



2025 WORK PROGRAMME

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is an intergovernmental Euro-Mediterranean organisation gathering all 27 countries of the European Union and 16 countries of the Southern and the Eastern Mediterranean shores. As a direct continuation of the Barcelona Process, the launch of the UfM in July 2008 was a true reflection of the shared political commitment of its 43 Member States to strengthen regional cooperation, dialogue and integration in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

The UfM Secretariat (hereafter referred to as UfMS), was established in 2008 as the first permanent structure dedicated to the enhancement of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. The Secretariat is based in Barcelona; a location that signifies the permanent linkage between the organisation and the process from which it inherited its acquis. Ever since its creation, the organisation 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.

In line with the reform process launched by the UfM Co-Presidency and Member States in 2023, on the 15th anniversary of the UfM, regarding the role, functioning and efficiency of the organisation, the UfM Secretariat has been working towards a more streamlined, coherent, and cross-sectoral working methodology, increasing internal and external synergies.

In that sense, the proposed 2025 work programme puts forward actions under the UfM renewed priorities¹ under three cross-cutting objectives:

1. To address strategic priorities in the Euro-Mediterranean area through the adoption of common regional agendas and engagement around high-level political initiatives and actions
2. To mobilise regional stakeholders for a more effective ownership and effective operationalization of regional agendas
3. To promote increased initiatives and projects for tangible regional impact on the ground

These three goals lie at the heart of the UfM *raison-d'être* and methodology of work, namely the so-called “three Ps”: Policies; Platforms; and Projects. 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. This three-layered methodology of action was reviewed in 2024 and will be further reinforced throughout 2025, towards increased results and tangible outcomes.

¹ i) environmental and climate action, ii) sustainable and inclusive economic and human development, iii) social inclusiveness and equality, iv) digital transformation, and v) civil protection.

Moreover, the 2025 Work Programme goes beyond transversal objectives, pushing forward cross-sectoral action and proposing several joint endeavours under the UfM priorities, responding to the call of Member States to amplify synergies and boosting efficiency. The UfMS will continue putting a significant emphasis to further interlinking the areas of action described above, to increase impact, as well as relevance of its action. For example, actions on gender and transport will be examined; synergies between the green and digital transitions will be explored; water and youth; urban development and education.... The specific interlinkages are explained and developed under each chapter.

Always in accordance with the ongoing discussions on the UfM reform, the organisation will also continue reinforcing its capacities, implementing increased efficiency and impact not only throughout its activities but also its functioning and processes: through the development of institutional and financial partnerships, reinforced trainings and capacity-building activities, reinforcing the skills of its staff, 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. It will also continue strengthening its relationship, processes, and methodology of work with the UfM Co-Presidency and Member States, through the SOM, and other developed tools, to increase support and engagement in the Secretariat's action, as well as trust and transparency.

Furthermore, 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. The UfM Secretariat will reinforce synergies among global, regional, national and local levels to implement its agenda efficiently. It will particularly work on enhancing the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership with the organisations bound to the Barcelona Process, mainly through their growing joint initiative of Mediterranean Capitals of Culture and Dialogue.

Finally, in light of the evolving geopolitical and socio-economic context across the Euro-Mediterranean region, and considering that the UfM Roadmap for Action, agreed in 2017, has been to a large extent either been implemented or in some sectors outdated, the UfM Secretariat will closely work with the Co-Presidency and Member States in 2025 to continue the reflection on its future priorities and the review of its mandate towards a new Roadmap for Action 2026-2030.

DISCLAIMER: This work programme describes strategic actions planned to be implemented in broad terms. Additional activities linked to the priorities and processes described in this document may be included in the course of the year, always in line with the strategic objectives defined.

Implementation of the actions proposed will be always subject to the availability of resources (human and financial) as well as to the commitment and engagement of the stakeholders involved.

1. UfM Member States address strategic priorities in the Euro-Mediterranean area through the adoption of common regional agendas and mobilization around high-level political initiatives and actions

The UfM's political dimension is structured around Ministerial and governmental representatives' meetings, that define the priorities for the UfM work through the adoption of common agendas in key strategic areas.

Through declarations adopted by consensus of the 43 UfM Member States, Ministerial Meetings address strategic priorities in the region, and define the scope and objectives of a common Mediterranean agenda.

1.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

i) Economic development

- The **UfM Regional Platform on Trade, Investment and Industry** brings together relevant Senior Officials and selected private sector stakeholders from across the UfM region. It will be organized by the Co-presidency twice during the second and fourth quarters of 2025 to **discuss ongoing regional projects and new policies** related to its priority areas as well as how to **foster a common regional agenda** notably through the preparation of Ministerial meetings. This Platform is the result of the recent merge of the UfM Platforms on Trade and Investment and on Industrial cooperation towards more synergies and impact in line with the UfM reform process. The possible 12th UfM Ministerial meeting on Trade, Investment and Industry could be held in the second half of 2025 (tbc).
- The **UfM Ministerial on Digital Economy** (Barcelona, September 2014) called upon the removal of the regional barriers in the digital sector such as: e-trust services including e-signatures, e-health, connectivity for research and education institutions, harmonization of digital economy-related legal frameworks, in particular telecommunications or open data. In that sense, the **UfM Regional Platform on Digital Connectivity and Internet Access**, will be convened by the UfM Co-Presidency to **revive dialogue and engagement among UfM Member States** on issues related to the deep and disruptive digital transformation that affects all aspects of social and economic life, and that offer the opportunity to unleash massive potential, should the massive digital divide in infrastructure and skills be tackled properly.

ii) Employment

- Upon the conclusion of the "UfM Roadmap 2022-2025: Implementation of the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Employment and Labour", a new Roadmap with UfM Secretariat and other partner's implementation activities is foreseen following the **6th UfM Ministerial on Employment and Labour**, that is planned to be held in Q3 2025. The **UfM Regional Platform on Employment and Labour** will meet once during the first quarter of 2025 to prepare this Ministerial meeting. The UfM Community of Practice on Monitoring has been given a new impetus based on the **UfM Ministerial Declaration on Employment and Labour** (Marrakech, 2022). The main objective of this Community of Practice is to foster a culture of monitoring and evidence-based policy making in view of improving efficiency of policy design and implementation.

1.2 HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

i) Higher Education

- **Meeting of the National Focal Points on Higher Education. Erasmus+ in the Southern Mediterranean:** (Barcelona, Spain, February): The Erasmus+ programme has offered opportunities for young people and Higher Education Institutions in the Southern Mediterranean. It helped to improve intercultural understanding and knowledge sharing, as thousands of exchanges of students and staff in both directions

have been organized, hundreds of students from Southern Mediterranean countries have been able to pursue Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees with full scholarships, and many capacity-building projects in Higher Education have been implemented under the current and the previous programming period. Building on that, Ministries and Erasmus+ National Agencies should analyse what has been accomplished so far, discuss about how to better organize student exchanges and support the preparation of quality project proposals, as well as to offer suggestions regarding the future of academic cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The meeting of the UfM National Focal Points on Higher Education of 2025 will be dedicated to launch that discussion.

ii) Research and innovation

- **31st UfM Regional Platform on Research and Innovation** (Barcelona, November 2025): A meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Research and Innovation (R&I) will oversee the implementation of Ministerial priorities since their adoption at the first **UfM Ministerial Declaration in Research and Innovation** (Paris, June 2022). The Declaration acknowledged eight Roadmaps on the three agreed priority themes in the field of R&I: health, climate change, and renewable energy.
- **Meetings of the Bureau of the UfM Regional Platform on Research and Innovation:** Meetings of the UfM R&I Bureau will prepare the Platform meetings, and oversee the development of the Implementation plan and of the UfM Support Mechanism for R&I.
- Other strategic political priorities include the support to a dedicated Implementation Plan of the Ministerial, creating, where possible, synergies with bilateral programmes. Strategic actions will include supporting R&I actions, capacity building actions, scholarship programmes, coordination, and communication actions. Any possible follow-up actions to the Mediterranean Initiative, which was included in the Horizon Europe Work Programme for 2023-2024, will be supported, namely a Mediterranean Initiative II which will be included in the Horizon Europe Work Programme for 2025. Part of the implementation plan is a Euro-Med Hub for Research and Innovation, a one-stop-shop digital resource for Mediterranean stakeholders, jointly developed by the European Commission and the Union for the Mediterranean. In 2025 the Hub will continue being hosted by the UfM Secretariat.
- The UfMS will continue supporting the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) and liaise with the Dialogue 5+5 for Research, Innovation and Education, who is foreseen to hold a Ministerial Conference in Portugal in the second half of 2024. In 2025, the UfMS will continue hosting and attending several of their meetings.

1.3 SOCIAL AND CIVIL AFFAIRS

i) Women Empowerment

Roadmap for Implementation of the 5th UfM Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society and 2nd Progress Report on Gender Equality

- As part of the Roadmap for Implementation 2024-2025, the UfMS will launch the **second progress report on Gender Equality** focused on transformative approaches that address the root causes of gender inequalities as result of the second reporting exercise on gender indicators activities, to be launched in the 2nd half of 2024 but fully implemented in 2025. The presentation of the 2nd progress report will be delivered in the framework of the meeting of the **UfM Regional Platform on Women Empowerment**, foreseen in the last quarter of 2025.

ii) Youth engagement

Follow-up implementation of the UfM Youth Agenda

In alignment with the UfM Youth Strategy 2030 and UfM Youth Agenda priorities, the UfMS will launch a **Technical Assistance (TA) on the UfM Youth Agenda implementation** in 2025. This initiative follows the outcomes of the 2023

and 2024 online Youth Engagement meetings and the 2024 mapping exercise of youth-focused Civil Society Organizations in the Euro-Mediterranean region. It aims to ensure that UfM Youth initiatives proposed for 2025/6 and beyond receive the necessary political endorsement cross-sectorially and address the needs of the region's youth, even if neither a Ministerial Declaration on Youth nor a Regional Platform on Youth engagement are foreseen. This exercise will aim to indeed to align the UfM Youth Agenda implementation with other regional strategies, harmonize stakeholder inputs, and maintain relevance and impact. Activities will include consultations with relevant stakeholders—such as UfM Network of Focal Points on Youth, youth-focused and youth-led CSOs, = youth professionals and experts—supporting the development of methodologies and documents for youth-related projects.

i) Disability

UfM Regional Agenda on the Socio-Economic Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

The UfM Secretariat will strive, under the guidance of its Co-Presidency and Member States, to establish a **regional Agenda on the Socio-Economic Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities** based on the Theory of Change, the consultation and the workshop carried out in 2024. The agenda will include priorities for future actions agreed in collaboration with the main stakeholders of the region, most notably UfM Member States and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) and will provide the basis for the contribution to the 2025 Global Disability summit scheduled in April 2025 in Germany and co-chaired by Germany and Jordan.

ii) Civil protection

Action Plan 2030

The UfMS will adopt and follow-up on the implementation of the **Action Plan 2030 for Civil Protection** currently under development : the activities foreseen in the action plan will be developed throughout the Working groups on Preparedness, Prevention, Response, as well as the setting up of the Observatory of Volunteering, provided that additional funds are available.

1.4 TRANSPORT AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

i) Transport

On 9 February 2023, the **2nd UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport** established a new mandate for transport cooperation in the UfM area of action through the adoption of the **2023 Ministerial Declaration** and the new **Regional Transport Action Plan (RTAP)** for the Mediterranean region until 2027.

In 2025:

- The Regional Platform and its Working Groups will convene twice to continue monitoring the implementation of the RTAP, following the mid-term assessment.
- Sustainable, climate-neutral and zero-pollution maritime transport is one of the 10 priorities of the 2021 **UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy**. Continued coordination will be sought in this regard, including in the framework of the WestMED Initiative.

ii) Urban Development

The 3rd **UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development** held in Zagreb (Croatia) on the 4 May 2023, provides a key mandate for the implementation of the UfM Urban Agenda, especially through the new UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040 and its Housing Action Plan. Following the Ministerial declaration mandate, the UfMS will move forward in 2025 to, among others, promote public policies and programmes to tackle affordable housing, boost energy efficiency in buildings, promote the valuation and dissemination of vernacular architecture and traditional building skills, compare coastal land planning instruments across the region, and support the identification of bankable projects.

1.5 WATER, ENVIRONMENT AND BLUE ECONOMY

i) Water

Meeting of the Drafting Group on the Ministerial Declaration on Water. Morocco and Malta offered to steer this drafting group for the 2nd UfM Ministerial Declaration on Water. This group will convene at least once in-person, tentatively in the first quarter of 2025. It will be tasked with identifying the main themes that will form the backbone of the ministerial declaration on water and related issues reflecting a holistic and collaborative approach to address regional water challenges. The drafting group will also reflect and take stock of the first Ministerial Declaration on Water (Malta, 2017).

2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Water. Over 7 years have passed since the 1st UfM Ministerial Meeting on Water took place in 2017. A new ministerial meeting is needed to provide political impetus to the process of implementing the UfM Water Agenda to 2030 as well as to incorporate new priorities such as the importance of an approach to highlight the nexus between water, energy, climate and environment, in policy-making. It is proposed that the Ministerial will take place in the last quarter of 2025 (tbc).

UfM Ministerial Meetings on Water (2017) and on Environment and Climate Action (2021) call the UfM to address the climate and environmental crisis through an integrated approach acknowledging that, in the Mediterranean, water, energy, food and agriculture and ecosystems issues are inextricably linked. At the **13th Meeting of the UfM Regional Platform for Water**, UfM Member States supported the proposal of developing a draft strategy for the “Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea continuum”, as a joint effort led by the UfM, the EU and UNEP MAP with the technical support of GWP-Med, the Water and Environment Support (WES) project and PRIMA, to propose a strategic framework to assist countries in enhancing integration of policy across sectors and to promote leveraging of necessary funding. Following broad consultations in 2023 and 2024, the draft strategy is now presented for discussion at the **14th Meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Water** to be formally approved at the **15th Meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Water** mid-2025 to be finally endorsed at the next UfM Water Ministerial Meeting late 2025. In 2025, the UfM Secretariat will carry two activities to finalize the draft strategy and prepare an implementation roadmap including monitoring and evaluation mechanisms which will be shared for approval at the 15th Meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Water.

3rd Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus Roundtable for the Mediterranean to be held during S1 2025, co-organized with UfM partners. It will have two objectives: (i) prepare an implementation and M&E Roadmap of the WEFE Strategy and (ii) leverage funding and mobilize private capital. (PCM) for the WEFE.

A TA will be launched to support the implementation of the WEFE Roadmap, including by leveraging public and private capital to ensure all four sectors are adequately funded, particularly biodiversity and ecosystems, which currently receive less financing. This TA would be complemented by TAs from other partners on the WEFE strategy implementation. It will also be complemented by a **workshop, organised back-to-back with the Roundtable**, aimed at enhancing the digital skills and knowledge of individuals involved in water management across the Mediterranean, and specifically in the nexus of water-energy-food-ecosystems (WEFE).

ii) Environment

In 2025, following on the adoption of the **UfM Ministerial on Environment and Climate Change** (Cairo, October 2021) and the implementation of the Greener Med Agenda 2030 as framework for regional cooperation and technical/financial convergence around the endorsed priority axes of work, the UfM Secretariat will:

advance the GreenerMed Agenda, keeping track of the progress towards the above-mentioned priorities and revise the original GreenerMed document to reflect/integrate the ongoing international and regional developments such as the Global Biodiversity framework, the International Agreement on Plastic Pollution, BBNJ-Biodiversity beyond National Jurisdiction, Barcelona Convention COP and the Emission Control Area MED and more, as appropriate;

- in line with the GreenerMed results-based Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation Plan, complete the agreed external Mid Term Evaluation set for 2025, building on the late 2023 First GreenerMed Monitoring

Report; the regular project mapping; the country updates on their national developments; the e-survey; a dedicated technical assistance will be launched for the above mentioned purpose.

iii) **Blue economy**

In line with the **UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy** (online, February 2021), the UfMS will continue the implementation of the related UfM SBE Roadmap in order to progress on the endorsed priority axes of work, including the Emission Control Area MED. In line with the already approved and ongoing results-based Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation System of the Roadmap/Ministerial, an external mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration is planned in 2025. Annual reporting by the countries on progress achieved towards the implementation of the Ministerial/Roadmap, for each of its priorities, will also take place in the framework of the **Regional Platform on SBE**.

The outcomes of the UfM Stakeholders Conference together with the information/inputs shared by countries through the SBE result based monitoring mechanism at the Regional Platform on SBE, contain new thematic elements that could be addressed in a future Ministerial Declaration, tentatively scheduled in 2026.

The above work is to be achieved in close coordination with a wide range of partners, including the regular and continued coordination with the WestMED Initiative, ensuring close alignment of priorities between the UfM and the WestMED Initiative through (inter alia) participation in mutual meetings, including WestMED Steering Committees, UfM SBE Regional Platform meetings, WestMED Technical Groups, etc.

1.6 ENERGY AND CLIMATE ACTION

i) **Energy**

To address energy challenges and promote sustainable energy models, the UfMS continuously supports Member States and partners in implementing regional strategies and frameworks to stay aligned with regional needs and global sustainability goals, notably through the 2021 **UfM Ministerial Declaration on Energy**.

Following the streamlining exercise of the UfM Regional Platforms conducted in 2024, the Declaration is implemented via three key Working Groups: the UfM Working Group on a Regional Electricity Market, the UfM Working Group on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, and the UfM Working Group on Gas, Emissions Abatement and Hydrogen (whose mandate has been expanded from the original Working Group on Gas). These Working Groups operationalise the declaration via a comprehensive Roadmap for Action to advance the Declaration's objectives and support its implementation. The initial Roadmap, adopted in 2022, concluded in 2024, and in coordination with platform stakeholders, the UfMS initiated the preparation of a new Roadmap to guide the region for the 2025-2027 period. Furthermore, in coordination with the UfM, the Commission engaged in an evaluation of the mid-term implementation of the 2021 **UfM Ministerial Declaration on Energy**. The study is assessing progress in implementing the Roadmap, evaluating outcomes, and providing recommendations to enhance future implementation. Updates to the Declaration will be proposed based on recent developments in energy policies and practices. The study will also offer recommendations for updating the Ministerial Declarations and provide support to the UfM Secretariat during consultations with Member States.

Considering the above and building on the work carried out in previous years, in 2025, the UfM Secretariat will focus on reviving Member States' dialogue and engagement to scale-up regional coordination. To achieve this goal:

- the UfMS will organise bilateral meetings with Member States' focal points and collaborate closely with the European Commission. The meetings will aim to understand the expectations of Member States vis-à-vis the UfM and the most optimal way to get involved in working at a regional level to advance the Mediterranean joint energy agenda.
- In addition, the UfMS will work with the EU and Member States to work towards implementing relevant recommendations proposed and approved in the Mid-term evaluation assessment.

ii) Climate Action

UfM Member States adopted in Cairo in 2021 the 2nd UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Action which sets the desired course of policy action in a broad number of domains, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions, limiting temperature increase to 1.5°, reducing fossil fuels use, phasing out of fossil fuel subsidies, reinforcing science-society-policy nexus, fostering regional cooperation, scaling up finance to the region, enhancing awareness and understanding of climate change, integrating gender and youth consideration into climate policy, action and investments.

Underlining the role of the UfM as a key forum for political dialogue in the region and a valuable platform to achieve effective regional cooperation, the UfM Working Group on Climate Action (previously the Climate Change Expert Group – CCEG) will continue its support to the implementation of the objectives of this Declaration. The UfMS will use this Working Group to monitor the progress and regularly review the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration.

The UfM Secretariat will focus in 2025:

- On reinforcing continuous bilateral engagement with Member States, aiming at reviving the political dialogue and engagement to scale-up regional coordination. To achieve this goal, the UfMS will facilitate bilateral meetings with Member States' focal points and collaborate closely with the European Commission, , and European Union Delegations, aiming to enhance coordination and foster greater cooperation with Member States.
- This collaborative effort will also focus on implementing the recommendations derived from the evaluation of the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration, performed by consultants hired by the EC to evaluate Member States' engagement within the UfM and assess the need for updating the section on Climate Action of the Ministerial declaration and/or developing an action plan to enable more efficient monitoring of the Ministerial declaration's implementation.

2. Regional stakeholders are mobilised for a more effective ownership and effective implementation of regional agendas

The UfM's policy dimension is structured around permanent regional platforms involving not only representatives from governmental institutions and experts, but also regional and international organisations, local authorities, civil society, private sector and financial institutions.

This close interaction between national experts and stakeholders is a fundamental tool to exchange on the ministerial mandates, better understand the needs, share experiences, identify best practices and promote concrete projects of cooperation, as well as monitoring progress in implementing the regional agendas.

This dimension is complemented with ad hoc events and meetings that the UfM Secretariat organises to foster networking opportunities, launch key initiatives, gather insights and join hands with other regional stakeholders that contribute to the regional agendas.

2.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

The UfM Hub for Jobs, Trade and Investment which was launched in 2022 and which is part of the Team Europe Initiative for Jobs through Trade and Investment in the Southern Neighbourhood, forms the overarching framework

under which most of the activities by the UfM Secretariat in the field of Economic Development and Employment are realised. Youth and women employment and employability remain to be at the heart of these activities, with youth and women empowerment, gender equality and just transition being transversal values. The following activities under the UfM Hub for Jobs, Trade and Investment, unlike the UfM Regional Platforms stipulated under section 1.1, involve not only representatives from governmental institutions and experts, but also regional and international organizations, local authorities, civil society, private sector and financial institutions, promoting a dynamic and inclusive regional dialogue under these thematic issues.

i) Economic development

• **The 7th UfM Trade and Investment Forum**

During the **12th UfM Ministerial on Trade** in 2023, UfM Ministers encouraged the organization of business-to-governments and business-to-business meetings in the region, with a special focus on enforcement and implementation of the existing bilateral and regional trade agreements, as well as the fight against non-tariff barriers and advancing work on further economic integration, including through mobilization of capital flows for sustainable development and decent job creation. Acting upon this mandate, the UfM Secretariat will organize the UfM Trade and Investment Forum in Barcelona during the fourth quarter of 2025, the seventh edition in seven successive years, tackling the most pertinent opportunities and challenges. It will benefit from the expertise of a broad spectrum of experts and actors in the field who will come together to discuss latest trends, opportunities, and challenges, as well as best practices that can be replicated or scaled up. The key recommendations from the Forum will guide future actions of the UfM Secretariat in the field and will inform the preparations for the next UfM Ministerial on Trade and Investment.

• **9th Conference of Central Mediterranean Bank Governors**

Following up on the collaboration achieved in the last years and in partnership with OECD, IEMed, el Banco de Espana and the Central Bank of Egypt, the UfM will co-organize this event to be held in Egypt in Q1 of 2025 (TBC) to gather Governors of Mediterranean Central Banks as well as representatives of International Organizations, Private Sector and Academia. It will provide a unique opportunity to exchange best practices and ideas on the challenges facing financial stability and how to address them in an effective manner as well long-term priorities such as financial inclusion and green finance.

• **UfM Workshops on Sustainable investment (sustainable finance)**

In line with the three pillars of the Team Europe Initiative on Jobs through Trade and Investment (TEI) and acting upon the relevant Ministerial Declarations, the UfM Secretariat will capitalize on its previous work and continue raising the awareness of its stakeholders about the importance of driving investments towards serving sustainability goals. In this context and with the objective of synergy-building exchange, a workshop will be organized during the first semester of 2025 to exchange on best practices and inspiring strategies in the region.

• **UfM Conference on Artificial Intelligence for Economic Growth**

The rapidly advancing Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies are reshaping the economic landscape by offering huge opportunities to enhance economic growth and business competitiveness. Data has shown that AI-powered solutions can significantly improve productivity, efficiency, and decision-making processes.

However, the adoption of AI still faces several challenges such as high implementation costs, ethical issues such AI risks in the workplace, and the perception related to the risk of employees losing their jobs. This event which will take place during the second quarter of 2025 will gather industry experts, policy makers and civil society representatives to explore how to make AI work for sustainable economic growth and discuss its impact on economic sectors such as Creative and Cultural Industries.

ii) Employment

- **The UfM Community of Practice on Youth Employment in the Southern Mediterranean**

During the **5th UfM Ministerial on Employment and Labour**, the UfM Ministers encouraged to further develop the use of Communities of Practice, notably on youth employment. The UfM Secretariat has therefore launched a Community of Practice on Youth Employment meeting online and twice a year in person, including as from 2024 a field visit. Its purpose is to collect, discuss, assess and disseminate experiences and good practices inter alia in supporting decent job creation as well as quality education systems and training, skills and employability. The UfM Secretariat will organise two meetings of this Community of Practice in 2025 during the second and the fourth quarters.

- **UfM Informal Economy Conference**

A conference on informal economy will take place during the second quarter of 2025 to take stock of the current state-of-play of informal employment and its multiple (interrelated) dimensions with regard to jobs, enterprises, and its contribution to the economy. It will also explore ways to tackle challenges of informality in the region from different perspectives like structural policies, access to finance and impact of e-commerce (digital platforms). In line with the UfM's emphasis on ensuring the contribution of its activities to regional stability and inclusive development efforts, the UfM Secretariat will organize this Conference bringing together stakeholders from different sectors across the labour market and the employment landscape to exchange views and experiences, share best practices and lessons learned, and present recommendations on how to tackle the transition to formal economy using multidisciplinary approaches that would take into consideration the special needs of vulnerable groups and groups at the risk of economic exclusion.

- **UfM Conference on "Tourism and Job Creation in the Mediterranean"**

The full potential of tourism as a vehicle of economic development and a generator of decent jobs is still not fully tapped. In line with UfM priorities to address structural challenges in the region particularly the growing labour shortages, structural skills and competencies mismatches and gaps between labour force supply and demand and focusing on sectors with untapped economic potentials in some sectors like tourism. The UfM Secretariat will organize a conference during the first semester of 2025 to examine the current realities, opportunities and challenges in this Sector across the region, bringing together a broad spectrum of partners and stakeholders from the tourism sector focusing on deepening the interlinkage with the private sector to share best practices, exchange views and experiences, and present recommendations on the sector-related issues on employment and employability.

- **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 will organize a Conference on Digital Transformation during the third quarter of 2025 with a focus on employment-related opportunities and challenges. This activity could feed the discussions under the revived **UfM Regional Platform on Digital Connectivity and Internet Access**. The Conference will bring together digital entrepreneurs from the UfM region to showcase success stories, as well as employment and labour market experts to discuss the employment-related challenges associated with digitalisation. The outcome document from the Conference will guide future UfM Secretariat actions in this area.

The outcomes of the CoP discussions and the aforementioned Conferences will feed the 6th UfM Ministerial on Employment and Labour scheduled for the last quarter of 2025.

2.2 HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

i) Higher Education

UfM Higher Education Stakeholders' Meeting - Greening Curricula: a cross-cutting challenge for Higher Education Institutions. (Tunis, Tunisia, May): Achieving sustainable development goals and positive impact within and for the region requires a holistic approach and strong collaboration of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Euro-Mediterranean. The curricula and tools of many HEIs are not yet fully adapted to train students and researchers on how to tackle and work on global and complex problems. Not all the institutions have the resources and funding to support research in sustainability and implementation of sustainable solutions. The meeting, gathering representatives from Euro-Mediterranean universities, will advance the reflection on how to introduce modules, seminars and programmes on sustainability and SDGs into the curricula as well as extracurricular activities.

ii) Research and innovation

UfM Innovation Conference: from Research to Business (Tirana, Albania, October): The main purpose of this conference will be exploring the pipeline between research and job market/startup creation, further bridging UfM areas of action. It could be held back-to-back with a second edition of an EuroMed Innovation Market, in view of creating synergies and increase visibility of individual actions, while showcasing successful research projects with potential regional impact. It could be launched, continuing pilot actions developed in 2023, both at national and regional levels. A technical assistance would support its development and promotion. The Conference can associate the Mediterranean Innovation Partnership, PRIMA, among others.

Study on the state of Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean: If additional resources are made available, studies could be foreseen on existing and upcoming priorities of research and innovation in the Euro-Mediterranean, identifying key data, indicators, and trends in the region, and paving the way for a future UfM Ministerial Conference on Research and Innovation.

Following the joining of the UfM Secretariat in the Mediterranean Innovation Partnership, initiated by CIHEAM Bari, the UfMS will seek synergies between this initiative and its activities connected to innovation.

2.3 SOCIAL AND CIVIL AFFAIRS

i) Women Empowerment

UfM Platform on Women Empowerment's meetings: in 2025, two Online working group meetings under the framework of the UfM Regional Platform on Women Empowerment (April-June 2025) will take place, as well as the meeting of the regional Platform itself (last quarter 2025). They will be devoted to 1) validate the 2nd Gender Equality report and to 2) monitor the implementation of the Roadmap for the Ministerial.

UfM Women Community of Practices on the nexus Gender Environment and Climate (CoP)

- Following the launch of this CoP in 2024 to work as a based knowledge regional platform to exchange good practices, share data analysis, provide operational recommendations to the policy makers and implement gender-responsive environmental policies, a specific focus in 2025 will be to the **climate-change dimension** included in **the Women Peace and Security Agenda**: a dedicated number of the Joint Policy study publication **UfM/IEMED MedWe** will be released early 2025.

Gender and Food Security Regional Agenda

- Given the recognition stated in the Ministerial Declaration of the fact that the regional crisis "induced a food crisis by pushing further behind and into extreme poverty women and girls in massive numbers", the UfMS will work on the implementation of the **Gender and Food Security Regional Agenda**, with different regional stakeholders such as the Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Partnership for Research and Innovation in

the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA). The Agenda will rely potentially on an online platform hosting knowledge sharing and productions as well as training materials, building on the already existing **Sustainable Food System Platform** co-owned by UfMS, FAO and PRIMA will be explored.

Mediterranean Women In Tech Network

- In line with one of the strategic objectives of the 5th Ministerial Declaration, which aims to, among others: “promote the establishing of regional platforms aiming at supporting Women Economic Empowerment in the Euro-Mediterranean region”, the UfM follow-up on the activities to be implemented under the platform of the **Mediterranean Tech Women Network and focused on Tech and Artificial Intelligence (AI)**.

International Women’s Day.

- A devoted webinar is planned for March 2025. The specific focus of the event will be in line with the priority theme of the UN Commission on the Status of Women for 2025, still to be announced but it will be certainly related to 30th **anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)**. It will aim at increasing the visibility of the UfMS in this field and further mobilize its network of actors and stakeholders around this priority area.

Synergies with the Transport portfolio: With a view to greater efficiency and impact, the UfM Transport and Women Empowerment sectors will co-implement joint activities in 2025, namely an advocacy event aimed at promoting a gender-inclusive perspective in sustainable urban transport policies and decision making in the UfM Member States, as well as in planning and projects on the ground (See also “Transport” section).

ii) Youth

Youth representation in UfM Regional Dialogue Platforms and Ministerial initiatives

In order to ensure youth engagement in the policy dialogue of the UfM and in the formulation and follow-up of the UfM Ministerial initiatives, an internal pilot practice to institutionalise the integration of youth voices in UfM Regional Platforms and ministerial initiatives will be launched in 2025: up to three young people will be selected based on background and motivation via a call for applications and invited to contribute in three UfM Regional Platforms meetings. The specific UfM Regional Platforms will be selected based on engagement level, Member State representation, and thematic alignment with UfM Youth Agenda priorities (Climate Action and Environment, Education and Employment, Social Inclusion and Participation). This initiative will capitalise on best practices already implemented by the UfM, (i.e., the inclusion of youth voices in the UfM Regional Platform on Employment) aiming to ensure the systematic engagement of youth in UfM initiatives and their contribution to UfM Ministerial Declarations. The final goal of this initiative is to develop a scalable model for youth integration in UfM Regional Platforms and ministerial initiatives. Specific synergies with relevant programs already in place (i.e., EU-funded project Mediterranean Youth in Action by the Anna Lindh Foundation) will be duly explored.

iii) Civil protection

4 online Working Group meetings under the supervision of 4 external experts hired in 2024 will be carried out between March and June 2025, in addition to a physical meeting of the **Regional Platform on Civil Protection** if funds are available. Participation in events is possible, such as Nicosia Risk Forum in Cyprus or other events/actions organised by UNDRR (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction), if this is deemed necessary.

iv) Disability

The UfMS, together with ONCE (Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles) Social Group and other regional partners, will organise **the 3rd Euro-Mediterranean Conference** on Disability to be hosted by Greece in the first quarter of 2025, thereby putting forward a regional position to be presented at the Global Disability Summit scheduled to take place in Germany, in April 2025.

2.4 TRANSPORT AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

i) Transport

Meetings of the UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity and its thematic Working Groups: follow-up, monitoring, and evaluation of the RTAP

- In 2025, in coordination with the UfM Co-Presidency, the UfM Secretariat will support the organisation of up to **two rounds of meetings of the UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity and its thematic Working Groups on Land, Air and Maritime Transport and Logistics** in all its aspects, one round online around June and one round in person later in the year (tbc), with a view to ensuring the follow up, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the new RTAP, following the mid-term assessment carried out in 2024, as well as reflecting on how to maximise the benefits of ongoing regional projects and initiatives aiming to support UfM Member States in implementing the RTAP.
- During the meetings, UfM Member States will provide updates on their progress regarding the implementation of the actions under each component of the RTAP, encompassing both horizontal and thematic subsectors.
- In order to increase engagement with the UfM Partners and enhance delivery on the RTAP objectives, special focus could be put on certain specific objectives of the RTAP during the meetings of the Regional Platform and its WGs. This focus should be determined based on the finalised mid-term review, reflecting ongoing progress in the implementation of the RTAP and specific priorities of the UfM Partners.
- Additional engagement with the UfM national transport coordinators will also take place in the form of regular evaluation of the RTAP objectives, which notably also serves to enhance accountability of the objectives. The UfM Secretariat will be expected to play a more active role in this process, following the mid-term review of the RTAP conducted in 2024.
- The WGs will also discuss previous, ongoing and future regional projects and initiatives, along with activities organized by the UfM Secretariat, aimed at supporting UfM Member States with the implementation of the RTAP. In this context, discussions will tackle the most effective technical and financial assistance by which these projects and initiatives could enhance the overall achievement of the RTAP 2021-2027 objectives.
- The agendas of the Regional Platform meetings will also contain a standing item on regional projects with a view to identifying potential projects for their submission to the UfM label. Promoters of UfM labelled projects or other relevant projects could be invited as observers to the meetings of the Regional Platform. Additionally, *ad-hoc* sessions within the Regional Platform meetings and/or back to-back meetings involving IFIs and donors will be organised to discuss, in particular, on the potential UfM pipeline of transport projects emerging in relation to the RTAP.

Additional UfM Secretariat support to the implementation of the RTAP

Additional moments of engagement with UfM National Transport Coordinators and Focal Points will be provided through the organisation of **regional workshops** targeting specific priority objectives within the RTAP.

With regard to the first pillar of regional transport cooperation, regulatory reform and convergence in all transport sectors, the UfM Secretariat, in coordination with the Co-presidency, will prioritise its work on two transport sub-sectors covered by the RTAP, namely i) sustainable ports and maritime transport and ii) sustainable urban transport and mobility.

- In this context, the UfM Secretariat will organise **regional workshops**, open to the participation of key regional and international stakeholders (including IGOs, NGOs, academia IFIs, donors and private sector), to raise awareness, amplify country engagement, as well as the outreach and impact on the ground, exchange best practices, build capacity, and discuss/develop recommendations related to the implementation of specific actions under the two priority policy areas.

- Given that the first policy area is a shared priority between the UfM Regional Transport Action Plan and the UfM Sustainable Blue Economy Roadmap, a regional workshop on the greening of ports and maritime transport in the Mediterranean basin will be jointly organised by the UfM Transport and Blue Economy portfolios, and held back-to-back with the meeting of **UfM Regional Platform on Blue Economy** (to be held in the 2nd quarter of 2025, date and venue tbc), as a follow-up to a similar workshop organised in 2024, to continue discussing the way ahead in this green-blue transition. In particular, the regional workshop will address such topics as the development of Motorways of the Sea services, ports as energy hubs, as well as related regulatory reform and convergence actions and infrastructure investment needs.
- Secondly, given the cross-sectorial interlinkages between Transport and Urban Development, the UfM Transport and Urban Development portfolios will co-implement a second regional workshop on Sustainable Urban Transport and Mobility, to be held in November 2025 in Morocco (tbc), which will address in particular sustainable urban mobility plans, and related infrastructure investment needs.

Regarding the second pillar, the transport connectivity network in the Mediterranean, the UfM Secretariat will continue providing its support through:

- The organisation, through the UfM Hub for Jobs, Trade and Investment, of a **high-level event** aiming, *inter alia*, to raise awareness on the benefits of enhancing transport connectivity in the region, learn about the revised TEN-T methodology and the current state-of play of UfM countries regarding their national transport infrastructure connectivity strategies and plans, showcase best practices and case studies on transport infrastructure investment projects and developments with a regional and international dimension, discuss transport infrastructure investment financing and on trade facilitation measures being implemented to improve connectivity

The high-level event will take place in Barcelona in the first quarter of 2025 (exact *date and venue tbc*).

Some of these events may be co-organised with partner organisations and platforms such as GIZ, the International Transport Summit (ITF) at the OECD, the MEDports Association, the MobiliseyouCity platform, the International Association of Public Transport (UITP), the International Road Federation (IRF), etc., building on the successful cooperation in previous years.

Joint activities with relevant international and regional stakeholders, building on established and consolidated UfM partnerships, for a more effective ownership and implementation of regional agendas, providing capacity building and skills development and engaging in advocacy actions.

- **2025 International Transport Forum (ITF) Summit and ITF Consultation Day with International Organizations (within the framework of the joint MoU UfM/ITF/OECD)**

The UfM Secretariat will contribute to the 2025 Summit of the International Transport Forum (ITF/OECD) on “Enhancing Transport Resilience to Global Shocks” (21-o 23 May, Leipzig, Germany), as well as in the ITF Consultation Day with International Organizations (January 2025, Paris, France), for the preparation of the Summit. The 2025 Summit will kickstart the Summit Trilogy on Accelerating the Transition towards Inclusive, Resilient, and Net-zero Transport.

Under the UfM Transport and Women empowerment portfolios, the UfM Secretariat will submit a proposal to jointly organise together with the ITF a regional side event at the ITF Summit (May 2025, Leipzig) aimed at exchanging best practices and presenting successful case studies and experiences encompassing the promotion of a gender-inclusive perspective into sustainable urban transport and mobility projects, plans and policies in the Mediterranean region.

Since the promotion of sustainable urban transport is paramount in climate change mitigation, this activity falls under the Women Empowerment priority “Gender equality and Climate change”.

- **14th edition of the MARLOG International Conference on Maritime Transport and Logistics**

The UfM Secretariat will be a co-organizer of the 14th edition of the MARLOG International Conference on Maritime Transport and Logistics titled “Artificial Intelligence Implementations. Towards Shaping the Future of the Digital World”, which will take place on 23-25 February 2025 in Alexandria, Egypt, hosted by Arab Academy for Science Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT).

- **2025 MEDports Forum**

The UfM Secretariat will support the organization of the 2025 MEDports Forum (to be held in the 2nd quarter of 2025, date and venue TBC). The Annual Medports Forum provides a valuable opportunity to exchange knowledge, build on existing synergies and explore opportunities for cooperation with potential partners and stakeholders in the port and maritime sectors.

- **38th Session of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe – UNECE**

The UfM Secretariat will contribute to the 37th Session of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe – UNECE (*date TBC in September 2024, Geneva, Switzerland*), under the agenda point “Development of transport networks and/or links: (e) Transport in the Mediterranean Region”.

- **Expert Group meetings of the GTMO 5+5 (Groupe des ministres de transports de la Méditerranée Occidentale) and GTMO 5+5 Ministerial Conference**

The UfM Secretariat will participate, with observer status, in the Expert Group meetings of the GTMO 5+5 Policy Dialogue on Transport (*dates and venues TBC*), as well as, in the next GTMO 5+5 Ministerial Conference, to be held in Tripoli, Libya in the first quarter of 2025.

ii) **Urban Development**

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.

The Working Groups on “Urban Transformation, “Affordable and Sustainable Housing”, and on “Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting Systems on Sustainable Urban Development”, as well as the UfM-IFIs Urban Project Committee, will be reconvened.

The **UfM Working Group on “Affordable and Sustainable Housing”**, targeting representatives of the ministries in charge of housing, will continue dealing with housing policies and programs from two different angles: housing affordability, on one hand, and sustainable housing construction and energy efficiency in buildings, on the other. On the latter, synergies are to be consolidated with EU-funded programs MeetMED, PEEB-MED, ClimaMED, and Climate for Cities (C4C). France has expressed interest in supporting the UfMS in leading the activities of this working group, an interest to be explored and potentially materialized during 2025.

Following the last meeting of the **UfM Thematic Working Group on “Urban Transformation”**, held under the theme of “Sustainable Urbanisation through Port City Transformation”, the focus of the 2025 meeting of the WG is still TBD.

The UfM Permanent Working Group on “Evaluation, Monitoring, and Reporting of Sustainable Urban Development” will continue elaborating on available cooperation frameworks, facilitating capacity development for better urban-related SDGs monitoring, promoting the adoption of common definitions and methodologies such as the Degree of urbanisation, and coordination of national statistical systems, counting on the support of the European Commission and Joint Research Centre (JRC), as well as EU agencies, such as the Eurostat and ESA (concerning Earth observation data, tools, and toolboxes). Healthy city indicators for human settlements will be promoted, to continue exploring sustainable solutions and environmental and health challenges of air, soil, noise, and water pollution in human settlements. In this regard, a potential collaboration with WHO and the Barcelona City Council is being explored.

2.5 WATER, ENVIRONMENT AND BLUE ECONOMY

i) Water

The UfM Secretariat will continue to work in 2025 to implement the initiatives and actions under the agreed priorities of the Water Agenda:

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

These thematic priorities shall be reflected in the UfM Financial and Investment Strategy for Water, through notably the platform on Water Finance and Investment, in view of improving the conditions for the funding of projects and activities within the sector, as well as the coordination with other sectors, developing strategies and programmes to advance the achievement of the goals of the 2030 UN agenda.

The continuous update of the UfMS water agenda will be maintained in 2025. The agenda will also be aligned with the biannual workplans (2024-2025) of the UfM Water Policy Framework of Actions 2030, as well as next UfM Ministerial on water scheduled in the last quarter of 2025. The concept note has also introduced the Digitalization on WEFE nexus.

15th Meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Water will meet once, around end of May. For 2025 we will target Tirana (Albania) as the place for the meeting. In addition to regular functions of reviewing progress in the previous 12 months and priorities for the next 12 months, the meeting will be key for the preparation of the 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Water planned for the last quarter of 2025.

3rd and 4th meetings of the UfM Working Group on Water Finance and Investment will meet twice, online in spring and in person in autumn back-to-back with the regional Conference on Water Finance and Investment that takes place in the framework of Cairo Water Week.

ii) Environment

In 2025, the UfM will:

- ensure the continuation of the policy/technical dialogue via the meeting of **UfM Regional Platform on Environment and Climate Action**, possibly in presence and if possible, in the framework of a second edition of the Med Green Week during the first semester 2025, and the UfM Working Group on Environment during the 2nd semester, possibly online;
- The Platform and the Working group will follow up on the outcomes of the annual UfM Regional Platform and Working Group on Environment organised within the Mediterranean Green Week 2024. On the occasion, key issues of relevance to the Mediterranean region were touched upon within the upcoming COPs as well as the 2030GreenerMed as a framework to define joint priorities and gaps with regards to develop joint solutions for the Triple Environmental Crisis and exchanging with countries on the main priorities and needs for the Med region, including closer linkages with civil protection and the European Commission; deepening aspects related to a just and inclusive transition; as well as the need for sustainable impact investments

iii) Sustainable Blue Economy

In 2025, the UfMS will:

- Further strengthen the policy/technical dialogue through at least two meetings of the **UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Blue Economy**. The Regional Platform will:
 - (i) Continue to foster synergies among existing and emerging joint initiatives/projects/programmes and promote the convergence and coordination of efforts at regional level; and
 - (ii) Continue to provide a platform for the exchange information, views, best practices, and know-how among countries, experts, and stakeholders.
 - (iii) continue engagement with the Global and UN Agendas including the Ocean Summit as well as the UN 2030 Decade agenda.
- A special role in this endeavour is assigned to the Med Blue Economy Platform (MedBESP) as regional networking platform for sharing knowledge and supporting the development of the blue economy in the Mediterranean. It is funded by the EU and overall managed by the UfMS. One of its key goals is to contribute to the development of the Mediterranean Blue Economy Community. To this end, the platform enables registered users to keep track of the latest news and events in the region; share their work and initiatives in order to disseminate and widen the reach of their activities; extend their network; and build new operational partnerships.

In 2025, the above will be achieved through the management and articulation of the IT-management MedBESP, enhancing coordination in the framework of all relevant regional, sub-regional strategies including WestMED and EUSAIR, and global platforms/fora/initiatives will continue to be pursued, in close coordination with a wide range of institutional partners.

- Given the cross-sectorial interlinkages between different sectoral priorities, and because of strengthened cooperation and coordination between different UfM portfolios, with a view to greater efficiency and impact, the UfM Transport and Blue Economy sectors will co-implement a joint activity in 2025, namely: A regional workshop on the greening of ports and maritime transport in the Mediterranean basin, a shared priority between the UfM Regional Transport Action Plan and the UfM Sustainable Blue Economy Roadmap, to be held back-to-back with the meeting of **UfM Regional Platform on Blue Economy**, as a follow-up to the workshop organised in 2024, to continue discussing the way ahead in this green-blue transition (See also the “Transport” section).

2.6 ENERGY AND CLIMATE ACTION

i) Energy

The UfM Secretariat will focus its activities on the following strategic priorities in 2025:

- Support the development of a New Energy Roadmap by bringing together the relevant stakeholders and collect input and feedback from UfM member states.
- **Organise the annual meetings of the UfM Regional Platform on Energy and its working groups:** Organising the annual in person meeting of the platform in May 2025 to present the new Roadmap for Action 2025-2027 and showcase progress in implementing activities outlined in the document, including advancements in energy efficiency measures by Member States and stakeholders. The meeting will be organised together with the meeting of UfM working group on Climate which could take place during the Green Week. The UfM will also hold an online interim meeting of the **UfM Regional Platform on Energy** to review the implementation of the roadmap for action on energy.
- Support the EU initiative on strengthening mediterranean energy collaboration: to facilitate development of renewable energy, interconnections and clean tech cooperation in the Mediterranean region **Organise the Energy and Climate Business Forum:** to support and showcase private sector stakeholders’ efforts towards a sustainable energy transition, by providing a networking space and promoting innovative and tangible financing solutions, as well as private investment and public-private partnerships in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The Forum will be

organised around October to offer a high-level platform for solution developers from public and private sectors and academia dealing with challenges in energy efficiency, renewable energy and climate action.

ii) **Climate Action**

In 2025, the UfM Secretariat will focus on the following strategic priorities:

- In May 2025, together with the **UfM Regional Platform on Energy** meeting, plan and facilitate **annual high-level discussions in the framework of the Working Group on Climate Action** meetings, covering the thematic priorities of science policy interface, both adaptation and mitigation matters, mobilization of climate finance and ensuring active participation of youth and women representatives to foster renewed engagement and secure their contributions to the decision-making processes.
- Organise the **Energy and Climate Business Forum** to support and showcase private sector stakeholders' efforts towards a sustainable energy transition, by providing a networking space and promoting innovative and tangible financing solutions, as well as private investment and public-private partnerships in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The Forum will offer a high-level platform for solution developers from public and private sectors and academia dealing with challenges in energy efficiency, renewable energy and climate action.
- Ensuring synergies with Energy and Environment activities implemented by sectorial UfM teams and external partners through the shared **UfM Regional Platform on Environment and Climate Action** and promoting synergies with the **UfM Regional Platform on Energy** during the annual meetings.

Actively participate to events and fora organised by the **UNFCCC** such as **COP29**, the subsidiary body meetings and the Middle East North Africa (**MENA**) **Climate Week**. Contribute to events led by relevant regional stakeholders (i.e. **MedCoP**) and Member States. The UfM actions in these fora aim to promote and raise awareness towards the Mediterranean agenda for climate action and energy in the global agenda, reinforce and animate a structured regional dialogue, with regional organisations, financial institutions, civil society, youth organizations, private sector and experts and showcase projects and initiatives in the region.

3. Increased initiatives, projects and partnerships for tangible regional impact on the ground

The UfM Secretariat acts as a catalyst of projects, promoting initiatives and activities with concrete impact, building on partnerships to capitalize on synergies in the region: from grant schemes, trainings and capacity-building activities to support of UfM labelled projects, this dimension comes as a translation of the key priorities of regional agendas on the ground, affecting directly citizens across the region.

3.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

i) **Economic development**

- **Inauguration of the 2nd UfM Progress Report on Regional Integration**

Following the publication in 2021 of the first edition of the Progress Report on Regional Integration in the UfM Region, the second edition developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is due during the first semester of 2025, to be launched in a ceremony bringing together representatives of institutions leading regional integration processes in other geographical areas pertinent regional, sub-regional and global frameworks. The second edition will incorporate an examination of gender, digitalisation and environmental protection as cross-cutting thematic, to further enhance the mainstreaming of these key UfM priorities.

- **UfM Grant Scheme for the Promotion of Inclusive Digital Trade**

With the support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ/GIZ) and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), this Grant Scheme, launched in 2024, aims to support and increase the participation of relevant entities, such as SMEs, cooperatives, entrepreneurs, social enterprises, and business communities in e-commerce, with a particular focus on business organizations led by women in Southern Mediterranean economies. The Grant Scheme intends to identify and address the challenges business organizations face in e-commerce through training and capacity-building measures. It will be concluded in 2026.

- **Technical training on e-Commerce**

This training that will take place during the third quarter of 2025 will be the occasion to equip the participants with the needed skills and knowledge to grow their own business capitalizing on the perks and benefits of e-commerce. The latter is constantly increasing driven by the digital transformation that has been accelerated by the pandemic crisis. The aim of this capacity building training is to help businesses boost their sales online using various digital tools.

- **UfM Study visit and awareness raising on International Trade and Investment Policies Architecture**

With the continuous evolving international policies landscape and underlying the importance of further providing technical assistance and capacity building for policymakers in the UfM Member States. The UfM Secretariat will organize a study visit for government officials during the second semester of 2025 to the main international organizations in Geneva dealing with Trade and Economic Development (i.e UN Trade & Development “UNCTAD” - World Trade Organization “WTO” – International Trade Centre “ITC”) with the aim of raising awareness on trade policy issues, investment policies’ reform, in order to allow for a better implementation and aligning of national policies and deepening regional policies coordination. Creating a channel of dialogue with international organizations dealing with trade, and which will provide a venue to communicate UfM efforts in regional economic development.

- **Study visit for Customs Administrations**

Customs play an important role in the management of cross-border trade which itself contributes to economic growth and job creation. In this context, the UfM envisages to organize in the fourth quarter a Study trip involving representatives of Customs Administrations from South Mediterranean countries to get an immersive experience in the Customs services of a high performing Country with the most possible efficient procedures in terms of trade facilitation.

ii) **Employment**

- **UfM Grant Scheme to Promote Employment and Entrepreneurship in the Green Economy**

With the support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ/GIZ) and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) , this Grant Scheme’s overall objective is to support the green transformation of the Southern Mediterranean economies with a view to supporting employment promotion in the green economy. It is especially targeted to benefit vulnerable groups, which are disproportionately affected by the consequences of climate change and the related changing socio-economic landscape. Five projects have been awarded with a Grant Scheme, resulting in 1,300 direct beneficiaries while assisting MSMEs, startups, training centres and local organisations in 8 Southern Mediterranean countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia. The Grant Scheme was launched in 2024 and will be concluded in 2025.

- **Multistakeholder Dialogue on the UfM Grant Schemes**

Following the closure of the first UfM Grant Scheme on Employment Promotion in 2022, a dialogue will be held during the last quarter of 2025 on the UfM Grant Scheme to promote employment and entrepreneurship in the Green Economy as well as the UfM Grant Scheme on Inclusive Digital Trade in 2025

with the participation of project promoters, local implementing partners and beneficiaries to share best practices and lessons learned in view of capitalizing on this activity.

- **The Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs (Med4Jobs)** remains to be the key pipeline of projects aiming at creating jobs, improving employability prospects for young people and women, and supporting startups. Consultations will continue with the promoters of UfM-labelled projects under the umbrella of Med4Jobs to explore the possibility of scaling up or replicating some of the best practices, as well as addressing bottlenecks and impediments.

3.2 HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

i) Higher Education

Education and Skills for Employment - Meeting of UfM-labelled projects in the field of education (Alexandria, Egypt, November): The socio-professional integration of young people stands as a priority in Mediterranean countries, especially as this age segment represents a substantial part of the population. This is the case for the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries where 300 million young people will enter the labour market until 2050, according to the World Bank's projections. Employability is a challenge for young people in general and graduates in particular, as they do not have enough skills and knowledge adapted to a rapidly evolving job market. Several UfM-labelled projects in the field of education have addressed this issue targeting different types of young people, such as the NEETs, through social inclusion programmes and second chance systems, or engineering and management graduates, through specific internship programmes. This meeting will be the occasion to exchange on common challenges and good practices to enhance the employability of young people, while capitalizing on what has already been accomplished under the Med4Jobs initiative and the Community of Practice on Youth Employment, and exploring synergies with the foreseen Ministerial on Employment and Labour.

i) Research and innovation

Workshop "Research for Reconstruction and Resilience" (February): UfMS and Italy's National Council for Research have signed a partnership agreement regarding a CNR Scholarship programme aimed at supporting 20 Lebanese and Palestinian Researchers. As part of this agreement, UfMS will organise a workshop on the value of Research for Resilience and Reconstruction. The workshop will include some of the beneficiaries, while extending the topic to regional initiatives where R&I aspects play a significant role, aimed at dialogue and supporting scientific communities under threat.

Science Diplomacy will continue being a central pillar of UfM activities on research and innovation, with follow up actions, trainings, conferences, and capacity building action that implement the results of a foreseen Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Science Diplomacy. Efforts will be launched to prepare the ground for Science Diplomacy centres and/or networks at Euro-Mediterranean level, including dialogue between research centres and think tank focusing on regional dialogue.

Regional Workshop on Science for Policy (June): the UfM will partner with the EU's Joint Research Centre (JRC) to organise a regional workshop concerning the societal impact of science for society. A possible topic will be the Science to Policy interface. According to the discussion with partners and beneficiaries, other possible topics include societal engagement, such as with young people, following interest being signalled by UfM Member States and promoting further cross-sectoral synergies.

Webinars and Training Missions: Capacity-building missions and information sessions on the Euro-Med Hub on Research and Innovation, science diplomacy and engagement of science with society could be organised, whenever UfM Member States express a direct interest. A pilot training activity could be developed with the Mauritanian Diplomatic Academy.

In order to support the green transition through research, knowledge, and skills, while promoting the employability of researchers, students and graduates, the UfMS will seek to continue developing actions on green innovation and employability, in order to foster an environment conducive towards employability, careers and entrepreneurship, continuing pilot actions developed since 2019 both at national and regional levels. Explored fields would be in line with the three UfM R&I priority themes.

The UfMS will further engage in the activities of SFSMed (Sustainable Food System in the Mediterranean), an inter-institutional platform coordinated with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and CIHEAM, with the participation of PRIMA, which promotes knowledge and green skills for food systems with an overall approach on science diplomacy. As such, the UfMS will contribute to the organisation of webinars on food systems, joint publications, and revising a multiannual work plan.

Finally, the UfMS will continue supporting its research-related projects such as BlueSkills and “Higher Education on Food Security and Rural Development”, promoting a reflection on their status and continuation.

A partnership with the European Bank for Investment shall be continued and updated, with the goal of delivering joint trainings to universities in the Southern Mediterranean. A follow-up action could be associating trainings with an internship scheme.

3.3 SOCIAL AND CIVIL AFFAIRS

i) Women Empowerment

Networking activities for women entrepreneurs and women business associations July 2025 (Italy)

Built up on the recommendations formulated in the past editions of the Women Business Forum and the successful practice of the MENA Women Business Club, a dedicated regional network of women entrepreneurs and women business associations with a cross-sectoral approach will be set-up in order to promote access to finance and provide capacity-building services: a regional event will be organised in July (Italy) 2025. The UfMS will work on consolidating the collaboration launched in 2023-2024 with financial actors such as IFC- World Bank and the platform 2xChallenge. Potential synergies with the ongoing programme funded by European Commission on financial and Digital inclusion of women entrepreneurs will be explored.

CoP Gender Environment and Climate Change

Under the framework of the CoP on the nexus Gender Environment and Climate Change, a capacity-building programme to support women economic empowerment for a sustainable growth (women for greening Mediterranean food systems, potential for blue-entrepreneurship, gender and the nexus WEFE). Two capacity-building workshops will be organised in May and October 2025 devoted to 1) women entrepreneurs in the pre-identified relevant sectors and 2) women negotiators to develop gender-sensitive climate policies under the overall objective of just transition.

These activities will be developed in close coordination with those planned by divisions working on Environment and Blue Economy as well as Climate action.

Capacity-building and training activities under the Regional Agenda on Gender and Food security

Under this agenda, to be launched in 2nd semester 2024, for a duration of three years (2024-2026), the UfM will carry out the following activities:

- Capacity-building online workshop addressing public and private stakeholders to enhance women’s participation in the agro-food chain. (April 2025, Egypt)

- Scaling up female entrepreneurship and women's empowerment in agribusiness via dedicated trainings to facilitate the access to new technologies but also to promote social innovation. (June in Tunisia and September 2025 in Palestine if feasible)

These activities will be developed in close coordination with those planned by divisions on Environment and blue economy as well as for Higher Education and Research as focal point of the UfMS Sustainable Food system platform.

Med Women in Tech network

- The UfMS will hold one workshop on Artificial Intelligence, and fintech to create economic opportunities for women and to encourage female entrepreneurship in AI. A regional Award for Women Innovator in AI and Tech will be launched early 2025, with an awarding ceremony in September 2025 in Barcelona. These activities will be developed in close cooperation with those planned on Digital Transformation and on Artificial Intelligence for Economic Growth (see Economic Development and Employment sections).

Mediterranean Women Journalists Network

- As emerged from the “Media and Gender Equality - Shifting Narratives” debate that brought together around 15 journalists from both northern and southern Mediterranean countries at the High-level Conference on Women 2024, the UfMS will support the creation of the Mediterranean Women Journalists Network.
- The MWJN will be a collaborative ecosystem of women reporters from across the Euro-Mediterranean region that fosters dialogue among journalists and serves as hub where they can network, exchange ideas and support each other with their career goals. The network will fight discrimination by promoting more inclusive journalistic practices and bolstering the role of women in the profession. This initiative is in line with the main commitments under the framework of the **6th UfM Ministerial Declaration on Women**, which called for the promotion of the voice and leadership of women, especially of those from younger generations, by working closely with media and social media actors.
- The network will provide a platform for 2 online trainings annually in addition to networking opportunities for its members. An annual gathering back-to-back with the one of main events of the UfM, a press-trip to visit UfM projects and, potentially, a Biennial Med Women in Journalism Award will be organised. A website will be launched that will contain useful information for members and the wider journalism community alike, such as articles/papers on Mediterranean stories with a gender perspective. Future opportunities will be explored, including the possibility of eventually creating a mentorship programme.
- The network will be open to new members besides the initial 15 and adhesion will be on a voluntary basis. The network will be moderated/animated by an external expert hired by the UfMS. The coordination of the network will be ensured by the SCA Division and the UfM Communications Unit.

Gender Equality Plans in Higher Education (September 2025)

- The UfMS will follow up on the delivered Gender Equality Plan workshop for Universities in the Mediterranean, which took place in 2023 and on the outcomes of the UfMS Higher Education Stakeholders’ meeting which took place in 2024. A study visit and a possible Regional competition to award three champions for Gender Equality Plan to be assigned to universities in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean region, in alignment with similar initiative existing within the EU to be developed in cooperation with the UfM Division on Higher Education and Research will be assessed. The award will not foresee any financial recognition : a call for applications will be launched by the UfM along the lines of the EU Award EU Award for Gender Equality Champions.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) November 2025

- In line with the commitments taken in the 5th Ministerial Declaration Ministers to invest in professional training programmes for service providers to victims and survivors of VAWG, the UfMS in 2025 will set-up a **VAWG capacity building programme** for CSOs and public service providers in order to develop and adopt a common toolkit to prevent VAWG and to support women survivors of violence.

ii) Youth

2025 Med Youth Lab (Tirana October 2025)

In line with the organization of the first edition of the Med Youth Lab in 2024, and building on the UfM Youth events held in previous years, the second edition will be held in Tirana, Albania in October 2025 in the framework of Tirana Med Capital of Culture. The initiative includes four days of workshops on project development and soft skills related to the UfM Youth Agenda thematic priorities, culminating in a day of keynotes and pitching sessions. This edition will target up to 60 young people (18-29) from the Euro-Mediterranean region, selected via a Call for Applications based on their background and motivation.

iii) Civil protection

Due to limited budget, there is no specific initiative foreseen for 2025 with a full UfMS ownership but, as done in the last two years, the UfMS will cooperate with its main partners, mainly the EC, in promoting the UfM Action Plan 2030 in the framework of external initiatives.

Discussions with potential donors are ongoing to explore increased funding for this portfolio.

iv) Disability

A Capacity building workshop for the CSOS working on the socio-economic inclusion of Persons with Disability in the MENA Region will take place in third quarter of 2025.

Pilot project Morocco: In 2025 the UfM will provide technical support to the implementation of the ONCE Social Group Pilot Project "*Intégration des jeunes et des femmes en situation de handicap à travers l'emploi dans le secteur des voyages et du tourisme*" in Morocco. UfMs participated in its Steering Committee in 2024. The results of the project will be promoted in the framework of the 3rd EuroMed Conference on Disability to explore its potential replicability in the region. The relevant information about the ongoing project and its results will be definitely shared with DG EMPL in order to better fits with the agenda of the Regional Platform on Labour and Employment

3.4 TRANSPORT AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

i) Transport

- **Steering Committee meetings of EU funded projects supporting the implementation of the RTAP**

The Implementation of the new RTAP will continue to involve EU support, including through the relevant European Agencies (EMSA, EASA, ERA).

The UfM Secretariat will contribute, in technical capacity, to the Steering Committee meetings of the ongoing regional Technical Assistance (TA) Transport Projects financed by the European Commission in the fields of maritime transport (SAFEMED) and air transport (Euromed Aviation), as well as any new initiative including Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the field of transport, to ensure that the Projects contribute to the implementation of the RTAP.

- **Joint initiatives with the International Association of Public Transport (UITP) in implementation of the joint MoU:**

- Technical assistance and capacity building initiatives to implement the new RTAP (to be held in June 2025 in Jordan, tbc);
- Communication campaigns to promote the benefits of public transport among the ministries of transport in the Mediterranean region (to be held in 2Q 2025, exact date and venue tbc).

- **Joint initiatives with the International Road Federation (IRF)**

- Capacity building / Training activities on Road Safety (to be held in 2Q 2025, exact date and venue tbc).
- Workshop to exchange with regional and global partners on best practices on national lead agencies for road safety (to be held in November 2025 in Istanbul, tbc).

Reinforcing women's leadership as well the need for dedicated investments in women's skills in the transport sector, will be integrated as relevant dimension in the joint initiatives to ensure that women have access to transport professions and that they can participate effectively in the planning and implementation of strategies and policies as well as in the management and operation of transport networks and services (see Women Empowerment section).

Sustainable, climate-neutral and zero-pollution maritime transport is one of the 10 priorities of the **2021 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy**. Continued coordination will be sought in this regard, including in the framework of the WestMED Initiative.

ii) Urban Development

In 2025, 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 those concerning the European Commission, UN-Habitat, Housing Europe, UCLG, Medcities, OECD, or UNECE among others. In addition, events might be organized on the margins of the International Social Housing Festival (Dublin, May/June 2025), the Smart City Expo World Congress (Barcelona, Nov 2025), the UNESCO Conference on Oasis in Saudi Arabia, Arab Ministerial on Housing and Urban Development, the EU Cities Forum, or related events.

- The **UfM program on Urban Heritage and Traditional Building Skills in the Southern Mediterranean Region** targeting Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia, aimed to identify and promote best practices in raising awareness, preserving, and promoting vernacular architecture and traditional construction techniques. The Final meeting of this initial part of the program identified the following strands of action for the implementation throughout 2025 and the coming years is as follows:
 - ❖ Support Maghreb countries in the definition and set-up of official and **recognized national programs of vocational training on traditional building skills in the form of training/workshop schools** as they exists in France (Acta Bao or Compagnons du Devoir), Germany, or Switzerland. This could be of particular interest also for EU countries such as Spain, Italy, or Greece among others which might also benefit from the conducted efforts. Support might be in the form of field visits, technical assistances or preparation meetings.
 - ❖ Through the course of the implementation of the workshops conducted in Maghreb countries it was obvious that construction with traditional materials (earth) happens mostly in the inner part of the North African countries, particularly in oases. Some of these oases in North African countries are already recognized by the FAO as **Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)**. These oases are exemplary for their integration of traditional agricultural and built heritage that support food production and biodiversity. Oases constitute an example of enhancing community resilience against climate change and are key for addressing contemporary challenges and triggering development in the inner part of North African countries. To this end, the UfMS will:
 - Support **candidatures of oases to FAO GIAHS and Unesco Cultural Landscapes** through both technical assistance and the active involvement of schools of architecture and planning of the region in the generation of knowledge to be used in candidatures for both recognitions.
 - A **program on the exchange of best practices between the EU and North African GIAHS** will be supported by joining efforts with the FAO and the UfM work under Water, Environment and the Blue Economy portfolio.

- Sustainable tourism and economic development in oases will be promoted by creating and promoting a **bike-packing route** in each country **under the theme of the ancient route of salt caravans** in collaboration with the Ministries of Culture.

- Organize an event at the UNESCO Conference on oases to be hosted by Saudi Arabia in 2025.

- ❖ Support the creation of **national directories of Traditional Building Crafts Masters** in the fields of traditional construction and its restoration.
- ❖ The 12 edition of the UN World Urban Forum (WUF) will take place in Cairo, Egypt, in November 2024. The UfMS submitted a joint proposal for a side event, together with the Egyptian National Organization of Urban Harmony (NOUH) and REHABIMED titled “Breaking Borders Exploring Women's Impact on Cultural Heritage”. Following up on this event, an **exhibition** is planned for 2025 to shed light on the **pivotal role of women in preserving cultural heritage** and recognize and celebrate the invaluable contributions of women in safeguarding and transmitting cultural practices across generations.
- ❖ Support the creation of a **prize recognizing traditional architecture**.
- ❖ Conduct a **training to promote sustainable building construction in building procurement** in coordination with France and the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction.

In 2025, while implementation actions will take place in Maghreb countries, the **UfM program on Urban Heritage and Traditional Building Skills will be enlarged to MENA countries** and, in particular, to Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine with the organization of two national workshops, one per semester. To this extent, the first workshop will be hosted by the Egyptian National Organization for Urban Harmony (NOUH) during the first quarter of 2025. The proposed sites by Egyptian hosting authorities are either the Oasis of Siwa or Luxor (New Gournah).

- A **UfM Program on Legal-regulatory frameworks for coastal land management in Mediterranean countries** was drafted with the partners aiming at identifying more technical and scientific solutions, promoting specific expert discussions, the creation of a platform or technical cooperation framework to elaborate on details, good practice manuals by themes, etc. and finding financial support to test and implement the ideas discussed. A capacity-building workshop to advance towards this end is foreseen in 2025 to be jointly implemented with UN-Habitat, UNEP-MAP, and IUCN, under the umbrella of the UfM WG on Urban Transformation.
- **UfM Network of Schools of Architecture and Urban Planning of the Euro-Mediterranean Region.**
 - ❖ The group will be reconvened in Crete, Greece (Center for Mediterranean Architecture) and Brussels, Belgium (Université Libre de Bruxelles).
 - ❖ 2025 edition of the UfM Student Competition on Urban Design: Urban Solutions to Climate Change in the Mediterranean to be launched with the support of the Fundació Mies van der Rohe.
 - ❖ Exchanges among EU and non-EU students of Schools of Architecture to conduct joint projects will be supported.
 - ❖ Technical support will be offered, if need be, to consortiums of EU and non-EU schools for revision of proposals to be submitted to mobility or research EU calls.
 - ❖ Publication on Urban Development in the Mediterranean Region, following the example of the UNESCO Global Report on Culture for Sustainable Urban Development, gathering best practices, to

be prepared with inputs from the members of the group. And presentation at University Mohammed VI Polytechnic..

- ❖ MoU to be signed on a bilateral basis with the Schools of Architecture and Planning which are part of the group. Organization of an institutional act at UfM premises in Autumn 2025, gathering representatives from all the schools who signed MoUs.

3.5 WATER, ENVIRONMENT AND BLUE ECONOMY

i) Water

The UfM Secretariat will continue its work to promote and facilitate projects that have a positive impact on local and regional level and develop partnerships that can capitalize on the opportunities that the region has to offer. To endorse this vision the following activities are foreseen in 2025:

UfM Youth Strategy for 2030 aims to address the challenges young people are facing in the region which are centred around human development. UfM Water Youth Engagement Strategy 2023-2028 aims at empowering young people attracting new talent and building career capacity. In this framework, the UfMS proposes to develop an innovative initiative in 2025:

- **the Youth Entrepreneurship Hackathon and Bootcamp:** to support enterprises and job creation in a segment of the population which currently suffers high unemployment. The programme promotes business solutions which are WEFE oriented thereby fostering cross sector cooperation. This activity is scheduled for S1 2025. Synergies may be found with the Youth portfolio and the results of this Hackathon and Bootcamp could be presented in the framework of the Med Youth Lab edition 2025 to be held in Tirana, Albania, in October 2025. Synergies may also be found with the Employment portfolio to expand the results of this Hackathon with more potential youth entrepreneurs benefiting from this job creation programme in the future, as well as with the view of growing the Hackathon's young participants e-commerce dimension of their businesses. Additionally, showcasing the findings of the UfM Workshop on Future of Work and the Community of Practice on Youth Employment in the Southern Mediterranean would be beneficial for the Youth Entrepreneurship Hackathon's participants.
- **Joint efforts with SIWI and Sida to increase the involvement of youth in MENA countries in the Stockholm Junior Water Prize (SJWP).** The main objectives will be to (i) support pilot countries to establish national competitions with a view on the Stockholm Junior Water Prize, and (ii) roll out national competitions for MENA countries and compete in the International Stockholm Junior Water Prize in August 2025. The whole purpose of this exercise will be to learn from the pilot projects, and disseminate their accomplishments with regional actors for scaling up.

A Technical Assistance in place for peer-to-peer learning under water digitalisation. Pilot one peer review study with a water utility. This will include: (1) developing a methodology for the UfM water digitalisation peer reviews, (2) developing a tailored concept note for a peer review, (3) and organise a peer-review where at least two officials from other two Member States will take part of the peer review.

A Technical Assistance in place to support the implementation of a capacity building programme and aimed at enhancing the entrepreneurial skills and/ or empowering in decision making (water diplomacy) for both women and youth in the water sector across the Mediterranean.

The Governance of Water Regulators. The UfM will establish an initiative to provide **short-term exchanges of best practices** between public sector experts of UfM Member States through Study Visits. This initiative shall start with the support of ERSAR, the national water supply and sanitation regulatory agency of Portugal.

Training and capacity building in partnership with ERSAR, the Portuguese water regulator and LIS Water, an international centre on public policies, regulation, and management of water services. Tap on the experience LIS-

Water has on capacitating water managers and create and implement in partnership a training programme on “Better Policies and Regulation of Water and Sanitation Services” for public administration, regulators and water and sanitation utilities of the Med region. 6th Regional Conference on Water Finance and Investment. It will take place in October 2025 in Cairo (Egypt). Since 2021 this annual conference is co-organised with the EU Delegation in Egypt and since 2023 also with the African Development Bank. The specific topic will be selected at the 3rd Meeting of WG-WATFIN. The annual conference has become a major event on water finance and investment in the Mediterranean region.

Elaborate and design a capacity building programme with GCF (Green Climate Fund) on water and climate finance. **TA to support the Training on green finance to help implement the WEFE strategy.** In-person training (2-3 days) for 50 people from Euro-Mediterranean countries + virtual trainings.

Foreseen involvement of the UfM in the next **Creative Forum**, which will focus on Water, green and blue agenda, and is scheduled to take place in first semester of 2025.

The UfM will contribute to the regional and **global agenda working on achieving SDG6**, and will specifically 1) Follow up the implementation of the Observatory of the Non-Conventional Water Resource NCWR and its associated renewable energies in its first pilot area located within the Mediterranean-Sahel Region through the Observatory’s first pilot Steering Committee, 2) follow up and take part of activities related to the mitigation of the climate change effects in the water sector (flash)flood and drought management through participating at UNECE/the Water Convention’s global workshop on Droughts in Transboundary Basins and its Task Force on Water and Climate, and 3) take part of activities that promote the international cooperation on integrated water resources management (IWRM), with special attention to the role of women in water diplomacy partnering with the Geneva Water Hub and GWP-Med activities addressing water resources management and governance and empowering women in water diplomacy.

PUBLICATIONS

UfM Water Finance Series #6. This publication will provide the conclusions and recommendations of the 6th Annual Conference on Water Finance and Investment. These are short publications aimed at policymakers.

ii) Environment

The UfM will aim at continuing the collaboration with FAO and EFIMED on a Mediterranean regional partnership on forestry/landscape restoration, maintaining a close link with the development of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and as well as renewing the support/partnership for the EFI Young Leadership Programme 2025.

Similarly, close partnership with Interreg EuroMed on the labelled Governance projects, together with Interreg NextMed and Prima as key partners and programmes operating in the region, will be ensured.

The UfM will follow and support closely the developments of the MedFund, also in relation to the BBNJ (international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction), in view of the UN Ocean Conference in Nice scheduled on 9-13 June 2025, co-hosted by France and Costa Rica.

Dedicated technical assistances will continue to support in house the overall environmental dossier:

- to support the continuation of the ongoing marine litter regional actions,
- to support the UfM/FAO/CIHEAM/PRIMA/One Planet partnership on sustainable food systems;
- Partner and contribute to the Conference of the Parties of the Barcelona Convention, as well as of relevant other conventions and partners.

iii) Sustainable Blue Economy

- In 2025, the UfM will build on the operationalization of the outcomes and main recommendations of the 2024 UfM Stakeholder Conference on Sustainable Blue Economy, as institutional mechanism set up towards the implementation of the **2021 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy** (SBE) and its related Roadmap in order to guarantee full stakeholder engagement. The 2nd UfM Stakeholder Conference on SBE hosted by Greece, brought together in Athens over 350 participants and provided a key opportunity to take stock of progress achieved; discuss joint challenges and transformative tools and pathways for the Sustainable Development of the sectors and activities of the Mediterranean SBE; feed the roadmap and the related next steps; and set the path towards future deliberations at political level.
- Particular attention will be devoted to the Blue Mediterranean Partnership (BMP), a dedicated financial partnership designed to help deliver the objectives of the relevant national strategies and policies for a sustainable blue economy of the Beneficiary Countries, taking into account the European Commission’s renewed Agenda for Mediterranean, the Barcelona Convention, and in particular the 2021 UfM **Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy**, adopted on 2 February 2021, which calls upon international financial institutions, development partners, public and private actors to prioritize investment in the sustainable blue economy and reinforces the need for increased dialogue between stakeholders, regional coordination, partnerships, and the pooling of resources.

3.6 ENERGY AND CLIMATE ACTION

i) Energy

- **Continued support to the UfM labelled projects in the energy sector:** The UfM will continue its support to its labelled project in the energy sector in the region, namely Tafila windfarm, and look into the potential labelling of MedGem project.
- **Promoting the Mediterranean energy agenda:** advocating in global processes including the United Nations (UN) the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and others to address the challenges and encourage the global scaling up of solutions developed in the region.

ii) Climate Action

- Continued support to the activities of the **Network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC)** including promotion of its activities, review of its legal status, communication of its report and support to its fundraising activities. Technical support to the MedECC is detailed in the 2024-2025 contract.
- Continued support to the **ECWMF-Copernicus** in the development of new Apps (i.e. Energy App) and dissemination of information on the current App on the impact of Sea Level rise on the impact of Cultural Heritage sites and the App on the spread of vector borne diseases, including organization of awareness raising events and trainings.
- Support initiatives channelling funds to the region for adaptation and mitigation through further engagement on partnerships with donors and Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) from the region; including support to the PAMEX-PLIFF and BlueMed Partnership initiatives. Emphasize activities that promote and empower youth engagement and prioritize gender equality within these initiatives.
- In cooperation with other sectorial divisions, back or develop specific actions for adaptation centred on more vulnerable communities and/or strategic ecosystem services with an initial focus on mountain ecosystems and populations (Food and Agricultural Organisation -FAO) and urban areas (UN Habitat).

- **Continued support to the UfM labelled projects in the climate sector:** The UfM will continue its support to its labelled projects in the climate sector in the region, namely the Clima-Med project as well as the origination of new projects and initiatives.

4. Reinforced UfM capacity for action

In order to increase UfM capacity to deliver on its mandate, as detailed in the work programme, the Secretariat will continue to build partnerships, optimize allocation of resources and management processes in view of increase operations efficiency and accountability vis-a-vis stakeholders and general public.

Following the adoption by the SOM of the new Regional Platforms guidelines, and the amended Labelling Guidelines in 2024, the UfMS will continue in 2025 their implementation to adopt a more efficient, coherent and results-based approach, ensure diligent monitoring and increase the quality of its 3Ps methodology with concrete impact in the region.

The UfM Secretariat will also continue consolidate and improve the Project Monitoring System, as the reference tool for updated and comprehensive information on UfM labelled projects, ensuring that the system remains relevant, updated and useful both internally and for the UfM Senior Officials.

To facilitate the application process, for the project promoters and for the UfM Secretariat management, an online application form will be fully operative in 2025, based on the eligibility and selection criteria defined in the Labelling Guidelines.

The new online application form will be embedded in the Project Monitoring System, the internal tool to record and monitor all information related to UfM labelled projects.

Evaluation procedures (for the label and for the discontinuity of the label) will be better structured to ensure transparency and equal treatment. In the same line, the UfMS will work to structure and streamline the types of support provided to labelled projects in order to ensure transparency and equal treatment as well as to meet the expectations of the promoters.

4.1 Institutional relations and strategic partnerships

Given the important role that partnerships have in the promotion of the UfM as a platform for regional dialogue and cooperation, and to increase the visibility and impact of its activities in the region, the UfM Secretariat engages in strategic partnerships with key regional stakeholders.

Specific focus is paid to:

i) Member States engagement: to strengthen the relationship, processes, and methodology of work with the UfM Co-Presidency and Member States, enhancing support, engagement, trust, and transparency in the Secretariat's actions.

ii) 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.

iii) reinforcing strategic partnerships with key actors involved in regional cooperation to finance UfM initiatives and projects labelled by its Member-States.

i) UfM Member States engagement

As the UfM Secretariat's activities expand in scope and scale, the increasing commitment of its Member States remains crucial to its functioning, visibility, and sustainability. To this end, and beyond specific actions within each sectoral portfolio, the UfMS will focus in 2025 on enhancing Member States' engagement through horizontal endeavours, among others:

- Continuously developing monthly newsletters to the SOM with enhanced features.
- Upgrading the Private Area dedicated to Senior Officials on the UfMS website, incorporating easily accessible information, more interactive features, and improved communication flows.
- Holding frequent meetings between the SG and DSGs with the UfM Co-Presidencies, building on the successful initiative launched in 2024, and improving institutional reporting.
- Reflecting on Member States' participation levels in sectoral platforms and identifying ways to enhance it, notably in promoting the implementation of the recently adopted Regional Platforms guidelines. Particular attention will be given to regularly updating Member States Focal Points in the respective Platforms so that the Platform meetings are visited by the relevant and most recently appointed people.

ii) Institutional relations

First and foremost, the UfM Secretariat holds a natural partnership with the **European Union**, as co-funder but also as Co-President of the organisation. Indeed, at every level and sector, the European Union is the main interlocutor and partner for the UfM in the region. Focus will be given to enhance the existing relationship between the two organisations, notably in view of the creation of a Commissioner for the Mediterranean portfolio. Furthermore, cooperation will be explored with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), around its EuroMed Summit,

Moreover, 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). With the ALF and ARLEM, the UfMS will particularly enhance its partnership in 2025 around the **Mediterranean Capitals of Culture & Dialogue joint initiative**, as the three institutions form its Advisory Committee.

> Here, focus will be given to:

- Follow-up on and support the effective implementation of the programmes of the two first Capitals (Tirana, Albania & Alexandria, Egypt) and prepare the evaluation of this first edition. Here, the UfMS will ensure the visibility and profile raising of these two cities, notably by holding several of its activities there (as described throughout this document). Potentially, Tirana and Alexandria could hold some other meetings. Efforts to advocate for UfM partners and Euro-Mediterranean stakeholders to hold their events related to the region there will be continued.
- Prepare the second edition of the MCCD with the two cities nominated for 2026, including fine-tuning their programmes, supporting their exchanges and coordination, and applying close monitoring to their preparations. Three meetings will be arranged to follow-up on the preparations (i.e., a preliminary meeting, a mid-year meeting, and a final preparatory meeting, as done in 2024. Ad hoc meetings can be set as required. Furthermore, the UfM Secretariat, Anna Lindh Foundation Secretariat and ARLEM will support the two capitals as well through their respective communication teams, including by developing a joint visual identity for the two MCCDs, highlighting cross-cutting actions and strengthening the overall coherence of the initiative and the two programmes, as well as in disseminating the results of the initiative through their wide audiences (media and stakeholders – See Communication & Public Affairs section).
- Set-up the participation of the cities that were already Capitals and successfully implemented the programme in the Advisory Committee, to help aspiring cities in their applications, assess them and disseminate lessons learned and best practices.

- Launch the call for applications for the MCCD 2027: the call will be open from January to June 2025, with the aim of nominating the two 2027 MCCDs in November 2025.

The UfM Secretariat will further focus its efforts in 2025 on strengthening strategic institutional partnerships with a set of **other identified and potential actors involved in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation**, the Council of Europe and the North-South Centre on issues related to youth and gender, the League of Arab States and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), through the recently signed MoUs, the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO), as well as the CIHEAM, to renew their joint partnership agreement.

The UfMS will also continue enhancing its cooperation with **major IFIs and donors** in the Euro-Mediterranean region to develop joint initiatives and projects, namely with the EIB through the the BlueMed Partnership and the seconded officials to the UfM Secretariat.

Moreover, the UfM Secretariat 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 UfMS has developed close partnerships with several UN institutions, which have contributed to the success of UfMS initiatives and events or to the implementation of regional projects of cooperation.

In 2025, the UfMS will focus on enhancing its relations with the **UN agencies and institutions** with whom it has ongoing joint projects and initiatives, namely the United Nations Development Programme, (UNDP) UNIDO, WHO, FAO, UNEP/MAP, UNCCD, UNFCCC, the UN Water Convention as well as UN Women and the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations (UNAOC), among others. Following the successful endeavour in 2024, the UfMS will continue working with its Member States that hold the Presidency of the UN Security Council to enhance the visibility of the Mediterranean at global level. It will notably collaborate with Greece in 2025 in that regard.

Finally, 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.

In 2025, the UfMS 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.

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.

> In the framework of the ongoing reflection and **review of the mandate and priorities of the UfM**, a particular focus will be given to open this reflection to these institutional partners so as to enrich perspectives, align priorities, and enhance engagement around the UfM and its Secretariat. This **open consultation**, , will aim to position the UfM as a central organization in regional cooperation, ensuring transparency, inclusivity and relevance of its strategy, fed by a bottom-up approach, as intended by its founding principles in the Paris Declaration of 2008 and its core methodology of action (3Ps).

Following the first meeting held on the margins of the 9th UfM Regional Forum, two additional consultation meetings/events will take place in 2025 to feed this review process. In collaboration with **EuroMeSCO**, key partners will be selected in two UfM Member States to organise these meetings, ensuring plurality and diversity of views.

A Technical Assistance will be contracted to gather the results of this consultation process, and build on the Member States contributions to draft a renewed UfM strategy 2026-2030 based on these inputs, to be submitted to the SOM and then adopted at the 10th UfM Regional Forum.

Finally, another 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.

iii) **Strategic partnerships**

On top of the contribution by the European Commission, as described above, the UfM Secretariat will continue to strengthen established cooperation with key partners and explore new opportunities to leverage our impact in the region through new financial partnerships.

Thanks to the following dedicated contributions, the UfMS will be able in 2025 to develop strategic areas of work, increase its capacity and achieve concrete results:

Partnership with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

Following the implementation of a first Cooperation Agreement between Sida and UfMS with a total budget equivalent to € 8,1 million over 2017-2023², a second Cooperation Agreement was signed between both parties in December 2021 to cover the period 2022-2025, with a budget equivalent to € 4,9 million. The cooperation between Sida and the UfM Secretariat consists in a programme designed from a Results-Based Management (RBM) perspective, compatible with the mandate of the UfM and the Secretariat yearly work-programmes. The programme is also geared towards increasing the impact and visibility of the Secretariat activities and how the action of the UfM brings changes in the region. In addition, one of the objectives of the renewed cooperation is the institutional development of the Secretariat itself (see 4.2. Institutional development and Internal administration).

In 2025 the UfM Secretariat will implement the Sida 2025 work plan, formulated in coherence with the 2025 Work Programme of the UfM Secretariat, according to the priorities jointly defined with Sida, aiming at enhancing and amplifying UfMS regional activities in UfM members countries, in three priority areas of common interest:

- Women Empowerment;
- Water, Environment and Blue Economy;
- Energy and Climate Action

In 2025, activities in the Transport and Urban Development portfolios, as well as Higher Education and Research and innovation related to these three priorities will be also implemented, enlarging the support of Sida to the whole UfMS priority areas of action and enhancing its cross-sectoral working methodology.

Partnership with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

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 Million will be provided to support the activities of the UfM in the area of regional economic integration, 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.

² The first Cooperation Agreement between Sida and UfMS was signed for four years (2017-2020) and extended in July 2020 for an additional period of two years (until December 2022, ultimately extended until December 2023). It encompassed a core support to the UfM Secretariat activities as well as a dedicated support to the regional water agenda implemented in collaboration with GWP-Med (Forwarding of Funds).

Furthermore, the GIZ project will provide support to implement activities fostering women economic empowerment and youth employment in the UfM region.

Cooperation with the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) [This section is still under discussion with AECID and might be amended in the upcoming weeks]

In 2025 the strategic partnership with AECID will be enhanced by an increased support and a wider scope of areas of intervention, in the framework of the newly launched AECID programme “Masar Al’an”. The programme refers to the UfM as the first strategic partner for its implementation and it is aligned with the UfM regional agendas for the thematic areas covered by the programme.

In addition to the current contribution provided by AECID to UfM Hub for Jobs, Trade and Investment, AECID is also supporting the UfM Regional Agenda on Gender and Food security and the UfM Urban Development Agenda, while other areas are being explored.

In 2025 the UfMS and AECID will establish a framework for a multiannual cooperation aligned with the one existing with other partners, defining scope, modalities and timeline of the cooperation.

EC (DG MARE)/CINEA Grant on Promoting Sustainable Blue Economy in the Mediterranean Sea Basin

Building on the successful cooperation on Sustainable Blue Economy (SBE) between the EC (DG MARE), the UfM Secretariat and the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) ongoing since 2016, the aim of the Action Grant (€ 800.000) is to reinforce the technical capacity of the UfM Secretariat on Sustainable Blue Economy and maritime policy. The implementation period of the Action Grant will run for 36 months, beginning in May 2024.

In close coordination with the UfM Co-Presidency, the UfM Secretariat will support the UfM Member States – in particular as represented in the **UfM Regional Platform on SBE** – and relevant partners and stakeholders, in order to: (i) Ensure/structure the dialogue on SBE through regular meetings of the **UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Blue Economy**; (ii) Support the regional portfolio of actions, in particular the identification/promotion/launch of initiatives, programs, and projects in line with the **2021 UfM Ministerial Declaration on SBE** and the Roadmap for its implementation, including as regards to enhancing the blue finance process in the Med (i.e. BMP) ; and (iii) Continue maintaining and developing the Mediterranean Blue Economy Stakeholder Platform (MedBESP), engaging with the relevant Sustainable Blue Economy stakeholders and partners that are part of the Mediterranean SBE community.

Increase coordination of development actors in the Mediterranean region for higher impact on the ground

The UfM Secretariat will convene the second edition of the UfM Member States development actors meeting in the first semester of 2025, following the success and positive outcomes of the first meeting organized in 2024.

Representatives from development agencies of UfM Member States will meet to agree on common priorities, coordinate work and create partnership opportunities. The involvement of relevant regional actors and increased engagement will be explored.

4.2 Institutional development and Internal administration

i) Institutional development

In the framework of the UfM Reform Process, kicked-off by the UfM Co-Presidency and Member States on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the organisation in 2023, a reflection to increase the UfMS capacity, efficiency and effectiveness was launched.

In continuity with the measures taken in 2023 and 2024, the UfMS will continue in 2025 to work on the improvement of its **internal structure and processes** towards the above described objective.

It will notably organise the annual UfMS **annual retreat** launched in 2024, enlarging its scope and duration, potentially engaging other key stakeholders involved in the UfMS structure and processes and relevant to the reflection.

Moreover, it will particularly focus on the **implementation of the recommendations and methodologies developed with the first comprehensive organisational audit conducted** in 2024, with a potential continuation of the technical assistance to support the implementation process.

The UfMS will also work on the operationalization of the **impact assessment** framework designed end of 2024, as requested in Reform Package 1 (SOM, October 2023), putting in place, if resources allow, trainings on this new framework for the UfMS staff to get acquainted with it, and organising an initial data collection and impact assessment for the UfMS, through the newly adopted methodology and against the retained KPIs, building on the RBM developed in the last years.

Furthermore, additional trainings and dedicated support for the Secretariat staff are planned to develop additional capacities to implement RBM and to work within a programmatic approach are foreseen in 2025, with the support of Sida, potentially leading to a sustainable adoption of RBM by 2025 and beyond.

The UfMS will continuously review and improve its **internal coordination and communication**, assessing the effectiveness of its internal governance structure reviewed in 2024. Internal coordination and cross-sectoral action will be enhanced through the College, the DSGs, the Programming Committee and the Horizontal divisions coordination meetings. To reinforce reactivity and agility of the UfM to the context unfolding in the region, a post-disaster and post-conflict recovery focus group was also set: This group has focused on the situation in Gaza and has identified several initiatives that can enhance the role of the UfM in any rehabilitation and reconciliation efforts that might be envisaged in a 'Day after' scenario *[the focus group is currently holding the described meetings and its outcomes might impact/amend the proposed activities under this WP – adding specific proposals of initiatives in Gaza/Palestine to be submitted in the upcoming weeks].*

ii) Human Resources Development (HR)

In 2025, the Human Resources Unit will align the organization with the UfM strategy and strengthen its human resources management by implementing new Staff Regulations and people-focused HR tools and processes. The aim is to harness the full potential of the organization's talent by introducing new rules and policies, adopting agile HR processes, enhancing staff talent development and capacity building, and fostering a gender-balanced, diverse, and inclusive team.

Four key areas identified for 2025:

➤ Organizational development

Based on the recommendations from the audit led by the Cabinet in 2024, the organizational structure will be revised, job descriptions updated, and some internal mobilities may be assessed. The organizational effectiveness will be measured on the ability to successfully meet the UfM goals and mission.

➤ Implementation of the new Staff Regulations and Implementing Rules

The HR team will be essential in drafting and enforcing new regulations, establishing procedures and policies, and supporting the administration department in introducing new benefits (e.g., medical insurance, pension plan, taxation, hybrid working). These new regulations will positively impact talent management at UfM.

➤ HR Digitalization - Agile processes

The new HRIS system will fully digitalize HR processes such as administration, absence management, hybrid working, recruitment, performance management, onboarding, training. This will make HR processes more agile and efficient, as well as enhancing the staff as well as the candidates' experience.

➤ **New HR Programs & Policies:**

Performance Management: implement a system to assess performance through annual goals, mid-year reviews, and performance appraisals, supporting staff excellence in their roles

Onboarding & Induction: establish a robust onboarding and induction process to ensure a lasting employee-employer relationship.

Training & Development: enhance staff performance and development through transversal trainings and individual development actions. Introduce coaching programs for specific management positions.

Gender, Diversity and Inclusion: identify and implement actions to reinforce the diversity and inclusion at the UfM. The activities related to Gender will be continued in 2025 including mandatory trainings for all the staff based on the Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, with the support of the German Development Cooperation and in close coordination with the SCA division. A technical assistance will be hired to develop the described trainings, as well as an overall Gender mainstreaming policy for the UfMS in 2025.

Furthermore, new initiatives aimed at enhancing staff well-being will be launched in 2025 to foster a positive and supportive approach to people management

iii) Administration

To strengthen the internal management framework, the UfMS has outlined key areas for development and improvement in 2025, focusing on financial management, internal capacity building, and support for operational activities:

➤ **Internal Control System**

The UfMS aims to enhance its internal control system by:

1. Upgrading risk management policies.
2. Strengthening the segregation of duties.
3. Improving governance mechanisms, including the establishment of an audit committee.

➤ **Risk Management and Internal Audit**

Risk management will be comprehensive, covering financial, contractual, and operational aspects under EU financial regulations. Steps will be taken to establish an internal control and audit function according to internationally recognized standards. The audit committee will link independent external audits with governance.

➤ **Budgetary and Accounting Systems**

The budgetary and accounting systems will incorporate a discharge procedure to ensure the annual submission of UfM reports and audited accounts for approval. This will align with statutory provisions and produce financial statements under IPSAS, certified by independent external audits with positive results.

➤ **Financing Through Grants**

To support growing interest in grants from Member States' cooperation agencies, the UfMS will enhance its internal policies in 2025 by:

- Updating the policy guidelines for financial agreements.
- Reinforcing operational monitoring of funded projects.
- Strengthening the protection of financial interests in grants management.

➤ **Procurement Policies**

In 2025, the UfMS plans to:

- Further digitalize the procurement process through e-procurement.
- Develop an exclusion policy based on EU regulations to establish an Early Detection System (EDS) for protecting financial interests.

➤ **Protection of Personal Data**

The UfMS will work on:

- Developing a consolidated personal data protection policy considering the GDPR and the intergovernmental nature of the organization.
- Establishing a Data Protection Officer (DPO) function.

➤ **Digitalization of Processes**

The UfMS will enhance efficiency and reduce paperwork through digitalisation with the aim to reduce administrative burden, increase productivity, and improve data security by:

- Identify key administrative processes for digitalisation.
- Implement electronic document management systems.
- Train staff on new digital tools and processes.

➤ **Development of a New BPM (Business Process Management) Tool**

The UfMS will implement a modern, user-friendly BPM tool in order to improve workflow management and better tracking of tasks and deadlines through the following actions:

- Complete assessment of requirements.
- Identify and evaluate potential vendors or solutions.
- Develop and implement the new BPM tool with external IT consultants.

➤ **Development of New Staff Regulations**

Update staff regulations to reflect organizational needs and changes in order to enhance clear and transparent employment standards and guidelines for staff rights, responsibilities and conduct:

- Complete the ongoing procedure of reviewing current regulations and identify areas for improvement.
- Feedback/Consult with stakeholders, including HR and staff representatives.
- Draft and finalise updated regulations in collaboration with the HR Unit and Cabinet in order to proceed with SOM's approval.

➤ **Update of Headquarters Agreement**

Finalise the procedure started in 2024. Ensure that the Headquarters Agreement complies with current legal and International organizational requirements and is aligned with legal and International organizational standards:

- Review and identify areas for amendment.
- Consult with legal advisors, management, and the Host Country.
- Negotiate and finalize updates.

➤ **Departmental Updates and Capacity Reinforcement**

Enhance efficiency and effectiveness within the Legal and Administration Department to streamline processes, improve service delivery and better coordination by:

- Conduct a comprehensive review of operations, policies, and procedures.
- Develop action plans for improvement.
- Implement updates in collaboration with section heads and stakeholders.

➤ **IT Investment for Obsolete Equipment Replacement**

Upgrade IT infrastructure for better performance and security to improve system reliability, faster processing speeds and enhanced cybersecurity, through:

- Assess current IT equipment and identify obsolete hardware.
- Procure new PCs and necessary IT equipment.
- Install and configure new hardware and software.

The Legal and Administration Department aims to achieve modernisation, efficiency, and compliance through these key objectives and actions in 2025.

4.3 Communication and visibility

The UfM Secretariat will focus on **communicating effectively the 2025 key initiatives, activities, and achievements of the organization**, increasing the overall understanding of the mission and role of the UfM among its key target audiences.

The first edition of the **Mediterranean Capitals of Culture and Dialogue** and the fifth edition of the **Day of the Mediterranean** will constitute a communication priority. Likewise, producing and disseminating a series of **inspiring human stories from the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation** will take an important place in the UfM communication efforts as they show the impact of projects and initiatives on people's everyday life. Furthermore, in 2025 we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Barcelona Process, which will provide another opportunity to raise awareness on the mission and work of the UfM..

Keeping informed and **fostering engagement with the UfM priority target audiences**, notably with the media, closer partners (UfM ecosystem), opinion leaders and influencers will also be part of the communication endeavours.

➤ **Media**

The COMMs Unit will continue to identify and target key journalists to increase the visibility of UfM activities and foster engagement in Member States. This **includes targeting vertical media outlets within the sectors of activity of the UfM to effectively reach professional groups** working in these areas.

The Secretariat will expand on already existing initiatives, such as the WhatsApp media group to disseminate key information, while also organising targeted activities to **foster engagement with a close group of journalists** who cover UfM areas of activity.

The COMMs Unit will further its aim to **incorporate journalists into the UfM's dialogue processes** by targeting key reporters from across the region and encouraging them to not only cover the Secretariat's activities, but to actively participate in those that are most relevant to them. This means that the Secretariat will also encourage **the organisation of and the participation in regional media events in order to foster dialogue and networking among and with journalists** on topics of critical interest for the region.

Additionally, the COMMs Unit will seek to provide **media training** to UfM spokespeople to enhance our communication efforts and ensure our messages are conveyed accurately and efficiently.

The press office **will seek partnerships with relevant media groups and organisations to contribute to impactful communication** aimed at UfM target audiences and will support communication about the most relevant UfM sectoral activities through the following actions:

- The **dissemination of information** on the main UfM achievements and activities.
- The **publication of articles, op-eds and interviews** with UfM representatives and UfM partners in renowned media outlets across the region.
- The organisation of **press briefings, conferences and press trips to the UfM Secretariat, events or projects**. The Secretariat will use these press events to ensure a more in-depth coverage of UfM activities.
- Holding **one-to-one meetings with relevant journalists from the region** and the UfM's SG and DSGs during their missions to Member States.

Several transversal media campaigns will be implemented in 2025 to consolidate the UfM's position as a leading organisation for regional cooperation in the Mediterranean on the occasion of:

- **UfM Regional Forum:** This will entail a media plan tailored to the event which will include a press visit to ensure regional coverage of the UfM key messages
- **Day of the Mediterranean:** The COMMs Unit will enhance visibility of the annual concert and other related activities in the region among targeted journalists, with a special focus of achieving mentions in top-tier outlets.
- **Mediterranean Capitals of Culture and Dialogue:** Key information media will be informed of includes the 2026 call for applications as well as relevant activities in the 2025 capitals of Tirana and Alexandria.
- **Important international days including the Women's Day, the World Water Day or the Environment Day:** In the absence of UfM activities marking these days, the COMMs unit will only issue a press release and offer journalists the opportunity to interview key experts.
- **UfM Ministerial Meetings**
- **UfM Grant Schemes or labelled projects under implementation**
- **Other important UfM events specified within this work programme:** These, by default, will entail a media advisory, press release, and the opportunity to interview experts and other relevant participants unless not applicable.

➤ Digital communication

UfM website

The UfM website is an essential component of the UfM's online strategy. With daily updates in three languages and a significant number of yearly visitors (200k approx.), it serves as **a crucial platform for disseminating UfM content and connecting with partners and stakeholders**, and contributes to the achievement of two specific objectives:

1. Increase the overall understanding of UfM's impact and added-value

Action-oriented web homepage: the UfM Secretariat will keep highlighting human-interest success stories, originating from the several UfM flagship projects and initiatives. Recognizing the importance of storytelling to showcase impact, the UfM web homepage acts as an enabling platform to increase the general audience's understanding of the UfM Secretariat's endeavours.

New Regional Platform's pages: following the rationalization of all UfM Regional Platforms – a process completed in 2024 – the UfM website will also provide a clearer presentation of such platforms with a new structure. These will be regularly updated in 2025 with the latest endeavours undertaken by the UfM Secretariat and UfM Member States under these sectoral frameworks.

2. Enhance the visibility of UfM flagship initiatives and ongoing activities

The UfM Secretariat will develop **special designs for landing pages for key initiatives and projects**, essential for capturing the attention of visitors and directing them towards specific information or actions. For instance, these landing pages will enable an improved understanding of the UfM Secretariat's transversal activities such as its actions for **Youth**, the **Blue Mediterranean Partnership** or the **2024 UfM Annual Report**.

In addition, the UfM Secretariat will work to nurture content and attract **more visitors to key sections** such as the UfM publications, as well as increase the **audio-visual material in the press corner available for journalists** and media.

In 2025, the UfM Secretariat will also keep regularly updating and managing its satellite websites:

- **Day of the Mediterranean website:** In 2025, the website will be updated with all the elements of the 2025 campaign, in up to 8 languages. It will keep serving as a platform centralizing activities held in around the Euro-Med region to celebrate the Day of the Mediterranean.
- **Mediterranean Capitals of Culture and Dialogue website:** Developed in 2024, this new website available in 3 languages will serve as a central hub for information related to the Mediterranean Capitals and will provide details about the celebration of its first edition foreseen in 2025.
- **Euro-Mediterranean Hub for Research and Innovation:** Jointly launched in 2024 with the European Commission, the UfM Secretariat will provide technical support when applicable for this website's maintenance, as well as increase its visibility in view of nurturing a Euro-Med community for R&I.

Considering that over one third of the total UfM website traffic comes from Google, the UfM Secretariat will keep working on **optimizing its website's Search Engine Optimization (SEO)** to ensure optimal placement on Google searches related to Euro-Mediterranean news and initiatives, ultimately increasing the visibility of the UfM Secretariat and its endeavours.

Finally, the UfM Secretariat will continue **enhancing the mobile/responsive view of the website**, considering mobile users account for one third of website visitors.

Emailing

The year 2025 will also be dedicated to **increasing the subscriptions to the UfM institutional monthly newsletter**, which will be distributed both to the **UfM general ecosystem** and to **UfM Senior Officials** – a new dynamic already put in place in 2024. With a current database of 28.000+ contacts, the UfM Secretariat also aims to progressively increase this database in 2025, with a **particular focus on expanding reach among French and Arabic-speaking stakeholders**.

Social Media

A key focus in 2025 will be achieving **greater geographical balance among UfM followers**, ensuring messages reach and resonate throughout the entire region. To facilitate this, the UfM Secretariat will put **special efforts into increasing follower growth and engagement, particularly on Instagram and LinkedIn.**

On **Instagram**, the UfMS will develop a content strategy that prioritizes engaging, educational, and emotionally compelling stories to resonate with its audience. **LinkedIn** efforts will include creating dedicated content capsules tailored to professional groups across various UfM sectors, ensuring relevant and impactful communication. Furthermore, the UfMS will foster deeper **engagement** with target audiences by interacting more actively with their accounts and developing a **network of digital content creators**. These creators will serve as message multipliers, helping to amplify the UfMS' reach and impact across the digital landscape.

➤ **Public affairs**

Efforts to identify and update key contacts within the main **UfM target audiences** will continue throughout 2025 to keep the UfM ecosystem up to date on the organisation's activities, build trust, and foster engagement. To this end, the UfM Secretariat will aim to assess **target audiences**, identify key objectives and develop tailored messages and actions.

In 2025, efforts will be dedicated to **increase the visibility** of UfM activities among its key audiences. Specifically, the UfM Secretariat will aim to:

- Potentially organise **Open Doors Days** to the UfM headquarters for the Day of the Mediterranean to bring the organisation closer to citizens residing in/visiting Barcelona.
- **Day of the Mediterranean 2025**. This international day provides an opportunity to promote the Mediterranean's shared heritage and culture as well as foster hope in Euro-Mediterranean relations. The UfM Secretariat will continue to foster synergies and collaborations with partner organisations, such as ARLEM, ALF, and UN institutions working in the region, among others. Efforts will also continue to increase the visibility of the Day and position it at an international level, particularly through its recognition by the United Nations.
- **Visits at the UfM headquarters**: The UfM Secretariat will continue welcoming groups of target audiences including parliamentarians, students from renowned Universities and representatives of institutions from the UfM ecosystem to give presentations on the organisation's work and mission.

Moreover, 2025 will see the first edition of the **Mediterranean Capitals of Culture and Dialogue**, while the second edition is prepared and the call for the third one is announced. The preparation of the cultural programmes with the selected capitals will allow to further identify new contacts and engage with local authorities, their respective ecosystems and increase UfM awareness among the cities' populations.

To foster engagement and support from Member States and other critical audiences (such as Senior Officials, financial institutions and development agencies) the UfM Secretariat will aim at demonstrating relevance and impact through regional events and initiatives:

- **10th Regional Forum**
- **Key regional events**: by securing the presence of UfM representatives and subsequent speaking opportunities
- Enhancing the communication with **project promoters** and partners to stay up to date with the evolution of projects

Furthermore, one of the objectives of the upcoming years is to position the UfM as a **thought leader** on regional priorities and a hub for knowledge sharing and capacity building. To this end, the UfM Secretariat will attempt to

strengthen relations with Think Tanks and Universities through more 1-to-1 or group meetings with researchers on UfM representatives' missions and through actions in cooperation with research institutions.

Lastly, the Communication Unit aims to deliver **training sessions on communication skills** to UfM staff in 2025. These trainings will be complemented by **induction sessions** to any new member that joins the UfM Secretariat in the future.

➤ **Communication tools and publications**

UfMS **institutional publications** and info tools (brochure, press kit, newsletters, templates, leaflets, reports, guidelines, videos, etc.) are essential tools to present the UfM Secretariat activities to external stakeholders. UfMS publications will continue to be regularly updated in 2025 to communicate on the UfM Secretariat's actions, especially through the production of the 2024 Annual Report.

Moreover, the UfM Secretariat will continue identifying and creating **Human Stories** to put the focus on regular citizens and connect emotionally with UfM audiences. These stories are crucial to showcase the tangible impact of UfM initiatives, conferences and/or networks. The UfMS will also organise **audiovisual trips** to UfM supported initiatives and labelled projects, to gather photos and videos for a more comprehensive communication on these stories.

Lastly, the Communication Unit will continue participating in the production of **sectoral publications by ensuring the visual coherence among all publications** and disseminating key findings and messages of reports to its target audiences.

Matrix Work Plan 2025

Priority area	1. UfM Member countries are increasingly engaged in regional mobilisation and actions, addressing strategic priorities in the region through the adoption of common regional agendas.	2. Regional stakeholders are mobilised for a more effective ownership and effective implementation of regional agendas	3. Increased initiatives, projects and partnerships for concrete regional impact
Economic Development	<p>12th UfM Ministerial meeting on Trade, Investment and Industry</p> <p>Two UfM Regional Platform on Trade, Investment and Industry.</p> <p>UfM Regional Platform on Digital Connectivity and Internet Access</p>	<p>7th UfM Trade and Investment Forum</p> <p>9th Conference of Central Mediterranean Bank Governors</p> <p>UfM Workshop on Sustainable Investment</p> <p>UfM Conference on Artificial Intelligence for Economic Growth</p>	<p>Progress Report on Regional Integration in the UfM Region</p> <p>UfM Grant Scheme for the Promotion of Inclusive Digital Trade</p> <p>UfM Study visit and awareness raising on International Trade and Investment Policies Architecture</p> <p>Study visit for Customs Administrations</p> <p>Technical trainings on e-commerce</p>
Employment	<p>6th UfM Ministerial on Employment and Labour (Q3 2025, tbc) / UfM Regional Platform on Employment and Labour</p>	<p>UfM Informal Economy Conference</p> <p>UfM Conference on “Tourism and Job Creation in the Mediterranean”</p> <p>UfM Community of Practice on Youth Employment in the Southern Mediterranean</p> <p>UfM Conference on Digital Transformation</p>	<p>UfM Grant Scheme to Promote Employment and Entrepreneurship in the Green Economy</p> <p>Multistakeholder Dialogue on the UfM Grant Schemes</p> <p>The Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs (Med4Jobs)</p>
Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting of the National Focal Points on Higher Education. Erasmus+ in the Southern Mediterranean: current situation and prospectives. DG-EAC (EC) 	<p>UfM Higher Education Stakeholders’ Meeting. Greening Curricula: a cross-cutting challenge for Higher Education Institutions.</p>	<p>Education and Skills for Employment - Meeting of UfM-labelled projects in the field of education.</p>

	will cooperate closely with UfMS as the meeting will help shaping the future Erasmus+ programme in the region.		
Research and Innovation	31 st UfM Regional Platform in Research and Innovation Meetings of the UfM R&I Bureau.	UfM Innovation Conference: from Research to Business Study on the state of Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean	Workshop “Research for Reconstruction and Resilience” Regional Workshop on Science for Policy Webinars and Training Missions
Women Empowerment	Follow up on the RoadMap for Implementation of the 5th Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society Follow Up on the Monitoring Mechanism on Gender Indicators Preparation of the UfM 6 th Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society	Med Women in Tech Network (MTWN) UfM Women Community of Practices on the nexus Gender Environment and Climate Change Regional Agenda on Gender and Food Security Mediterranean Women Journalists Network	Capacity building programme on VAWG Award on Women in Tech and AI Follow Up on the Gender Equality Plan in Mediterranean Universities Possible labelling of 1/2 projects on women economic empowerment
Youth engagement	Follow-up implementation of the UfM Youth Agenda	Internal policy practice on Youth engagement in the UfM Regional Platforms and Ministerial meetings	MedYouthLab 2nd edition (October 2025 Tirana)
Civil Protection	Implementation of the Action Plan 2030 for Civil Protection	Organisation of the Working group meetings (4) and of the Regional Platform on Civil protection	Collaboration with external partners in regional initiatives
Disability	Launching the UfM Regional Agenda on Disability Organising the 3rd Edition of the EuroMed Conference on Disability	Implementing the UfM Regional Agenda on Disability : setting up a network of regional stakeholders working on the socio-economic inclusion of PwD	Organization of two capacity building workshops to improve the skills of the CSOs for the socio-economic inclusion of PwD Scale-up of the pilot project on Economic inclusion of women in the tourism sector (Morocco)

<p>Transport</p>	<p>2nd UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport / UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity and its thematic working groups.</p>	<p>Two rounds of meetings of the UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity and its thematic Working Groups (follow-up, monitoring and evaluation of the RTAP).</p> <p>Additional UfM Secretariat regional events supporting the implementation of the first pillar of the new RTAP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional workshop on the greening of Ports and Maritime transport. - Regional Workshop on Sustainable Urban Transport and Mobility. <p>Additional UfM Secretariat regional events supporting the implementation of the second pillar of the new RTAP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High-level event workshop on transport infrastructure connectivity in the region. - Workshop to exchange with regional and global partners on best practices on national lead agencies for road safety. <p>38th Session of the UNECE Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics</p> <p>GTMO 5+5 Expert Group meetings</p> <p>GTMO 5+5 Ministerial Conference</p> <p>Side-event at the 2025 ITF Summit on the promotion of a gender perspective in sustainable urban transport.</p>	<p>Steering Committee meetings of EU funded projects supporting the implementation of the RTAP</p> <p>Monitoring and supporting UfM-labelled projects.</p> <p>Activities with UITP in implementation of the joint MoU:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical assistance and capacity building initiatives to implement the new RTAP; - Communication campaigns to promote the benefits of public transport among the ministries of transport in the Mediterranean region. <p>Activities with the International Road Federation (IRF):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity building / Training activities on Road Safety.
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		<p>14th edition of the MARLOG International Conference on Maritime Transport and Logistics</p> <p>2025 MEDports Forum</p> <p>2025 ITF Summit and ITF Consultation Day with International Organizations.</p>	
Urban Development	<p>The 3rd UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development held in Zagreb (Croatia) on the 4 May 2023, provides a key mandate for the implementation of the UfM Urban Agenda, especially through the new UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040 and its Housing Action Plan.</p>	<p>The UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Urban Development</p> <p>UfM Thematic Working Groups on “Urban Transformation” and “Affordable and Sustainable Housing”, the UfM Permanent Working Group on “Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting Systems on Sustainable Urban Development”, as well as the UfM-IFIs Urban Project Committee</p> <p>The UfM program on Urban Heritage and Traditional Building Skills in the Southern Mediterranean Region</p> <p>UfM Network of Schools of Architecture and Urban Planning of the Euro-Mediterranean Region - HER</p>	<p>UfM Program on Legal-regulatory frameworks for coastal land management in Mediterranean countries. A capacity-building workshop is foreseen in 2025 to be jointly implemented with UN-Habitat, UNEP-MAP, and IUCN – WEBC, under the umbrella of the UfM WG on Urban Transformation.</p> <p>Support Maghreb countries in the definition and set-up of official and recognized national programs of vocational training on traditional building skills in the form of training/workshop schools</p> <p>Support candidatures of oases to FAO GIAHS and Unesco Cultural Landscapes through both technical assistance and the active involvement of schools of architecture and planning of the region in the generation of knowledge to be used in candidatures for both recognitions.</p> <p>A program on the exchange of best practices between the EU and North African GIAHS will be supported by joining efforts with the FAO</p>

			<p>Sustainable tourism and economic development in oases will be promoted by creating and promoting a bike-packing route in each country under the theme of the ancient route of salt caravans in collaboration with the Ministries of Culture</p> <p>Support the creation of national directories of Traditional Building Crafts Masters in the fields of traditional construction and its restoration</p> <p>Exhibition to shed light on the pivotal role of women in preserving cultural heritage and recognize and celebrate the invaluable contributions of women in safeguarding and transmitting cultural practices across generations</p> <p>Support the creation of a prize recognizing traditional architecture</p> <p>Conduct a training to promote sustainable building construction in building procurement in coordination with France and the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction</p> <p>Enlarge the program on Urban Heritage and Traditional Building Skills to Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine with the organization of two national workshops, one per semester</p> <p>2025 edition of the UfM Student Competition on Urban Design: Urban</p>
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			<p>Solutions to Climate Change in the Mediterranean to be launched with the support of the Fundació Mies van der Rohe.</p> <p>Publication on Urban Development in the Mediterranean Region, following the example of the UNESCO Global Report on Culture for Sustainable Urban Development, gathering best practices, to be prepared with inputs from the members of the group. And presentation at UM6P.</p> <p>MoU to be signed on a bilateral basis with the Schools of Architecture and Planning which are part of the group. Organization of an institutional act at UfM premises, gathering representatives from all the schools who signed MoUs.</p>
<p>Water</p>	<p>Continued and incremental implementation of the UfM Agenda and its 4 thematic areas: WEFE Nexus, WASH, WCCA and WEM</p> <p>Developing the Strategy for the “Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus in the Mediterranean Source to Sea continuum” and continued efforts to leveraging public and private capital to ensure all sectors are adequately funded</p> <p>Continued efforts and resources mobilisation to achieve a successful organisation of the 2nd</p>	<p>15th Regional Platform on Water is held on May/June 2025</p> <p>At least three (3) meetings are foreseen to take place to advance the implementation of the UfM Financial strategy (two (2) meetings of the UfM Working Group on Water Finance and Investment and a conference on Water Finance and Investment)</p> <p>Continued and incremental implementation of the UfM Financial Strategy for Water</p> <p>Digital skills and knowledge of individuals involved in water management</p>	<p>Efforts are to be continued to ensure sufficient institutional cooperation and enforcement capacity, particularly in leveraging the establishment of the WEFE Nexus Knowledge Hub.</p> <p>Implementation of the UfM Water and Youth Engagement Strategy with at least one event (MedYWat Hackathon) and two training programmes (Bootcamp water entrepreneurial and training courses on water management for students)</p>

	Ministerial on Water proposed for the end of 2025 (tbc).	Continued support to the work line on digitalisation and the water sector (capacity building programme and peer-to-peer review)	
Environment	<p>Continued implementation of the UfM greenerMed agenda</p> <p>Annual reporting by the countries on the implementation of the Roadmap/Ministerial, in line with the Results-based Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation system of the Ministerial</p> <p>Mid-term external evaluation of the implementation of the Green agenda/Ministerial</p>	<p>One meeting of the Platform on Env and CC</p> <p>One meeting of the Working group on Environment</p> <p>Contributing to the Mediterranean Green week</p>	<p>Collaboration with FAO and EFIMED on a Mediterranean regional partnership on forestry/landscape restoration,</p> <p>Close partnership with Interreg EuroMed on the labelled Governance projects</p> <p>Follow and support closely the developments of the MedFund, in view of the UN Ocean Conference in Nice scheduled on 9-13 June 2025</p> <p>Dedicated technical assistances will continue to support in house the overall environmental dossier:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to support the continuation of the ongoing marine litter regional actions, - to support the UfM/FAO/CIHEAM/PRIMA/One Planet partnership on sustainable food systems; - Partner and contribute to the Conference of the Parties of the Barcelona Convention, as well as of relevant other conventions and partners.

<p>SBE</p>	<p>Continued implementation of the UfM SBE Roadmap in line with the 10 priorities of the 2021 UfM Ministerial Declaration on SBE</p> <p>Annual reporting by the countries on the implementation of the Roadmap/Ministerial, in line with the Results-based Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation system of the Ministerial</p> <p>Mid-term external evaluation of the implementation of the Roadmap/Ministerial</p>	<p>At least 2 meetings of the UfM Regional Platform on SBE held</p> <p>Continued leveraging of the Mediterranean Blue Economy Platform (MedBESP) as the regional networking platform to share knowledge on, and support the development of the Med SBE</p>	<p>Continued institutional cooperation with a wide ecosystem of Med SBE partners, strengthening/fostering the regional coordination and convergence of efforts and technical and financial resources towards the achievement of the Ministerial/Roadmap (i.e. building on the Outcomes and main messages of the 2024 UfM Stakeholder Conference on SBE, in line with the 10 priorities of the Ministerial)</p> <p>Particular attention to the Blue Mediterranean Partnership (BMP) and its alignment with, in particular, the 2021 UfM Ministerial Declaration on SBE</p>
<p>Energy</p>	<p>Bilateral engagement with UfM Member States to support the Energy Agenda</p> <p>Collaborate closely with the European Commission on implementing recommendations from consultants hired to evaluate Member States' engagement within the UfM and assess the necessity for updating the energy declaration.</p>	<p>Finalizing the New Roadmap for Action</p> <p>Organise annual meetings of the UfM Energy Platform and its working groups</p> <p>Supporting EU initiative on interconnection</p> <p>Renewable energy and clean technology cooperation</p> <p>Organise the Energy and Climate Business Forum</p>	<p>Support to the UfM labelled projects in the energy sector</p> <p>Promoting the Mediterranean energy agenda in global processes</p>
<p>Climate Action</p>	<p>Bilateral engagement with UfM Member States to support the Climate Action Agenda</p> <p>Collaborate closely with the European Commission on implementing recommendations from consultants hired to evaluate Member States' engagement within the UfM and assess the necessity for updating</p>	<p>Organise annual meetings of the UfM Climate Action Working Group (former CCEG)</p> <p>Organise the Energy and Climate Business Forum</p>	<p>Support to the UfM labelled projects in the climate action sector</p> <p>Support the origination of projects addressing climate action in the Mediterranean region</p>

	<p>the Climate Action section of the Ministerial Declaration and to develop an action plan for the climate component of the Declaration, to support the monitoring of its implementation.</p>	<p>Organise UfM and stakeholders' participation at COP30 under a joint Mediterranean Pavilion and/or Office</p> <p>Organise UfM and stakeholders' participation at UNFCCC regional meetings e.g. MENA Climate Week</p>	<p>Promoting the Mediterranean climate action agenda in global processes</p>
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