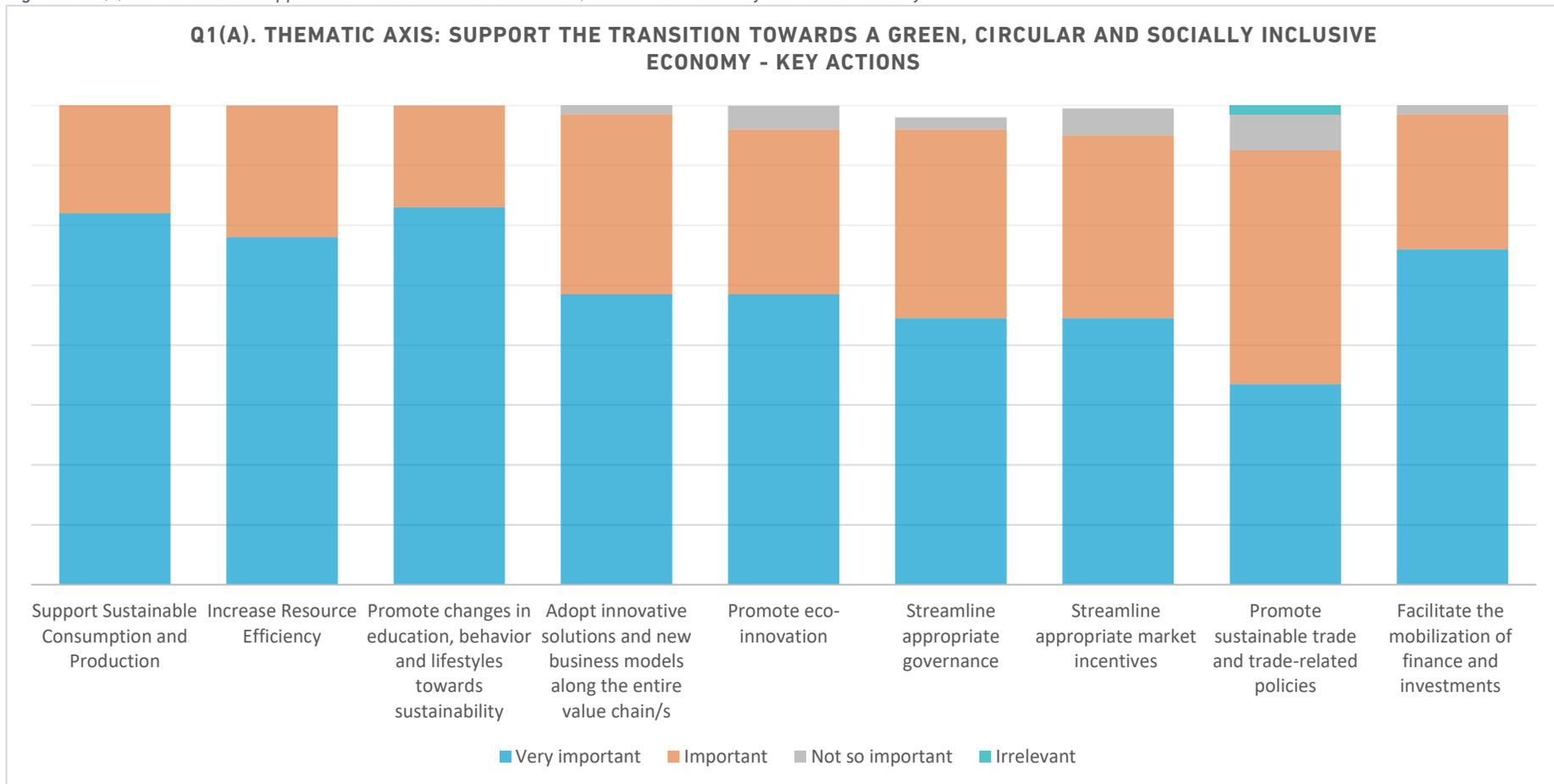




Figure 8 Q1 (b) Thematic axis: Prevent and reduce pollution on land, air and sea

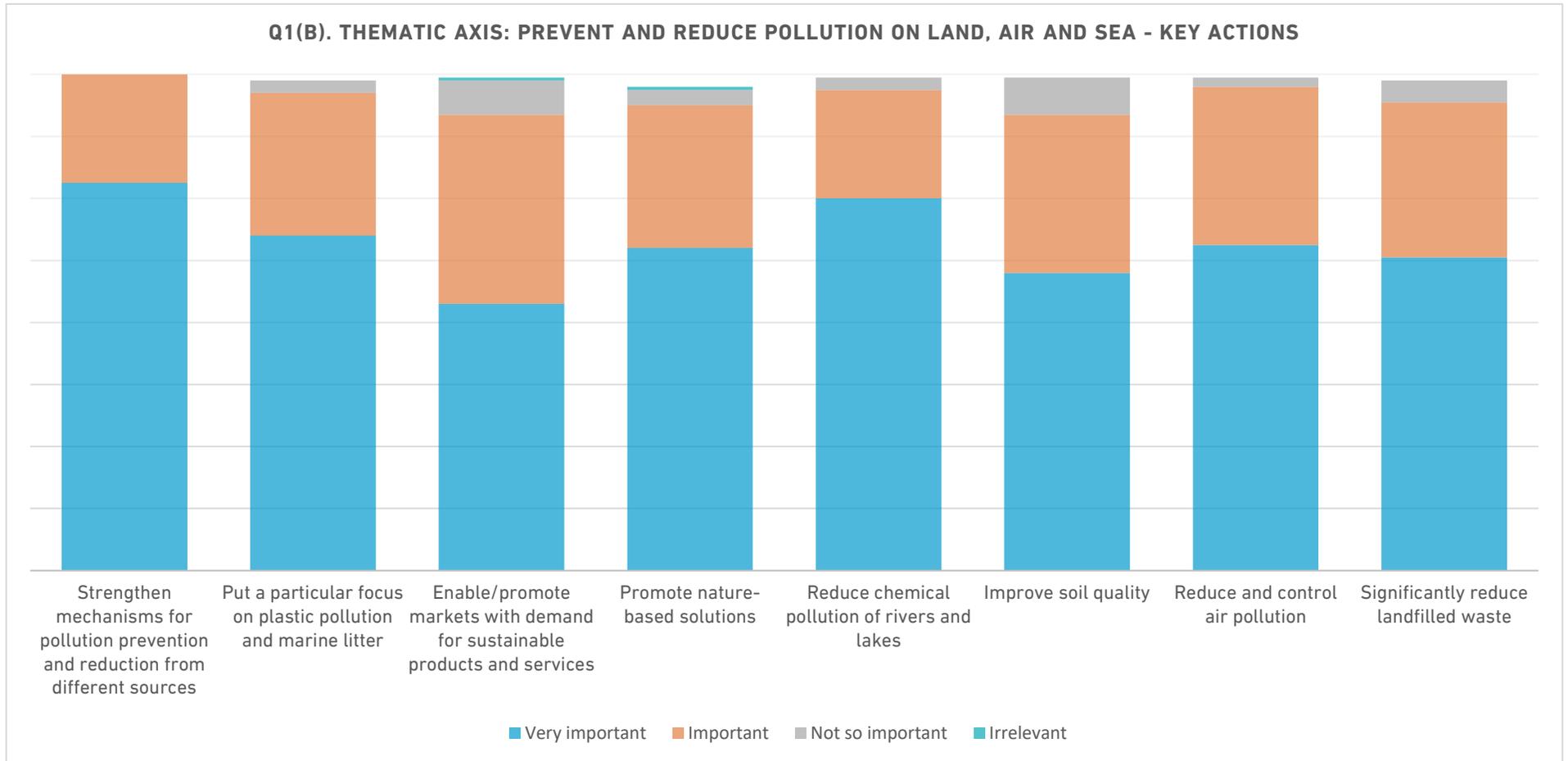


Figure 9 Q1(c): Thematic axis: Protect, preserve, manage and restore natural resources in the Med with an integrated ecosystem based approach

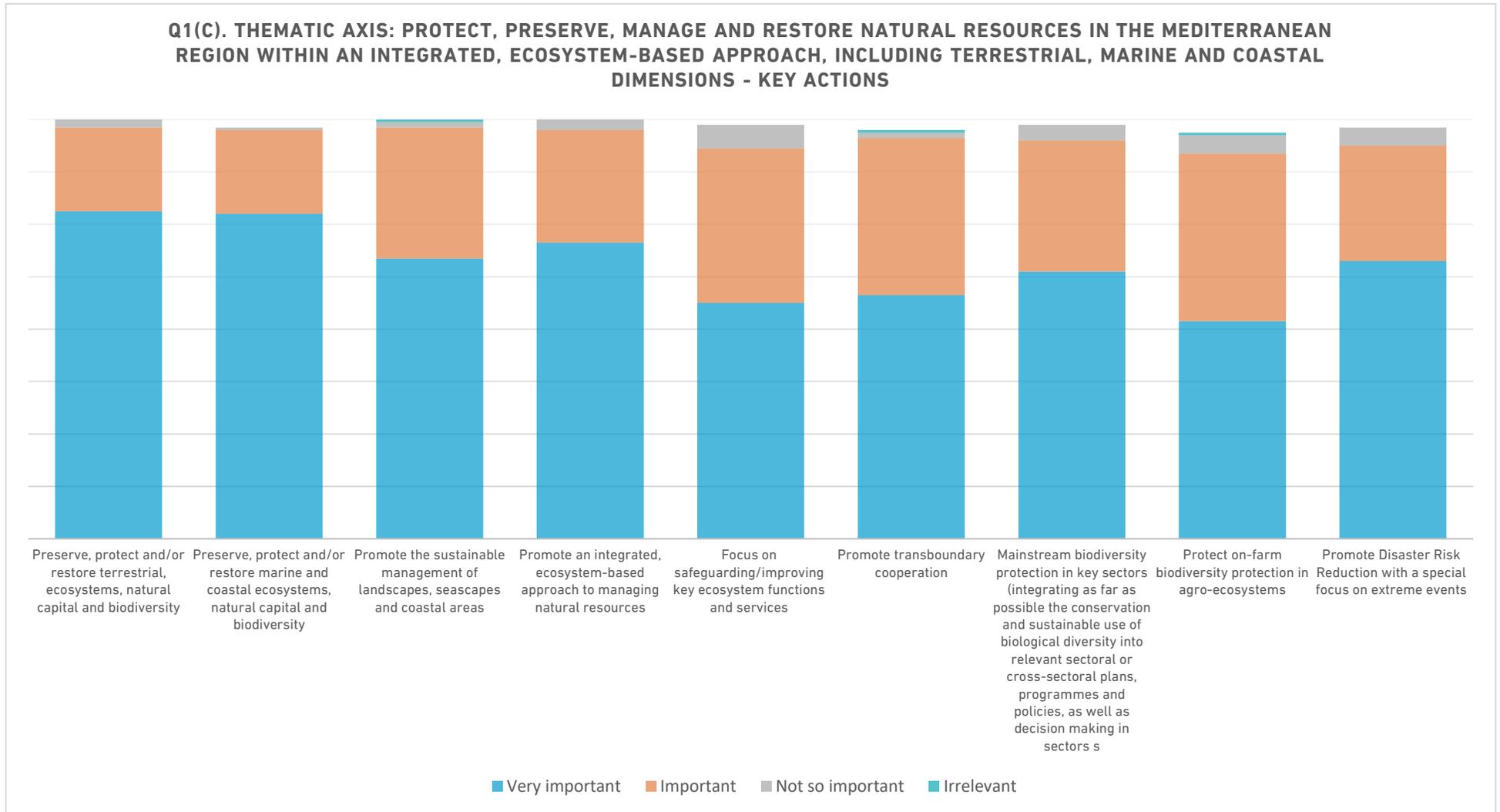


Figure 10 Q2(a) Activity 1: Reinforce the Science- Society- Policy nexus, together with the MedECC network

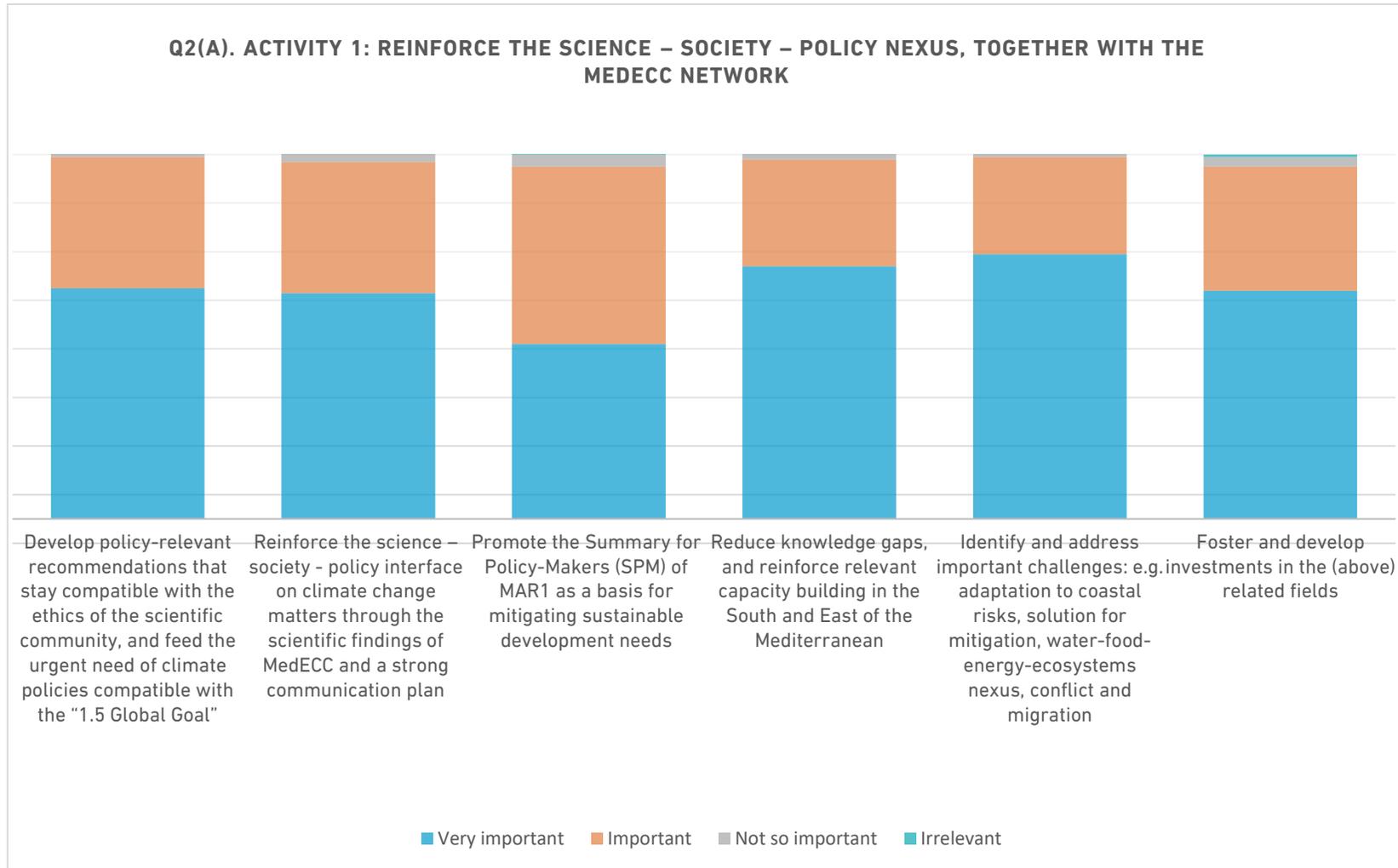


Figure 11 Q2(b) Activity 2: Assistance to the Enhancement of the NDCs of the Paris Agreement

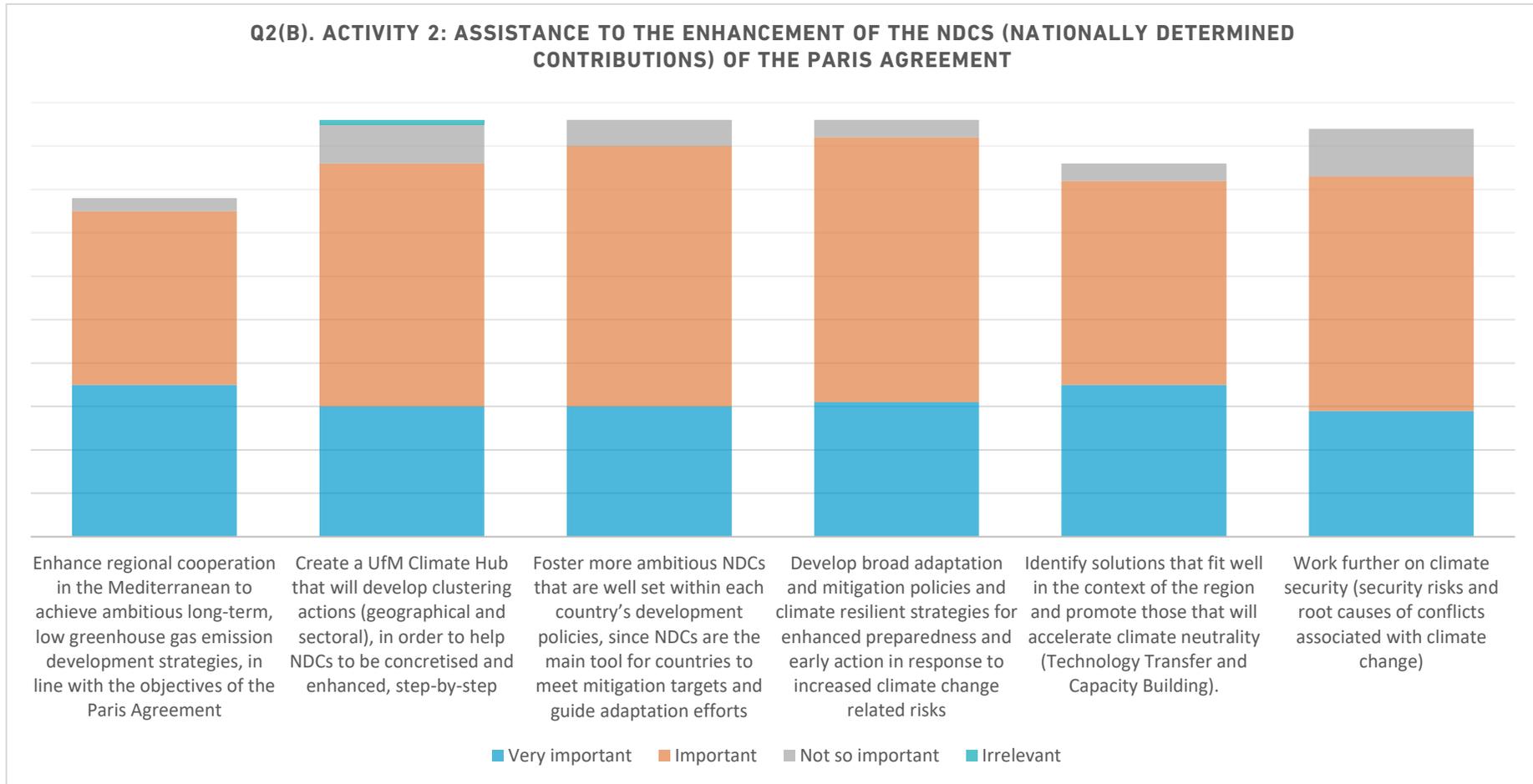




Figure 12 Q2(c) Action 3: Mobilise finance in the framework of a Mediterranean Climate Finance Strategy

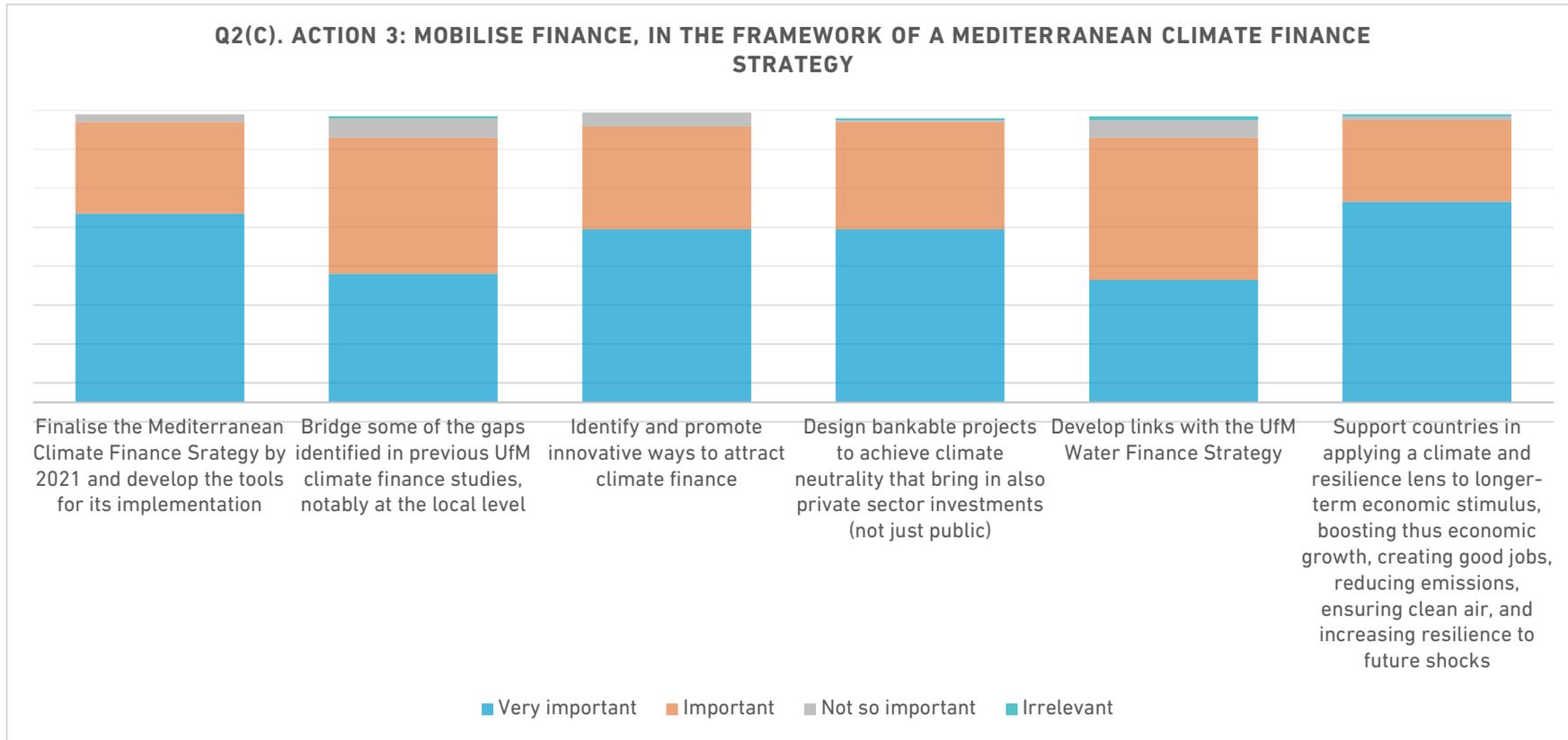




Figure 13 Q6 Challenges that hinder the advancement of environment and climate change agenda in the Med

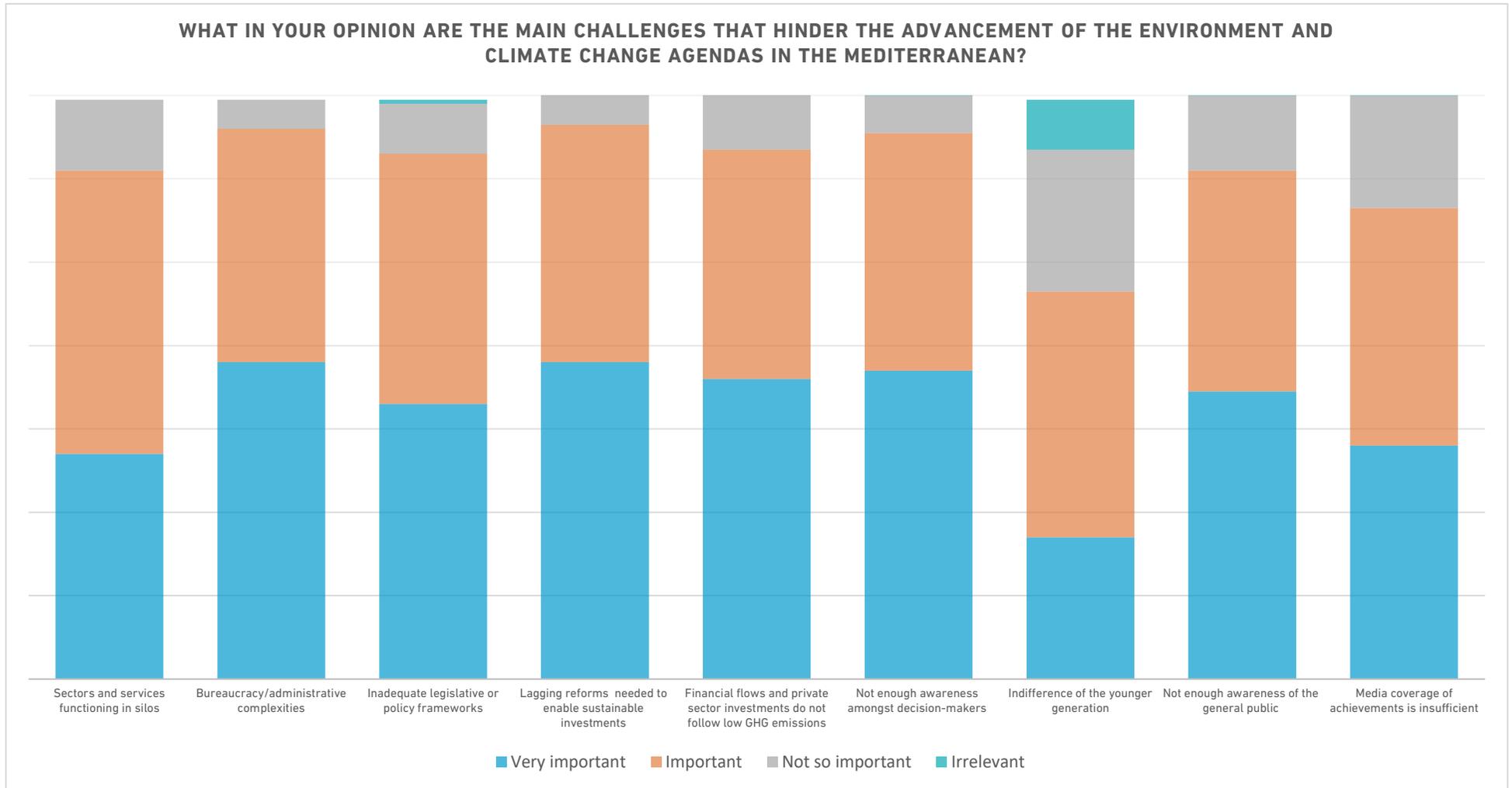




Figure 14 Q8 Use and benefit from the environmental monitoring and reporting system in the Mediterranean

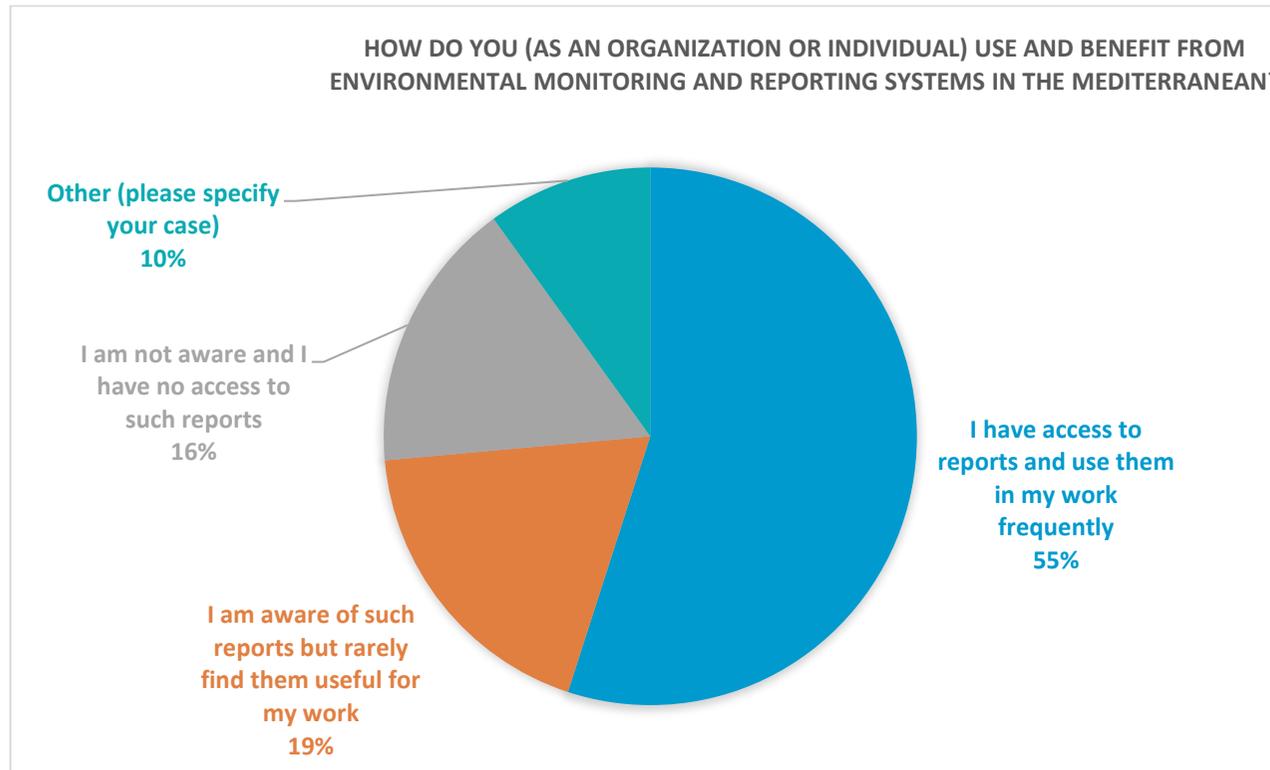
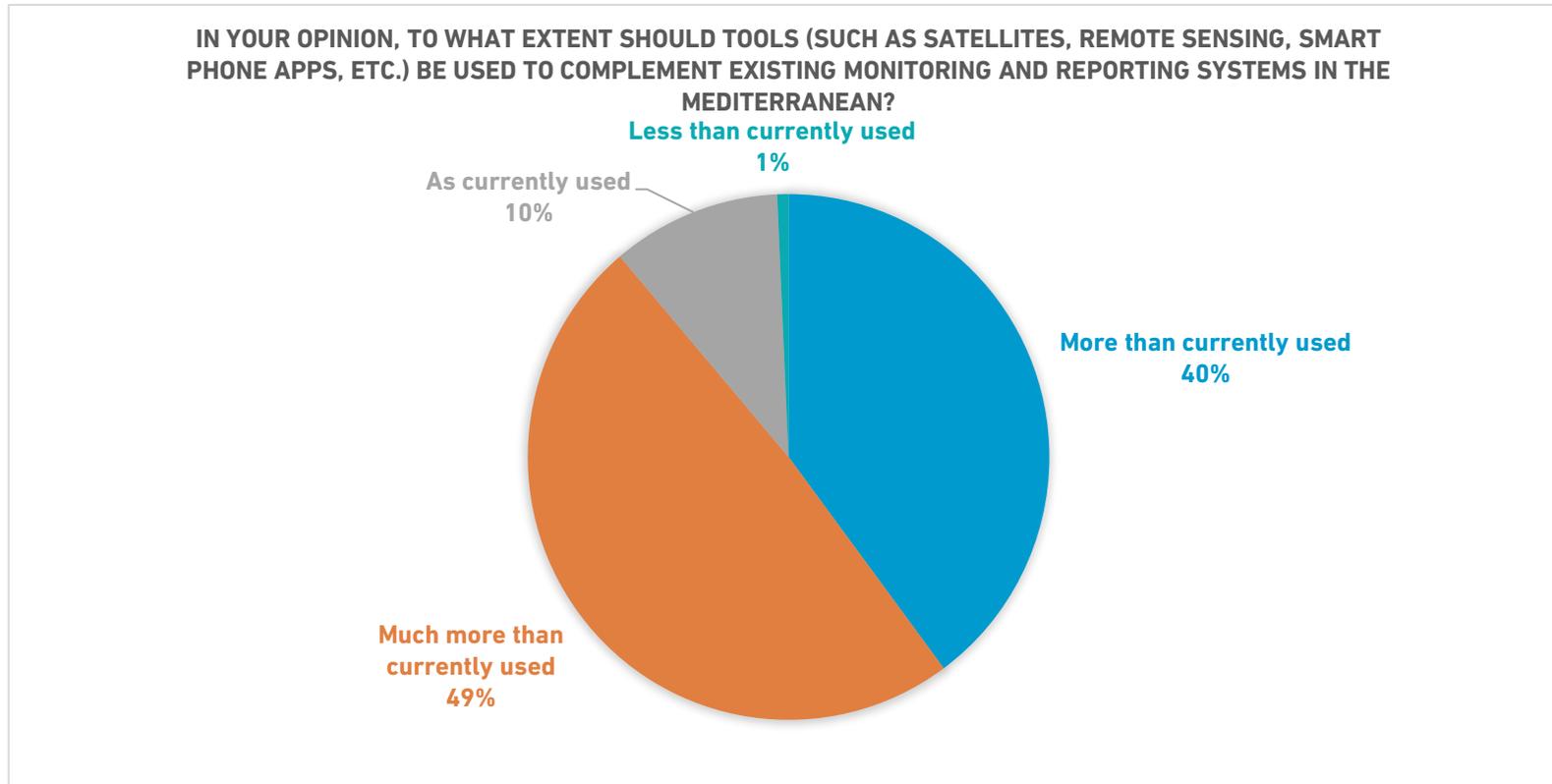




Figure 15 Q8 Extent to which tools should be used to complement monitoring and reporting in the MED





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