2026 UfM Secretariat Work Programme

Executive Summary

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is an intergovernmental Euro-Mediterranean organisation bringing together all 27 EU countries 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 reflected of the shared political commitment of its 43 Members to strengthen regional cooperation, dialogue and integration in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

The UfM Secretariat, established as a unique intergovernmental platform for dialogue and cooperation, is mandated to promote integration, stability, and sustainable development in the region. Since its creation, it has demonstrated resilience and adaptability in working toward its overarching goal: fostering a Euro-Mediterranean area of peace, stability, and shared prosperity that reflects the legitimate aspirations of its citizens.

The 2026 Work Programme prepared during an institution-wide reform process, builds on the UfM's established mandate while adapting to evolving regional and geopolitical dynamics. This programme represents the continuity of past work with initial adjustments to align with the reform and respond to emerging regional priorities.

The reform objectives are designed to enhance operational efficiency, policy coherence, cross-sectoral synergies and strategic impact, while strengthening internal capacities, refining processes, improving monitoring and communication, and investing in staff development. Implementation will be carried out in close collaboration with UfM Members, the Co-Presidency, and key regional and international partners. The programme is delivered within a constrained budget, highlighting the need for strategic prioritisation and mobilisation of external support.

The UfM's work in 2026 is guided by the renewed strategic vision, reflecting a shared determination to safeguard stability, foster cooperation, and deliver tangible benefits for the region. Aligned with the Pact for the Mediterranean, the UfM pursues a human-centric, country-focused, and economy-driven approach:

- **Connecting people**: through inclusive education, academic and joint research programs, mobility initiatives, and promoting gender and youth-responsive policies.
- **Connecting economies**: by strengthening trade and investment, promoting regulatory convergence, transport and energy connectivity (including electricity markets, renewable energy, green hydrogen, and clean technologies), digital infrastructure, innovation, and skill-building.
- **Connecting countries**: through dialogue and cooperation on resilience, climate, energy, water and food security, energy efficiency, sustainable management of natural resources and cultural heritage, as well as disaster risk reduction and civil protection.

The Secretariat continues to implement the "Three Ps" methodology Policy, Platform and Projects ensuring continuity within change and enabling flexibility to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities across the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Key activities for 2026 cover multiple sectors with a strong emphasis on cross-sectoral initiatives and tangible impact. New initiatives for 2026 focus on regional resilience and post-crisis recovery and strengthening the UfM's role as a catalyst for investment and project readiness. Flagship actions such as the Youth Mainstreaming Plan, the Mediterranean Pavilion at COP and strategic regional fora such as trade, blue economy and research are designed to deliver measurable outcomes and monitor progress in the region. By engaging UfM members, regional stakeholders, multilateral partners, and civil society, the UfM aims to maximize collective impact, promoting inclusive development, stability, and prosperity throughout the region.

The 2026 programme is implemented under constrained human and financial resources, requiring prioritisation, prudence, and agility. Within the context of the ongoing reform, the Work Programme depends on stable management, clear governance, and fully engaged leadership to ensure effective delivery and avoid operational risks. This is anchored in active coordination between the Co-Presidency and the Secretariat and a restructured and complete team in place ensuring strategic direction, oversight, and risk management. During the year the Secretariat will build on its unique intergovernmental mandate and use the existing policy frameworks and regional dialogue platforms to receive political guidance, relying on Co-Presidency to facilitate voluntary initiatives and working groups among UfM members to advance key regional priorities and flagship initiatives. Regional Platforms will remain central to UfM operations, providing structured spaces for dialogue, monitoring, and coordination.

The Secretariat will also promote sub-regional and cross-border cooperation, including new partnerships with Gulf countries. Rigorous monitoring, evaluation, and transparent reporting mechanisms will be used to track results and adapt programming as needed. The Secretariat will continue leveraging its convening power, strengthened project-labelling mechanisms, and results-based management approach to mobilize investment and support regional cooperation.

It will also act as a trusted regional hub for information and public and institutional communication, reinforcing shared Mediterranean narratives. In parallel, it will reinforce its role as a regional information and communication hub, acting as a trusted source of regional knowledge and a neutral promoter of shared Mediterranean narratives. Strengthening the UfM to deliver more and better with its updated organizational structure and renewed mandate, the Secretariat will be better equipped to serve its Member States, ensuring operational performance, people management, effective resource allocation, and institutional stability through a new financial model and budget.

As a transitional year, 2026 serves as a bridge towards the UfM's multi-annual roadmap (2026–2030). This programme reinforces the UfM's role as the leading regional platform for dialogue, confidence building, and collective action, delivering tangible results and lasting impact. By connecting people, countries, and economies through targeted initiatives and strengthened operational methods, the Secretariat will continue to uphold its founding mission while adapting to emerging challenges. The consolidated 2026 Work Programme provides the detailed framework to guide collective action, ensuring that the UfM remains a resilient, agile, and impactful actor across the Euro-Mediterranean region.

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 over 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. Connecting and Engaging People: A human-centric Approach

🔷 **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1**: **Strengthen regional cooperation and integration through higher education, research and innovation to contribute to sustainable employment across the Euro-Mediterranean region.**

Activity 1 - Mapping Greening Education & Guidelines

Description: To implement the first two key points of the Girona Manifesto focused on advancing regional cooperation in climate education: mapping existing climate-related academic offerings across the Euro-Mediterranean region to consolidate and showcase fragmented educational initiatives, thereby supporting student choices, institutional benchmarking, and attracting funders and policymakers; and developing curriculum guidelines to standardize tertiary climate education, ensuring comparability, improving academic quality, facilitating joint degrees and credit recognition, and offering a reference for national ministries aligning with international climate commitments.

Implementation Provide support to conduct the mapping, draft the guidelines, and disseminate results through a publication and a digital platform, including online repositories of courses and tools to facilitate cross-border access and collaboration].

The UfM Ministerial Declaration on Research and Innovation (Paris, 2022) calls "on the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean to continue fostering linkages on research, innovation, education and skills in the Mediterranean region." Similarly, the building blocks for the UfM ministerial declaration on higher education, planned to be approved in 2026, include a full chapter on higher education for sustainable development.

Timeline: March to December 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: students, academic institutions, national ministries, policy actors, funders, and the broader Euro-Mediterranean region.

Activity 2 - Science Diplomacy Conference on Research and Technology Infrastructures

Description: Science diplomacy plays a critical role in fostering regional cooperation, peace, and sustainable development. Research and technology infrastructures such as SESAME offer unique platforms for collaboration across borders, disciplines, and cultures, including through digital research platforms enabling remote participation and knowledge-sharing. This conference will explore how such infrastructures can serve as engines of diplomacy and resilience in the Mediterranean and beyond.

Building on the EuroMed Conference on Science Diplomacy (Barcelona, 2023) and the UfM-LAS-EU High-Level Meeting on Science Diplomacy (Cairo, 2024), the event will provide a space to discuss concrete actions for science diplomacy in the Mediterranean, including a dedicated session on developing joint EuroMed activities. Science diplomacy is recognised by the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Research and Innovation (Paris, 2022), and UfM is mentioned by the document "A European Framework for Science Diplomacy" released by the European Commission in 2024.*Implementation:* Organise a joint high-level conference hosted at SESAME (Jordan), co-led by the European Commission, Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU, UfM Secretariat, and SESAME.

Timeline: May 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Organised jointly by the European Commission, Cyprus Presidency, UfM Secretariat, and SESAME, with participation from national governments, research institutions, and international organisations.

Activity 3 - National Focal Points Meeting on Higher Education

Description: The 2007 Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Higher Education called for creation of a Euromed higher education area but subsequent policy coordination has remained limited. The annual National Focal Points Meeting provides a much-needed platform for policy dialogue and the development of actionable strategies to translate political commitments into tangible outcomes. In 2026, discussions will focus on the post-2027 Erasmus+ programme, Euromed University Alliances and the alignment of recognition frameworks. The meeting will also address strategic issues such as the reconstruction of higher education systems in crisis-affected areas, strengthened participation of Southern Mediterranean countries in Erasmus+, and enhanced South–South cooperation.

Implementation: Convene a policy dialogue led by the UfM Secretariat with participation of UfM members and key stakeholders. The meeting will lead to the adoption of a joint action plan outlining next steps for regional cooperation in higher education.

Timeline: October 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, UfM members, stakeholders

Activity 4 - 32nd Meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Research and Innovation

Description: The UfM Regional Platform on Research and Innovation is the main regional forum for dialogue and cooperation on R&I policy in the Euro-Mediterranean area. It supports research cooperation and science diplomacy by identifying shared priorities, fostering joint initiatives, and preparing the ground for Ministerial-level decisions. The 32nd meeting will advance the work of the newly launched UfM Working Groups on mobility of researchers, open data and digitalisation, and innovation scalability. It will also contribute to shaping the second UfM Ministerial Declaration and Action Plan on Research and Innovation.

Implementation: Organise the 32nd meeting of the UfM Regional Platform in Barcelona to take stock of progress of the UfM R&I Roadmaps and Working Groups, exchange on regional priorities and synergies with initiatives such as PRIMA and Horizon Europe and prepare inputs for the second Ministerial Conference and contribute to new editions of the Innovation Marketplace.

Timeline: October 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Organised by the UfM Sectorial Co-presidencies with support from the UfM Secretariat with participation from UfM members and observers.

Activity 4.1 – Side event of the UfM Regional Platform: Climate Data Training in partnership with ECMWF-Copernicus to support the uptake of technology tools to enhance policymaking in the Mediterranean

Description: Since signing a MoU in 2021, the UfM and the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) have collaborated to foster knowledge sharing, training and capacity building with the aim to increase the uptake of the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) and the Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (CAMS) to support evidence-based policy-making in the Mediterranean. To strengthen the skills of technical experts and decision-making staff in relevant line Ministries, and the

research community in the Mediterranean region to harness the potential of Copernicus data, tools and services, for societal benefit across relevant sectors.

Implementation: Conduct targeted training session focused on practical data analysis and decision support tools provided by ECMWF-Copernicus services – C3S and CAMS.

Timeline: October 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, UfM members, stakeholders.

Activity 5 - Women in Science and Higher Education

Description: Despite progress in gender parity in STEM education, women remain underrepresented in scientific leadership and decision-making roles across the Mediterranean. Structural barriers, and lack of visibility continue to hinder their full participation. This initiative aims to celebrate achievements, raise awareness, and promote policy dialogue on advancing gender equality in science and higher education leadership. Region-wide promotion of best practices, existing tools and actionable recommendations to strengthen gender equality in scientific and higher education leadership and decision-making including Digital Education Action Plan, Digital skills Action Plan and STEM action plan- related initiatives. This will occur also through webinars on the International Day of Women and Girls in Science – February 2026, and the International Day of Living Together in Peace – May 2026. Gender-balanced leadership in higher education is also firmly anchored in the draft UfM ministerial declaration on higher education, planned to be approved in 2026.

Implementation: Support selected higher education institutions to support reforms that ensure greater gender equality in governance. Targeted outreach to policy makers to encourage the adoption and support of these reforms at the national level.

Timeline: January–December 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Organized by the UfM Secretariat in collaboration with regional partners, academic institutions, and networks such as Tethys.

Activity 6 - The 1st UfM Employment Forum

Description: An overarching annual forum aligned with the mandate of the 2022 Marrakech Ministerial Declaration on Employment and Labour that will accommodate discussions and exchanges on employment-related opportunities and challenges with an emphasis on entrepreneurship as mandated by the Declaration, as well as high-potential economic sectors like Social Economy, Creative Economy, etc. This will allow to explore best practice and success stories that can be replicated and scaled up and pressing bottlenecks that call for coordinated action and policy reform with the aim of improving youth and women employment in the region. The draft UfM ministerial declaration on higher education, planned to be approved in 2026, includes commitment to “deepen university-business cooperation to support entrepreneurship, start-up culture, technology transfer and job creation and employability aligned with social and market needs”.

Implementation: Organise a multiple stakeholders forum combining policy dialogue moderated discussions, and a capacity-building component on entrepreneurship. Universities will be engaged to

mainstream entrepreneurship across disciplines and create a regional university network to drive youth innovation and job creation.

Timeline: Novemberb/December 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Multiple stakeholders including public and private sector, youth, Academia, social partners, etc.

Activity 7 – 20th and 21st UfM Regional Platform on Employment and Labour

Description: Within this framework, the UfM organizes bi-annual in-person Regional Platform Meetings to advance on employment and labour commitments. These discussions contribute to the operationalization of the Action Plan 2026-2028 that was discussed in Malta on 14 October 2025 as well as the Marrakech Ministerial Declaration on Employment and Labour of 2022.

Implementation: Coordinate with Regional Platform members on policy developments, data gathering, analysis, and monitoring and organise two in person Regional Platform meetings.

Timeline: March and November/December 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, UfM Co-Presidency, Members of the Regional Platform.

Activity 8 – The UfM Social Dialogue Forum

Description: Within this framework, the UfM organizes every 3 years in person Social Dialogue Forum to provide a platform for discussion amongst the Regional Social Partners organisations and their members on the employment and labour priorities. These discussions contribute to the operationalization of the Action Plan 2026-2028 that was discussed in Malta on 14 October 2025 as well as the Marrakech Ministerial Declaration on Employment and Labour of 2022.

Implementation: Coordinate amongst the Regional Social Partners organisations and their members on the priorities and their contribution to the Action Plan 2026-2028.

Timeline: September/October 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, UfM Co-Presidency, Regional Social Partner Organisations and their members.

Activity 9 - Fostering quality employment opportunities in the international trade sector through vocational training in major ports and logistics hubs.

Description: Capacity-building programme aimed at supporting the increase of quality employment opportunities in the international trade sector in UfM MENA countries, through vocational training in major ports and logistics hubs. In the long term, to foster workforce development for sustainable port and logistics sectors. In the specific, to train technically skilled professionals and promote sustainable practices in transport and supply chain management, while ensuring gender equity and prioritising youth inclusion in these sectors.

Implementation: Develop and deliver specialised vocational training programmes in key ports and logistics hubs, in cooperation with national authorities, industry operators, and education institutions. The programme will empower local professionals and students, strengthen vocational training systems and prepare a new generation of experts for international trade operations.

Timeline: September 2026 to September 2028.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Ministries of Transport in the UfM MENA Countries, industry operators, Transport-, logistics- and trade-related higher education and vocational training institutions in the region. Strategic partners and donors: AECID, GIZ.

◆ **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: Promote inclusive and participatory societies across the Euro-Mediterranean, by empowering youth and women and , supporting equal access to opportunities that strengthen social cohesion.**

Activity 10 – Implementing the Youth Mainstreaming Plan (YMP)

Description: Implementation of the Youth Mainstreaming Plan (YMP) to provide a strategic and operational framework to embed meaningful and inclusive youth participation across all UfMS policies, programs, partnerships, and internal processes. It will also include a Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning (MERL) mechanism and a targeted communications toolkit.

This will build internal capacity and put in place tools and mechanisms to ensure that youth engagement becomes a systematic, evidence-based, and adequately resourced practice across the organisation moving beyond occasional or symbolic youth participation.

Implementation: Deliver internal training on youth mainstreaming principles, methodologies, and launch of the UfM Youth Sounding Board (ages 18–30) from across UfM members. The Board will participate in UfM policy and platform-level initiatives (i.e., targeted consultations, attendance to events, etc.).

Timeline: Throughout the year

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, Youth-led CSOs and experts from UfM members, external training providers, selected Youth Sounding Board members.

Activity 11 – Supporting Youth-led initiatives

Description: Equip youth-led civil society organisations (CSOs) and networks from the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean with the necessary skills and institutional knowledge to co-develop proposals for joint initiatives with the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat (UfMS). It will also support the implementation of the UfM Energy and Climate Youth Delegate Programme through the Youth Local Climate Action Initiatives, enabling delegates to design and deliver local initiatives that contribute to regional knowledge-sharing, policy advocacy, and tangible community impact.

Thie activity addresses structural underrepresentation by building sustained, skills-based collaboration and laying foundations for a long-term UfM Youth Engagement Partnership Framework under the Joint Programming, and institutionalising youth participation in climate and energy policy and grassroots impacts.

Implementation: Deliver preparatory sessions, capacity-building webinars and workshops, advocacy and practical toolkits and social media and visibility campaigns.

Timeline: Throughout the year

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, GIZ, selected youth-led CSOs and networks from Southern and Eastern Mediterranean; UfM Youth Delegates, UfMS staff; external facilitators and thematic experts.

Activity 12 - Regional Platform Women Empowerment

Description: Within this framework, the UfM organizes annual online Working Group meetings and an in-person Regional Platform Meeting to advance gender equality commitments. These discussions contribute to the operationalization of Roadmap for Implementation of the 5th UfM Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society, adopted in Madrid in 2022, and to the development of future gender equality policies.

Implementation: Coordinate with Regional Platform members on data gathering, analysis, and monitoring and organise two online meetings and one Regional Platform meeting.

Timeline: May and October 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, UfM Co-Presidency, Members of the Regional Platform

Activity 13 - Inclusive workplace for persons with disabilities

Description: Pilot project to addresses the foundational systemic barriers for persons with disabilities in workplace with the ambition of replicating the outcomes of the pilot project into a future large-scale action.

Implementation: Develop an "Inclusive Employer Toolkit": a practical, downloadable guide on topics like reasonable accommodations, interviewing persons with disabilities, sourcing talent, and accessing financial incentives. Map Market-Ready Training & Conduct One "Train-the-Trainer" Workshop on disability inclusion and accessible teaching methods. Establish Multi-Stakeholder Taskforce to assess the implementation of the pilot project and develop the potential large-scale project.

Timeline: A targeted one-year capacity-building pilot project.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: National Organization of Persons with Disabilities (OPD); Business Councils/Chambers of Commerce, Vocational trainers, HR professionals, and policymakers who will be equipped to drive change.

🔷 **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3 Champion sustainability, heritage and inclusive Mediterranean cities through knowledge and cooperation to build cohesive and resilient urban spaces.**

Activity 14 – Supporting the implementation of the UfM Urban Agenda though the UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040 and its Housing Action Plan.

Activity 14.1 – Annual meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Urban Development

Description – In line with the mandate of the 3rd UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development (2023), the UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Urban Development supports and monitors the implementation of the UfM Urban Agenda, though the UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040 and its Housing Action Plan, aimed at advancing public policies and programmes to tackle affordable housing, boost energy efficiency in buildings, promote vernacular architecture and traditional

building skills, compare coastal land planning instruments across the region, and support the identification of bankable projects.

Implementation – In coordination with the UfM Co-Presidency, the UfM Secretariat will support the organisation of the annual meeting of the UfM Regional Platform, to follow-up on the mandate of the 3rd UfM Ministerial Conference and review the tasks of the UfM Thematic Working Groups (WGs) accordingly.

Timeline – Q4 2026.

Beneficiaries - Sectoral UfM Co-Presidency, UfM Secretariat, sectoral UfM National Coordinators, observer regional and international organisations.

Activity 14.2 – Annual meeting of the UfM Working Group on Affordable Sustainable Housing

Description: The UfM Working Group on Affordable and Sustainable Housing is a regional platform for dialogue, peer learning, and collaboration among national governments and local authorities. Through periodic meetings, the group supports the design and dissemination of inclusive, resilient, and climate-responsive housing policies.

Housing is a pressing and multidimensional challenge in the Mediterranean, linked to urbanisation, demographic shifts, social equity, environmental sustainability, and economic development. The Working Group contributes to strengthening institutional capacities, aligning policy approaches, and mobilising knowledge and technical support in response to these challenges. It also helps create a culture of exchange of best practices between mediterranean countries.

Implementation: Hold biannual meetings gathering national housing authorities, regional actors, and sectoral experts featuring thematic presentations, project updates, and regional policy briefings. Use these exchanges explore synergies with the New European Bauhaus, to promote good practices, innovative tools, and funding opportunities (PEEB MED and SHAPE-EU), co-design future regional activities and identify priority topics.

Timeline: The 6th edition is expected to be held in Vienna, Austria, early 2026.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, senior public officials and experts responsible for housing and urban development in UfM members.

Activity 14.3 – Annual meeting of the UfM Working Group on Urban Transformation

Description: The UfM Working Group on Urban Transformation aims to improve the capacity of key stakeholders to develop effective urban policy and legal frameworks and instruments for integrated coastal zone management and to promote their adoption, with a view to addressing the challenges of coastal sustainability and resilience in the face of climate emergency. The final aim is to produce one comparative analysis that will highlight different approaches used by the UfM Member States to deal with coastal management in the urban context.

Implementation: In coordination with the UfM Co-Presidency, the UfM Secretariat will support the organisation the annual meeting of this thematic UfM Working Group.

Timeline: Q2 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Sectoral UfM Co-Presidency, UfM Secretariat, UfM Focal Points for Urban Transformation and Urban Development, observer regional and international organisations.

Activity 14.4 – Annual meeting of the UfM Permanent Working Group on Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting Systems on Sustainable Urban Development

Description: The UfM Permanent Working Group on Evaluation, Monitoring, and Reporting of Sustainable Urban Development aims to elaborate 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 the 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 also be promoted.

Implementation: In coordination with the UfM Co-Presidency, the UfM Secretariat will support the organisation of the annual meeting of the permanent UfM Working Group.

Timeline: Q3 2026.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Sectoral UfM Co-Presidency, UfM Secretariat, UfM Focal Points for urban indicators and experts from National Statistical Offices in UfM members, observer regional and international organisations.

Activity 15 – Urban Heritage and Traditional Building Skills Programme: Follow-up Conference for the Maghreb Region and Launch of the Middle East Programme

Description: In line with the 2023 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Urban Development, the Urban Heritage and Traditional Building Skills Programme aims to safeguard Mediterranean urban heritage and traditional construction knowledge, while adapting these methods to modern climate challenges. It leverages traditional techniques as a driver for local economies and job creation, and it contributes to their survival by formalising them into certified training integrated into national education systems. This approach both preserves cultural identity and strengthens climate-resilient building practices in the region. Launched in July 2023 for Maghreb countries, the programme promotes the exchange of best practices, the development of certified vocational training in these skills, their integration into national education systems, and technical support to the development of initiatives at the country level. The programme has been, until now, fully funded by GIZ and AECID.

Implementation: The programme consists of national workshops, visits to reference centres in traditional building skills and vocational training schools, and conferences that bring together country stakeholders involved in conservation and specialist in the fields. The follow-up of the existing programme focused on the Maghreb will take the form of a conference in where countries will present their projects developed to potential donors.. For the Middle East, the programme will start with national workshops in Egypt and Jordan.

Timeline: The conference is expected to take place in Barcelona in the 1st Semester 2026, and the national workshops in Egypt and in Jordan in the 2nd Semester 2026.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Coordinated by the UfM Secretariat, with support from a roster of experts, and the participation of sectorial UfM National Coordinators/Focal Points from participating UfM members, specialist centres and other partner organizations.

2. Connected Economies: Building an Interconnected and Integrated Euro-Mediterranean Region

🔷 **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: Strengthen economic connectivity by enhancing trade and investment integration across the Euro-Mediterranean region to improve resilience and investor confidence.**

Activity 16 - The UfM Economic Forum

Description: An overarching annual forum to address trade facilitation and simplification as well as investment facilitation opportunities and challenges in the region including strategies for digital trade, energy and climate cooperation, low-carbon energy, climate-resilient economies and strengthened trade and financial integration. To discuss the most pressing issues and way to revitalise trade, integrate supply chains and financial integration and to promote regional cooperation and investment in sustainable and climate-smart sectors, supporting a more competitive and resilient region. Furthermore, discussions will revolve around enhancing the business and investment environment, regulatory convergence, and simplification of customs' procedures. The forum will be aligned with activities of the UfM platform on trade, investment and industry.

Implementation: Workshops, panel discussions and focused discussions aimed at developing common recommendations and acting upon the findings of the UfM Progress Report on Regional Integration issued in 2025, complemented by a dedicated Energy and Climate Day with panel discussions, B2B sessions and exchanges on investment mapping tools. A training component will emphasize specific trade-related thematics, and dedicated Study Visits to International Trade and Investment Frameworks.

Timeline: December 2026 (TBC)

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Trade Ministries and actors, Energy and Environment Ministries and actors, Investment Promotion Agencies, Experts, Regional and International organisation and international financial institutions, private sector partners, etc.

Activity 17 – Two UfM Regional Platform Meetings on Trade, Investment and Industry

Description: Within this framework, the UfM organizes bi-annual in-person Regional Platform Meetings to advance on trade, investment and industry commitments. The meetings will follow up on the next steps in regional integration, sustainable trade and green industry.

Implementation: Coordinate with Regional Platform members on policy developments, data gathering, analysis, and monitoring and organise two in person Regional Platform meetings.

Timeline: May and October 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, UfM Co-Presidency, Members of the Regional Platform.

Activity 18 – CBAM 2.0

Description: Organisation of a targeted CBAM (Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism) 2.0 training for south Mediterranean countries, replicating the format of the previous Brussels session. The training will bring together both public and private sector representatives from selected audience to strengthen understanding of CBAM. To address the expressed interest and needs of public and private sector

stakeholders, providing targeted capacity-building on CBAM with practical knowledge and tools to understand and navigate the mechanism effectively.

Implementation: Technical tailored training sessions and interactive discussions with selected participants.

Timeline: Summer 2026.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, public and private sector representatives.

Activity 19 - 10th Conference of Mediterranean Central Banks

Description: This annual event provides a unique platform to exchange best practices and perspectives on the challenges to financial stability and effective ways to address them, while also exploring long-term priorities such as financial inclusion and green finance.

Implementation: Conference with panel discussions and focused discussions.

Timeline: 1st half 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Governors of Mediterranean Central Banks, prominent speakers, and representatives from international organizations, the private sector, and academia.

🔷 **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: Build seamless physical and digital connectivity by developing integrated transport networks and expanding digital infrastructure to promote green mobility and economic growth across the Mediterranean.**

Activity 20 - 5th UfM Digital Transformation Conference

Description: Enhance digital infrastructure, smart cities, and bridging the skill gap across the region with a focus on non-EU UfM members.

Implementation: Conference building on outcomes from former editions and guided by the principles of green and inclusive development, the discussions will focus on concrete actions that can be delivered on the ground.

Timeline: June 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Digital developers, entrepreneurs, cities, Academia, etc.

Activity 21 - Implementation of the Strategic framework on digitalization of the Water Sector

Description: To strengthen water governance, resilience, and efficiency by equipping institutions, utilities, and stakeholders with digital skills and tools, ensuring evidence-based decisions and innovation in line with the UfM Water Agenda 2030.

Implementation: Regional and national capacity building programs on digital water management, developing digital platforms for data sharing, monitoring, and decision support, and piloting projects to demonstrate scalable digital solutions.

Timeline: Implementation in 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, UfM Co-Presidency, UfM members, European Commission.

Activity 22 – Supporting the implementation of the Regional Transport Action Plan (RTAP) 2021-2027

22.1 UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity and its Thematic Working Groups

Description: The 2nd UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport (2023) adopted a new Ministerial Declaration and the new Regional Transport Action Plan (RTAP) for the Mediterranean region until 2027. In 2026, the UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity and its Working Groups will convene twice to continue monitoring the implementation of the RTAP.

Implementation: 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 with a view to ensuring the follow up, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the RTAP, following the mid-term assessment carried out in 2025, as well as reflecting on how to maximise the benefits of ongoing regional projects and initiatives aiming to support UfM members in implementing the RTAP.

Timeline: 1st round of meetings: 2Q 2026 / 2nd round of meetings: 4Q 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Co-Presidency on Transport, UfM Secretariat, the Ministries of Transport from UfM countries (i.e. UfM National Transport Coordinators and Thematic Focal Points), and observer regional and international organisations.

22.1.1 Side Event: Regional Workshop on the greening and decarbonisation of civil aviation through energy transition and the development of sustainable fuels

Description: UfM Regional Workshop on the greening and decarbonisation of aviation in the Mediterranean region, with a focus energy transition and sustainable aviation fuels (SAF), implementation of green and low carbon solutions, as well as investment implications and financing mechanisms available.

Implementation: Regional conference to align regional efforts with global and European regulatory frameworks—focusing on the implementation of green technologies and clean alternative fuels, policy and regulatory innovation, and access to finance.

Timeline: 2Q 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Direct beneficiaries: Ministries in charge of Transport, and Aviation in particular, in the Mediterranean countries; Civil Aviation industry. Contributing stakeholders: European Commission (DG MOVE & EASA), International and regional civil aviation organisations. Strategic partners and donors: SIDA.

22.1.2 Side Event: Regional Workshop on gender inclusive transport policy and workforce

Description: UfM Regional Workshop encompassing the promotion of a gender-inclusive perspective into sustainable transport and mobility projects, plans and policies, as well as fostering the participation of women in the transport workforce in the UfM MENA countries.

Implementation: Workshop to promote gender-inclusive perspective into sustainable transport and mobility projects, plans and policies, as well as fostering the participation of women in the transport workforce in the UfM MENA countries.

Timeline: 2Q 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Direct beneficiaries: Women and girls in the UfM countries. Contributing stakeholders: Ministries of Transport and Ministries responsible for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment policies in the UfM MENA countries, as well as local authorities and transport operators in these countries. Indirect stakeholder: private sector employers, including transport operators. Strategic partners and donors: SIDA, GIZ, AECID, the World Bank, as well as international and regional organisation in the field of transport with a track record of activities on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the transport field (ITF-OECD, UITP, UIC, IRF, POLIS Innovation Network).

Activity 23 - UfM Transport Connectivity Forum

Description: A high-level forum to support regional dialogue and define a strategic roadmap for efficient, integrated, interoperable, and sustainable transport system across the Mediterranean region engaging governments, private sectors, academia, and civil society. Expected outputs include discussing an integrated regional transport infrastructure network, highlighting its investment value and overall economic impact.

Implementation: High-level regional event to raise awareness, foster dialogue, and showcase best practices, and plan a way forward for a more efficient and integrated regional transport connectivity, including agreement on follow-up actions, priority projects, and modalities for sustained cooperation through the UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity. Among the expected output of the Conference will be the establishment of a permanent regional stakeholder network, tasked with advancing the conference's recommendations and fostering continuous coordination across sectors.

Timeline: 4Q 2026: 28-29 October 2026 (tbc) in Barcelona (Spain)

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Governments (including Ministries of Transport) of EU's Southern Neighbourhood countries, the European Commission, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), national development banks, private companies, within the logistics, infrastructure and transport services, transport-related think tanks and academia.

Activity 24 - Strengthening the Climate Change Adaptation Capacities of the Transport Systems in the UfM MENA countries

Description: The main objective of the initiative is to improve climate change adaptation in Mediterranean transport systems. The Regional Transport Action Plan (RTAP) for the Mediterranean Region until 2027 aims to assist UfM countries in mitigating risks and considering adaptation options to build resilience, future-proof national transport policies, as well as strengthen the region's culture of preparedness and evidence-based anticipatory policy-making, with strategic foresight on a regional level.

Implementation: Strengthened capacities of the Ministries of Transport and Infrastructure managers in these countries, as well as private associations and entities from the transport sector, to adapt their transport systems to climate change.

Timeline: Activities kicked off in 4Q 2025. The project will be implemented throughout two successive years, i.e. until 4Q 2027.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Target groups: Public administrations (Ministries of Transport) and public operators across all modes of transport in the UfM MENA countries, as well as private companies and operators within the transport sector involved in infrastructure development, maintenance, and service provision. Contributing stakeholders: AECID, international/regional organisations pertinent to transport

and climate change adaptation in the field of transport –UNECE, PIARC, PIANC ITF-OECD, UITP, UIC, IRF, ERTICO, MEDPorts Association, IAPH-WPSP–, and academia (technical universities, engineering schools and other academic institutions and research bodies focusing on transport, climate change, and environmental studies).

◆ **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3 Advance the green and blue transition across the region, to protect and restore our ecosystems, decarbonize and circularize our economies, and foster fair and sustainable livelihoods across the Mediterranean.**

Activity 25 – Annual meetings of the UfM working group on environment

Description: Advance policy dialogue on environment and green and economy (2021 UFM Ministerial Declaration, GreenerMed Agenda, capitalise on projects, programmes and initiatives on key topics (circularity, sustainable tourism, food systems, marine litter, maritime clusters, coastal communities, green/blue skills, financing, innovation) reinforce partnership and coordination and support the preparation for future political deliberations (i.e. potential next Ministerial Meetings expected in 2027).

Implementation: Two annual meetings of the UFM Working Group on Environment. The regional dialogue on environment and green economy as key axis of regional cooperation, moves around the meetings of the Environment Working Group as part of the Regional Platform on Environment and Climate Change.

Timeline: Throughout the year

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, UfM Co-Presidency, national representatives designated by the UfM member countries Focal Points and key stakeholders/observers.

Activity 26 - Annual meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Blue Economy

Description: Advance policy dialogue on sustainable blue economy (2021 UfM Ministerial Declaration, Roadmap) capitalise on projects, programmes and initiatives on key topics (circularity, sustainable tourism, sustainable food systems, marine litter, maritime clusters, coastal communities, green and blue skills/financing/innovation), reinforce partnership and coordination and support the preparation of future political deliberations (i.e. potential next Ministerial Meetings expected in 2027).

Implementation: Organise the meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on SBE. The regional dialogue on sustainable blue economy as key axis of regional cooperation, moves around the Regional Platform on Sustainable Blue Economy.

Timeline: Throughout the year

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, UfM Co-Presidency, national representatives designated by the UfM member countries Focal Points and key stakeholders/observers.

Activity 27 – Supporting the Environment and Green Economy Dossier

Description: To strengthen the capacity of the UfM to monitor progress of regional Environment and Green Economy initiatives, ensure effective follow-up on the Action Plans, and provide evidence-based reporting to UfM members and stakeholders. Annual Progress reports should be drafted and presented during the

Platform meetings to take stock of progress of clean efforts in accordance with the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Change 2021.

Implementation: Expert advisory contracts, analysis, technical workshops to support the preparation, implementation, monitoring, and reporting of the GreenerMed Agenda, and regular update of its respective results-based monitoring reporting and evaluation mechanism.

Timeline: Throughout 2026.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, UfM members, external consultants.

Activity 28 – Supporting the Sustainable Blue Economy Dossier

Description: Support the preparation, implementation, monitoring, and reporting of the Sustainable Blue Economy Roadmap, and regular update of its respective results-based monitoring reporting and evaluation mechanism. To strengthen the capacity of the UfM to monitor progress of regional Sustainable Blue Economy initiatives, safeguard regional cooperation is developed in accordance with international law, including UNCLOS, ensure effective follow-up on the Action Plans, and provide evidence-based reporting to UfM members and stakeholders. Annual Progress reports should be drafted and presented during the Platform meetings to take stock of progress of clean efforts in accordance with the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy 2021. The UfM will encourage sustainable use of maritime resources, including fisheries and aquaculture, eco-tourism, and coastal resilience initiatives.

Implementation: Expert advisory contracts, analysis, technical workshops.

Timeline: Throughout 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, UfM members, external consultants.

3. Connecting Countries: Building a Resilient, Sustainable and Stable Mediterranean

🔷 **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: Advance joint climate, water and energy action ter and natural resources through regional cooperation frameworks that strengthen resilience, enhance resource efficiency and promote equitable access, supporting adaptation and stability across the Mediterranean.**

Activity 29 - UfM presence at COP 31

Description: COP31 is the largest global forum for climate policy and multilateral engagement, offering the Mediterranean an essential platform for coordinated regional representation. UfM participation ensures the region speaks with one voice, showcases joint action on climate action, energy transition, water, and resilience, and strengthens regional coordination in international climate efforts.

Implementation: UfM participation at COP31, either through a Mediterranean Pavilion (if hosted in Türkiye) or an official UfM delegation (if hosted in Australia).

Timeline: November 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, UfM members and regional partners.

Activity 30 - UfM Mediterranean Green Week – UfM Energy Platform meeting and UfM Climate Action and Environment Platform meeting

Description: The Green Week serves as the annual UfM platform meetings on energy, climate, and environment. The event provides an opportunity to take stock of progress, coordinate and advance joint sustainable development initiatives. It enables governments, regional stakeholders, and partners to exchange knowledge, strengthen policy coherence, and showcase collaborative solutions across the region. UfM will present the outcomes of the regional action plan on Energy, adopted in 2025, including the presentation of the annual energy progress report in the Mediterranean region, as well as the advancement in the implementation of the UfM GreenerMed Agenda.

Implementation: Meetings of the UfM Regional Platform on Environment and Climate Action, the UfM Regional Platform on Energy, thematic side events

Timeline: May/June 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfMS Secretariat, UfM members, Stakeholders, academia and HE representatives.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, UfM members, external consultants.

Activity 31 – Supporting the Energy and Climate dossiers

Description: Support the preparation, monitoring, and reporting of the UfM Energy Action Plan and the Climate Action Plan, including the production of the annual progress report. To strengthen the capacity of the UfM to monitor progress of regional energy and climate initiatives, ensure effective follow-up on the Action Plans, and provide evidence-based reporting to Member States and stakeholders. This activity is at the core of the Secretariat's coordination function for the Platforms, ensuring strategic monitoring of the Ministerial Action Plan's implementation, policy dialogue among Member States and partners, and coherence across Working Groups. *Implementation:* Expert advisory contracts, analysis, technical

workshops coordination meetings with partners contributing to regional energy outcomes, and preparation of the annual progress synthesis presented during the Green Week.

Timeline: Throughout 2026.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, UfM members, regional partners external consultants.

Activity 32 – NDCs and Carbon Markets Report

Description: To equip UfM members with a regional benchmark on ambition and implementation, highlight gaps and opportunities for cooperation, and provide practical inputs for accessing climate finance and leveraging carbon markets. The report will also strengthen UfM's role as a regional knowledge hub and inform collective positions in global climate discussion.

Implementation: Deliver a comprehensive report on the updated NDC 3.0 submissions and carbon market developments across the Mediterranean. Through structured data collection, comparative analysis, and targeted consultations with UfM members and partners, ensuring policy relevance and regional ownership.

Timeline: Q4 2026, with presentation at COP31 as a UfM regional contribution to the global stocktake and carbon market discussions.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, in collaboration with the NDC Partnership, UfM members focal points, and external experts/consultants.

Activity 33 – Support the MedECC to promote the Science-Policy-Society Nexus in the Mediterranean

Description: To ground policymaking in robust evidence and address the needs of stakeholders by making MedECC's scientific outputs more accessible and actionable.

Implementation: Support MedECC with preparation and dissemination of the MAR2 report, targeted communication, participation in key regional and international events, fundraising cooperation, and interactive exchanges to translate findings into policy options.

Timeline: Throughout 2026.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, MedECC network.

Activity 34 - The UfM Climate and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Network

Description: The UfM Climate and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Network is a multi-stakeholder platform dedicated to bridging the nexus of climate resilience, peacebuilding, and gender equality in the Mediterranean launched in 2025. It will convene diverse actors to amplify women's leadership, strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration, and advocate for inclusive, gender-transformative climate and peace policies.

How: Online Knowledge Hub for resources, Capacity building and peer-learning exchanges, Co-production of research, toolkits, and policy briefs. Advocacy at COP, CSW, UfM and other regional/global forums. Annual UfM regional gathering for coordination and agenda-setting.

Timeline: Throughout the year

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Civil society, women-led groups, academia, defenders, youth, governments, UN, and development partners, women and communities in fragile and climate-affected contexts across the Mediterranean, particularly rural and marginalized groups**.**

Activity 35 - 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Water and 16th Meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Water

Description: The goal is to provide political direction, monitor implementation of the UfM Water Agenda 2030, and align national actions with wider regional objectives, in line with SDG 6 and the UfM vision.

Implementation: Adoption of a Ministerial Declaration and Regional Action Plan; tracking outcomes through thematic working groups on the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus, water finance, and digitalization; annual progress reporting.

Timeline: 24-25 March 2026, Rome, Italy for the Ministerial; June 2026, [venue TBD] for the Platform Meeting.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM members and respective focal points of the platform.

Activity 36 – Supporting the water dossier

*Description: P*rovide support and coordination to UfM members in operationalizing the Water Agenda 2030, Ministerial Declaration, and associated regional prioritization framework. Ensure practical delivery and tracking of jointly agreed regional water/climate priorities and strengthen national-international linkage in implementing ministerial commitments.

Implementation: Tailored advisory services, peer-learning exchanges, and progress monitoring.

Timeline: Ongoing through 2026, main milestones after Ministerial Meeting and RPW16

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, AECID, UfM members, partner agencies

Activity 37 - 3rd WEFE Nexus Regional Roundtable

Description: To mainstream system-thinking and the WEFE Nexus approach across Mediterranean countries, enabling the shift from "Nexus thinking" to "Nexus doing" and integrated governance structures.

Implementation: Regional roundtable for stakeholder engagement and experience sharing. Technical assistance for policy integration and institutional capacity building. Development of demonstration projects showcasing WEFE benefits.

Timeline: 4-5 February 2026, Cyprus

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: GWP-Med, UNEP MAP, European Commission, EU WES Project, Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA), UfM members, Research Institutions, Private Sector, Local Authorities

Activity 38 – Supporting the Inter-Islamic Network on Water Resources Development and Management (INWRDAM)

Description: To leverage existing networks and expertise for enhanced regional cooperation and knowledge sharing on integrated water resources management approaches.

Implementation: Joint capacity building programs, technical exchanges, and project development support coordinated through INWRDAM's network and UfM partnerships.

Timeline: Ongoing collaboration throughout 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: INWRDAM, UfM members, regional water institutions, technical experts

Activity 39 - UfM Regional Agenda on Gender and Food security

Description: Women play a critical role in agriculture and food systems, yet they remain underrepresented in decision-making, entrepreneurship, and value chains. Strengthening women's empowerment in agribusiness is essential for advancing food security, fostering inclusive economic growth, and ensuring sustainable regional development. The initiative aims to adopt a Regional Agenda on Gender and Food Security to: Scale up female entrepreneurship and women's empowerment in agribusiness; promote public-private partnerships to enhance women's participation in value chains; foster an enabling environment through gender-sensitive technologies, inclusive financial mechanisms, improved infrastructure, and capacity-building.

Implementation: Mapping exercise of regional networks and donor initiatives; Publication of an analytical report, based on stakeholder briefings to share insights and promote collaboration; A regional stakeholder conference and policy dialogue in 2026 to provide a platform for policymakers and grassroots organizations to come together.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Women entrepreneurs, Regional organizations and donors; Policymakers and grassroots organizations; National institutions (ministries, public agencies) responsible for agri-food policies; Private sector partners and multi-stakeholder coalitions contributing resources, expertise, and innovation.

🔷 **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: Enhance regional preparedness and resilience by advancing cross-border disaster risk reduction and civil protection cooperation—developing shared early warning systems, coordinated response mechanisms, and moving towards a structured resilience framework to build trust and solidarity in the face of overlapping crises.**

Activity 40 - Facilitate Regional Cooperation on Emergency Management and Risk Data Exchange

Description: To progressively build common approaches and mutual understanding for coordinated disaster management

Implementation: Organize consultations and working sessions to align procedures for information-sharing, emergency management planning, and risk data exchange among UfM members. Working group sessions (prevention, preparedness, response), joint drafting sessions with national focal points and scientific partners, peer review of practices.

Timeline: Q1–Q4 2026 (progress report with recommendations by Q4).

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, Commission, PPRD Med, UfM members, scientific partners.

Activity 41 – Annual Thematic Workshops (Wildfires & Emerging Risks)

Description: To strengthen technical expertise and regional collaboration on high-impact hazards.

I*mplementation:* 1 workshop/year on wildfires + 1 workshop/year on emerging risks with the Commission. Expert presentations, exchange of best practices, recommendations adopted by the platform.

Timeline: Q2 (Emerging Risks), Q4 (Wildfires) 2026.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, Commission, UfM members, scientific community.

Activity 42 – Observatory on Volunteerism & Legal Mapping

Description: To enhance community engagement and remove legal/administrative barriers, establish an observatory and conduct legal mapping for cross-border volunteer deployment.

Implementation: Baseline study, annual report, high-level dialogue on legal harmonization.

Timeline: Q1–Q4 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, CSOs, national authorities.

Activity 43 – Mediterranean Guidelines on Earthquake Resistant Buildings and Traditional Building Materials and Rewriting proposal of the Moroccan Code - "RPCTerre 2011"

Description: In line with the 2023 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Urban Development, gather best practices from codes across the Mediterranean on earthquake resilience, particularly considering the recent earthquakes in Türkiye and Morocco, with the aim of informing the update of Morocco's seismic building code.

Implementation: Develop Mediterranean Guidelines on earthquake-resistant buildings using traditional materials and produce a rewritten version of Morocco's code (RPCTerre 2011) to improve post-seismic reconstruction and resilience using vernacular techniques. The project will begin with a comparative analysis of seismic codes from Morocco, Türkiye, Portugal, Croatia, Italy, Israel, Greece, and Spain, followed by the development of a data-gathering template and engagement with national experts. Based on the findings, the Moroccan RPCTerre 2011 code will be reviewed and rewritten. Therefore, two main deliverables will be produced: the Mediterranean Guidelines on Earthquake Resistant Buildings using traditional materials, and a revised version of the Moroccan code with tailored recommendations.

Timeline: The project is expected to last 11 months.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, Morocco, Türkiye, Portugal, Croatia, Italy, Greece and Spain are the 8 Mediterranean countries which will have their earthquake building codes analysed by a team of specialist consultants.

◆ **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: Foster political and societal connectivity by leveraging the UfM's convening power to build trust, promote dialogue and confidence-building, supporting practical cooperation**

between and within conflict-affected communities—contributing to regional stability, inclusive governance, and peace through sectoral entry points such as water, climate, and disaster response.

Activity 44 - UfM Resilience Symposium

Description: To provide a structured platform for translating UfM's political commitment on resilience into concrete strategies and partnerships, responding to the region's urgent needs for stabilisation, post-crisis recovery, and climate adaptation. The Symposium will also serve as a bridge between UfM policy work and implementation, reinforcing UfM's credibility as the convener of cross-sectoral resilience efforts.

Implementation: Organisation of the UfM Resilience Symposium, a high-level follow-up to the 2025 Resilience Side Event, dedicated to operationalising the resilience pillar of the UfM reform and deepening cooperation between Mediterranean and Gulf partners. Expert-led discussions and/or workshop with public authorities, private sector actors and regional/international partners.

Timeline: end 2026 – possible side event of SOM or next Regional Forum

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfMS Secretariat, UfM Co-Presidency, UfM members, UNDP, World Bank, EU institutions, Gulf partners, other international organisations.

Activity 45 – UfM Resilience Report 2026

Description: Annual flagship report mapping resilience challenges and opportunities in the Mediterranean, including climate shocks, socio-economic vulnerabilities, and post-crisis recovery pathways. To consolidate evidence and position UfM as a central actor for cross-sectoral resilience, linking climate, energy, and socio-economic agendas.

Implementation: Consultancy-led drafting coordinated by UfMS with data collection from UfM members, IFIs, and regional agencies and validation via an expert workshop (which could also be the activity 1 depending on advancement of implementation of the reform)

Timeline: Release Q3 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfMS Secretariat, external consultants, UfM members, regional experts.

Activity 46 - Ministerial Side Event / Policy Conference: Post-Crisis Recovery in Higher Education and Research

Description: Higher education and research systems in the Mediterranean have been deeply affected by multiple overlapping crises - armed conflict, natural disasters and political instability. Regional cooperation and solidarity must be put at the service of their resilience and reconstruction. This policy forum will pave the way a structured, regional response mechanism for academic and research continuity in crisis-affected settings, coupled with a concrete development project to implement from 2027 onwards.

Implementation: Demonstrate how regional education and research cooperation can support post-crisis recovery and resilience in the Mediterranean (resumed in a conference communiqué). Develop a roadmap for a Mediterranean Academic Resilience Mechanism in crisis-affected contexts. Organise a donor round table for financing of a pilot project to be launched in 2027.

Timeline: June 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, UfM members, international organisations (UNESCO, World Bank, EIB), regional university networks and crisis-affected institutions.

Activity 47 - Supporting Post-Crisis Recovery in Higher Education and Research in Syria and Gaza

Description: Higher education and research systems in Syria and Gaza have been severely affected by prolonged crises, including conflict, displacement, and infrastructure collapse. There is an urgent need to support recovery efforts through targeted innovation and capacity-building actions that strengthen institutional resilience, restore academic continuity, and promote inclusive development.

Implementation: Conduct a needs assessment to identify priority areas for support in higher education and research. Design technical assistance activities focused on innovation, digitalization, and institutional capacity-building for the Higher Education and Research sector. Explore opportunities for regional cooperation and knowledge exchange. Develop a roadmap for medium-term recovery actions, including pilot initiatives and partnerships.
Timeline: July to December 2026
Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, Commission, UNIMED, regional and international stakeholders with expertise in post-crisis education recovery.

4. Renewed UfM Capacity for Action, Communication and Dialogue

🔷 **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: Position the UfM as a regional catalyst for investment and blended finance by enhancing its convening role, strengthening project investment-readiness, and bridging the gap between UfM members' technical needs and available financial resources.**

Activities under this strategic objective will be further refined jointly with the European Commission in early 2026 to ensure proper coordination and avoid duplications. The Secretariat and the European Commission will jointly identify the needs not covered by other instruments and complement them where appropriate.

Activity 48 - Blue Mediterranean Partnership

Description: The Partnership is designed to help deliver the objectives of the relevant national strategies and policies for a sustainable blue economy of the Beneficiary Countries, the European Commission's renewed Agenda for Mediterranean, the Barcelona Convention, as well as the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy, issued on 2 February 2021.

Implementation: The BMP is a platform for coordinating interventions and leveraging resources from the Implementing Partners and Donors to enable sustainable blue economy investments in the Beneficiary Countries of the Mediterranean region. The BMP seeks to increase upstream and downstream coherence, cooperation and coordination among all stakeholders concerned to increase the impact and visibility of sustainable blue economy investments.

Timeline: Ongoing activity all over 2026.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM co-chair of the Steering Committee, Donors (SIDA, Spain, Germany, France and possibly Commission), Beneficiary Countries (All Southern Neighbourhoods countries but for the moment Egypt, Jordan and Morocco) and Implementing Partners (EBRD, EIB, AFD, KFW and CDP).

Activity 49 - Research to Business

Description: This innovation initiative aims to bridge the gap between research and market uptake, contributing to competitiveness, job creation, and alignment with UfM strategic priorities.

This activity is in the framework of the upcoming UfM Research Scalability Strategy, which has been presented at the UfM Regional Platform for Research and Innovation

Implementation: Programme to bridge the gap between research and market supporting skills development, workshops, training modules on venture building, business models, IP, innovation and sustainability, market analysis, and investment readiness. Provide tailored mentoring and access to innovation networks. Develop a Research-to-Market Toolkit and facilitate investor engagement through a final pitch workshop. Prepare a UfM–PRIMA policy brief, reflecting actionable insights and institutional uptake.

Timeline: December 2025 – December 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, AECID, PRIMA and regional innovation stakeholders.

Activity 50 – UfM Capacity Building Programme for Sustainable Urban Investment

Description: In line with the 2023 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Urban Development, the programme will provide participants with the necessary tools and expert guidance to turn their ideas into financially sustainable, bankable projects.

Implementation: Programme to equip authorities at both the municipal and national levels with the skills and knowledge required to develop bankable projects that address challenges related to sustainable urban development, urban transformation, and housing.
Timeline: Throughout the year.
Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, AECID. The countries contemplated are Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Mauritania, Palestine, and Tunisia.

Activity 51 - Funding Readiness Programme for Women Entrepreneurs in the Agro-Food Sector
Description: The Funding Readiness Programme for Women Entrepreneurs in the Agro-Food Sector will strengthen the investment and funding opportunities of women-led SMEs in the MENA region.
Implementation: Build capacity of BSOs and financial institutions to deliver gender-responsive services and products. Equip women-led SMEs with skills, mentorship, and tools to become funding-ready.
Timeline: The programme will run from 2026 to Q1 2027
Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Women entrepreneurs in agro-food MSMEs, cooperatives, and start-ups across UfM/MASAR countries. Business development service providers, investors, agri-tech developers, incubators, and regional networks; AECID.

Activity 51.1 - Funding Readiness Programme for Women Entrepreneurs in Green and Blue Economy
Description: F In the framework of AECID Funding Readiness Programme in the Agro-Food Sector, a specific pillar will be added for Women Entrepreneurs in Green and Blue Economy.
Implementation: Support BSOs and financial institutions to deliver gender-responsive services and products. Equip women-led SMEs with skills, mentorship, and tools to become funding-ready.
Timeline: The programme will be implemented in 2026
Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Women entrepreneurs in green and blue sectors (MSMEs, cooperatives, and start-ups across UfM countries. Business development service providers, investors, incubators, and regional networks; Sida.

Activity 52 – MedBank Tool 2.0
Description: Phase II of the MedBank Tool, transforming it from a mapping platform into a regional mechanism that actively facilitates investment flows for climate and energy projects. To unlock financing and accelerate NDC implementation, bridging the gap between identified project pipelines and the capital needed from IFIs and private investors.
Implementation: By integrating project-level data, financing gap analysis, and matchmaking functions into the tool, and embedding its outputs in UfM ministerial processes and the Energy & Climate Business Forum.
Timeline: Q2 to Q4 2026.
Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, UfM members, IFIs (EIB, EBRD, World Bank), global partners (IRENA, IEA), and private sector investors.

Activity 53 - UfM Support to the T-MED Platform
Description: Support the European Commission T-MED Platform in promoting dialogue, political consensus and technical coordination among the 43 Euro-Mediterranean countries.
Implementation: The UFM could put at disposal and under the coordination of the Commission its capabilities to facilitate investment-related coordination with Partner countries through the established UFM Technical platforms, stakeholders' engagement, but without managing any financial instrument directly. The Commission as financier and strategic policymaker, is extremely well positioned to set the investment agenda and allocate resources. The UFM, in turn, can support the deployment of this agenda,

within the limit established by the Commission, by offering technical and secretariat coordination, regional convening and outreach to non-EU actors. The UfMS can enhance coordination, stakeholder engagement, and visibility support to T-MED to strengthen regional collaboration on clean energy and innovation.
Timeline: Ongoing throughout 2026
Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat with the Commission and stakeholders involved under the coordination of the Commission.

Activity 54 – Supporting the Implementation of UfM Financial Strategy for Water
Description: Update and implement the UfM Financial Strategy for Water with enhanced focus on blended finance mechanisms, climate finance integration, and private sector engagement in coordination with the UfM Working Group on Water Finance and Investment.
Implementation: Identification of innovative financing instruments including green bonds, blended finance mechanisms, and guarantee facilities.
Timeline: Ongoing throughout 2026
Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Development Banks (World Bank, EIB, AfDB, IsDB), Private Sector Investors, Climate Finance Institutions, Water Utilities, UfM members Finance Ministries.

Activity 54.1 – Organization of the annual meetings of the UfM Working Group on Water Finance and Investment (WATFIN)
Description: Ensure coordination with the members of the UfM Working Group on Water Finance and Investment to update and implement the UfM Financial Strategy for Water.
Implementation: Organization of the annual meetings of the UfM Working Group on Water Finance and Investment. Through quarterly WATFIN (Water and finance) Working Group meetings and semi-annual progress reviews.
Timeline: Throughout 2026 with one of the WATFIN (Water and finance) Working Group meetings to be held in the framework of the Cairo Water Week (see below) in October 2026.
Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Development Banks (World Bank, EIB, AfDB, IsDB), Private Sector Investors, Climate Finance Institutions, Water Utilities, UfM members Finance Ministries.

Activity 55 – Supporting the Implementation of UfM WEFE Nexus and Water Strategies
Description: Mobilize and coordinate financing specifically for integrated WEFE Nexus projects and water sector digital transformation initiatives. To ensure adequate funding for cross-sectoral WEFE approaches and innovative water solutions, particularly targeting biodiversity and ecosystems which currently receive less financing.
Implementation: Development of WEFE financing roadmaps, coordination with climate finance institutions, and support bankable project preparation. Integration with digital transformation financing strategies.
Timeline: Ongoing collaboration aligned with WEFE strategy implementation timeline
Beneficiaries and stakeholders: Climate Finance Institutions (GCF, AF), Development Banks, Private Investors, WEFE project promoters, national governments

🔷 **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: Position the UfM as a key player in the strategic dissemination of positive, inclusive, and human-centred narratives that foster mutual understanding and highlight the vital role of regional cooperation, while also reinforcing its positioning as a centre of regional expertise and thought leadership. At the same time, raise awareness and visibility of UfM initiatives and projects to ensure a**

clear understanding of the organization's mission and role, while showcasing the tangible benefits of UfM cooperation.

Activity 56 - Promote initiatives, campaigns and narratives that build bridges

In line with the UfM's vision to foster mutual understanding and a shared sense of belonging to the region by celebrating its diverse identities, the UfMS will continue to lead communication and outreach efforts for its recently launched flagship initiatives, the *Mediterranean Capitals of Culture and Dialogue* and the *Day of the Mediterranean* (*including advocacy actions aimed at securing official UN endorsement for the latter*).The UfMS will also promote cross-regional non-political narrative campaigns featuring human-centred stories that reflect shared challenges and the outcomes of regional cooperation. These stories deepen understanding of the UfM's mission, showcase the tangible benefits of regional cooperation, and inspire hope and motivation among individuals across the region. This approach humanises the UfM's work, fosters empathy, and communicates the organisation's impact in a relatable and accessible manner. The stories will be disseminated through a multichannel strategy, including digital platforms and media outreach.

Activity 57 - Engage with the media and other key information actors as a strategic instrument to foster informed narratives on regional cooperation

As part of its strategic approach to media engagement, the UfMS will continue strengthening visibility and raising awareness of its activities and initiatives through targeted and proactive outreach to the media and other key information multipliers across the region. This includes fostering relationships with leading traditional outlets as well as emerging information platforms in the Euro-Mediterranean area, positioning them not only as dissemination channels but also as active contributors to regional dialogue. To this end, the UfMS will establish *media partnerships*, *organise press visits and events*, and promote informed yet non-political narratives on regional cooperation.

In line with this objective, the UfM will also continue supporting the recently launched Euro-Mediterranean Network of Women Journalists as a platform to amplify diverse voices and promote more inclusive and representative storytelling across the region.

Activity 58 - Enhance people-to-people communication and public engagement

To foster a more human-centric communication approach and reach wider, more diverse audiences, the UfM will lay the groundwork for *engaging with digital content creators* through targeted initiatives and *social media campaigns*. This will help connect with younger audiences and promote the UfM's work and activities through relatable and accessible formats.

In parallel, the UfMS will begin shaping a more strategic approach to *public diplomacy*, deploying *annual outreach and public affairs initiatives* led by the Cabinet of the Secretary General. The COMMs Unit will provide dedicated support to maximize the visibility and impact of these actions, aimed at strengthening the UfM's presence and resonance among UfM members, academics, opinion leaders, civil society, and the media.

To enhance engagement with its UfM members, the UfMS will complement potential outreach roadshows with consistent information sharing via its *monthly newsletter* and through a new *restricted online area for UfM Senior Officials*, facilitating closer coordination and an improved access to key updates, news and coordination materials.

Activity 59 - Position the UfM as a credible voice on Euro-Mediterranean sectoral priorities

In line with its renewed strategic vision, the UfM COMMs Unit will start working on the conceptualisation of a *new website* to reflect its role as a trusted source of expertise and capacity building, as well as a

thought leader on key Euro-Mediterranean priorities. The website will highlight sectoral priorities, work methodology and amplify human-interest narratives that showcase the tangible benefits of regional cooperation. It will feature an enhanced publications section and a regional directory of knowledge sources to support informed decision-making and foster regional dialogue.
A strategic *plan for the placement of op-eds by UfM experts in key media* across the region will also be developed to position the organisation as a credible voice on Mediterranean affairs. *Social media, particularly LinkedIn*, will support this positioning by engaging professional and institutional audiences.
In the context of the upcoming internal reform, the UfMS will identify and select several high-impact UfM sectoral reports/studies to be released annually, each supported by targeted dissemination campaigns. These campaigns may include launch events, media outreach, op-eds authored by UfM experts, and strategic partnerships to maximise visibility and influence. To support the UfM's positioning as a regional hub of expertise and systematise the production of data and key publications, the UfMS will explore the possibility of establishing a *framework contract with a consortium of think tanks and research institutions* across the region. This arrangement would facilitate the timely delivery of high-quality data and specialised studies to inform ministerial declarations, policy discussions, strategic communication efforts, and the broader public opinion.

Activity 60 - Establish a UfM-led community of practice bringing together communicators involved in regional cooperation with the aim of facilitating the exchange of best practices, fostering alignment, and promoting the adoption of cross-regional federative narratives. The community would support participation in regional campaigns, thematic calendars, and joint initiatives.

Additionally, with the aim of supporting this objective through stronger internal alignment, the UfMS will explore options to secure resources - potentially through GIZ in the framework of its goal to strengthen the institutional capacity of the UfMS - for potential capacity-building activities in communications for UfM staff and project managers. These would aim to strengthen their ability to identify success stories, highlight narrative angles, and translate technical outcomes into relatable communication, helping project-level insights contribute to the UfM's broader narrative.

Activity 61 - Regularly raise the visibility and awareness of UfM activities, while fostering understanding of the UfM's mission and role within the framework of the new strategy.

To effectively communicate the UfM's role and mission in the context of the ongoing reform and new strategy, the UfM COMMs Unit will update existing materials and develop new communication resources that reflect the organization's revised priorities, objectives, and overarching narrative. This will include the presentation of the updated narrative and priorities on the forthcoming website, as well as across the full range of institutional communication tools, including the brochure, PPT presentation, institutional video, leaflet, and other relevant materials.

Additionally, the UfMS Communications Unit will continue implementing visibility campaigns through media, social media, and broader outreach efforts to raise awareness of UfM events, projects, and initiatives included in the 2026 Work Programme. These efforts will be supported by regular press office actions, targeted social media coverage, email dissemination, and public relations activities.

Activity 62 - The Euro-Mediterranean Network of Women Journalists (EMNWJ)

The Euro-Mediterranean Network of Women Journalists (EMNWJ) is a collaborative platform launched in 2025 with the financial support of SIDA, that connects women journalists across the region to strengthen

solidarity, build professional capacities, foster cross-border cooperation, and promote authentic narratives on women's lives and contributions.

The EMNWJ responds to these needs with a structured, multi-annual strategy that blends skills development, collaborative production, advocacy, and institutional partnerships. By 2029, it aims to be a self-sustaining, inclusive, and influential network that elevates women journalists' voices and transforms narratives across the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Over 2026–2029, the Network will consolidate its governance, expand membership, scale its training and mentorship programs, launch cross-border productions, and institutionalize its annual EMNWJ Prize.

Women journalists in the Euro-Med region face overlapping challenges: limited visibility, precarious working conditions, restricted access to decision-making, and pervasive gender stereotypes. The EMNWJ provides a solution by fostering solidarity, building capacity, and positioning women journalists as leaders in shaping Euro-Mediterranean narratives.

Activity 63 - Mediterranean Capitals of Culture and Dialogue (MCCD)

Description: The Mediterranean Capitals of Culture and Dialogue, (MCCD) are two cities designated by the 43 members of the Union for the Mediterranean for one calendar year, during which a program structured around cultural, socio-economic, and sporting events will highlight the heritage of the cities, their respective Mediterranean identities and Euro-Mediterranean dimension.

The Mediterranean region has been renowned throughout history for the vibrant coexistence of cultures and religions and the prosperous interchange of learning and trade. This shared history has forged the creation of robust networks, and our region has evolved with its characteristic diversity. However, the Mediterranean today is facing several challenges that need to be addressed. In a context of growing hate speech, racism and xenophobia, compounded with geopolitical tensions and conflicts, this initiative works on creating stronger ties between peoples and countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region and strengthening the sense of Euro-Mediterranean identity and community, reminding of the importance of building bridges and fostering understanding between cultures.

Implementation: Follow-up on and support the effective implementation of the programmes of the two designated Capitals of 2026 Prepare the third edition (2027) of the MCCD and launch the call for MCCD 2028 edition. Work on setting-up a network of MCCD designated cities, through which cities that won the title can cooperate and coordinate beyond the year of their selection to ensure the sustainability of the initiative.

Timeline: Throughout the year

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: The Advisory Committee of the MCCD composed by the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF), the Parliamentary-Assembly of the UfM or the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM), the UfM Secretariat. UfM Co-Presidency and UfM Senior Officials.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: UfM Institutional development and internal administration

Activity 64 - Promotion of the UfM as unique platform for regional dialogue and cooperation

Description: As the UfM Secretariat's activities expand in scope and scale, the increasing commitment of its UfM members and stakeholders remains crucial to its functioning, visibility, and sustainability.

Implementation: Promote UfM members engagement to strengthen the relationship, processes, and methodology of work with the UfM Co-Presidency and UfM members, enhancing support, engagement, trust, and transparency in the Secretariat's actions in the framework of the regular and ad hoc Senior Officials Meetings as well as the Annual UfM Regional Forum.

Foster 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.

Timeline: Throughout the year

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, UfM Co-Presidency, UfM members, European Commission, UfM ecosystem, international and regional stakeholders.

Activity 65 - HR Transformation

Description: Full internal reorganisation to enhance its operational capacity, ensuring the UfMS is better equipped to meet its strategic objectives. The success of the organization will not be solely determined by its new strategy, it will depend on Implementation effectively its human resources capabilities align with the defined objectives ensuring they are skilled, engaged, and empowered.

To successfully implement its renewed vision and equip the institution for greater efficiency and impact, the UfM is undergoing a comprehensive transformation along 4 axes: organisational structure, people, processes and tools. The new organizational structure will be implemented through a structured organizational development process named HR Transformation. Alongside these structural changes, a comprehensive transformation process will support staff through this transition and beyond. These efforts will amplify a range of measures that have already been initiated in the past years, with the objective to render the organisation more efficient and better benefit from the talent existing at the UfM. But the organizations should continue to evolve, progressively and continuously adapting to the future challenges.

Implementation: The HR Transformation embraces an initial estimated period of 18 months going from the preparation, already started in 2025, to the implementation phase. It will be carried out through a structured and transparent process, in the respect of Gender Equality Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) principles.

Timeline: January to December 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat

Activity 66 - Digitalization of HR processes

Description: Factorial, the UfM HRIS system, was adopted in Q2 2025 as the first step in the UfM's broader digitalization journey. Its purpose extends beyond automating repetitive tasks related to people management such as recruitment, leave management, performance reviews, and training. It also aims to enhance Implementation talent is managed across the organization, allowing managers to support better their teams. Factorial provides leadership with greater visibility into resources management that support management decision-making to lead both organizational and staff development. This initial step has enabled the introduction of hybrid working measures and the rollout of an e-signature feature for all staff

members. The digitalization of HR must continue, expanding to cover all aspects of people management and aligning with the evolving Staff Regulations and new internal HR policies.

Implementation: In 2026 new digitalized HR processes related to performance management and talent development will be introduced along with the introduction of new Staff Regulations and HR policies. Furthermore, regular staff engagement surveys and new initiatives aimed at enhancing staff well-being will be continued to foster a positive and supportive approach to people management. These initiatives will significantly transform Implementation talent is managed at the UfM putting the focus on the most important resources of the organization: its people.

Timeline: January to December 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat

Activity 67 - Increase the UfM internal capacity to manage the activities / depending on availability of funds

Description: The UfM permanent organizational structure and resources available are limited. Some roles are covered just by one incumbent putting at risk the implementation of the activities. The funds provided by the partners increase the financial ability to implement new activities but may also impact the implementation capacity due to the insufficient internal HR in the Divisions and in the support Units.

The UfM has benefit in the past years of funds to finance indirectly or indirectly some positions in the organization which has impacted positively the implementation capacity of the organization.

Implementation: In 2026 this initiative should continue by contributing identifying the gap in the internal resources (the exercise will be facilitated by the HR transformation exercise) and continuing funding specific positions in the divisions as well as in the departments.

Timeline: January to December 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, Strategic Partners

Activity 68 - Implementation of the UfMS GEDI Action Plan / depending on availability of funds

Description: The UfMS seeks to promote gender equality, women's rights, diversity and inclusion and addresses discrimination and human rights violations based on gender, and other forms of exclusion. The UfMS fosters an organisational culture that embraces Value Based Leadership principles, whilst supporting staff to adopt good practice that exemplifies the commitment of the organization at all levels to gender equality, diversity and inclusion. In September 2025 the first GEDI Policy has been adopted by the UfMS and all staff members trained and engaged around concrete actions to implement it.

Implementation: To effectively translate the GEDI Policy into tangible outcomes, the GEDI action plan provides a structured approach to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and diverse workplace. It outlines key objectives and targeted strategies designed to integrate gender equality, diversity, and inclusion (GEDI) principles into the organisational culture of UfMS, ensuring that every staff member, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or background, has access to equal opportunities and a respectful work environment. Through a combination of leadership initiatives, specialised training programs, data-driven monitoring, and collaborative sector-wide strategies, this plan serves as a roadmap for sustained institutional transformation for this year and the following. Each objective is accompanied by measurable indicators to track progress, clearly defined responsibilities to ensure accountability, and allocated budgets to support

implementation efforts. The initiatives aim not only to address existing disparities but also to establish a foundation for continuous improvement. A strong emphasis is placed on leadership commitment, proactive policy enforcement, and staff engagement in GEDI-related activities. Additionally, mechanisms for compliance and oversight will reinforce transparency, ensuring that the policy's impact is meaningful and measurable.

Timeline: January to December 2026

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat

Activity 69 - Reinforce the Leadership Skills across the organization / depending on availability of funds

Description: To accompany the organizational transformation and strengthen the ability of the organization to full fill its mission, will be introduced initiative to reinforce the leadership skills across the organization. A specific focus and priority will be given to the staff with people management responsibilities given the main changes in responsibilities and the additional roles foreseen in the new organization.

Implementation: A capacity building program will be developed as well as coaching activities introduced focused on developing Leadership Skills of the staff, especially for the ones occupying or evolving to people management responsibilities.

Timeline: July to December 2026 (S2)

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat

Activity 70 - Reinforcing strategic partnerships with key actors involved in regional cooperation

Description: The UfM renewed strategy will aim to promote and better define the UfM added value in the region, seek new methodologies and instruments of action, notably through increased resources and partnerships, that allow for a more tangible, measurable and substantial impact on the ground.

Implementation: In this framework, the UfM Secretariat will convene the third annual meeting of UfM Development Actors meeting. Representatives from development agencies of UfM members will meet to further enhance coordination and synergies, encouraging partnership opportunities and exploring increased engagement prospects.

Timeline: First semester 2026 TBC.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, Development agencies form UfM members, European Commission, strategic partners.

Activity 71 – UfMS adoption of a Results-Based Management (RBM) approach

Description: In the framework of the Support for the UfM Regional Dialogue and Cooperation Programme 2022-2025 (Sida funded) one of the outcomes is to build the UfMS capacity to implement RBM and work with a programmatic approach, to increase efficiency and improve the results of UfMS interventions. The tools and methodological mindset to implement the RBM in UfM operations are essential to increase, improve and bring visibility to the organization’s impact in the Mediterranean region.

Implementation: UfM's capacity on RBM and Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) will be built through trainings and via the finalisation of logical framework of the UfM, including Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) based on the endorsed multiannual UfM Strategy.

In this framework, the UfM Secretariat will continue to 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. In the same line, the UfMS will work to structure and streamline the types of support provided to labelled projects to ensure transparency and equal treatment as well as to meet the expectations of the promoters.

Timeline: First semester 2026.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, strategic partners.

Activity 72 - Strengthening Internal Governance and Control Mechanisms

Description: In 2026, the UfMS will further consolidate and modernise its internal management framework, ensuring that governance structures, processes, and tools are aligned with international best practices and the UfM reform agenda. The objective is to reinforce efficiency, accountability, transparency, and compliance, while ensuring that the Administration's activities remain adaptable to evolving needs and reform priorities. This commitment supports the credibility, effectiveness, and resilience of the UfMS as an international organisation.

Implementation:

Enhancing the Internal Control System

- Upgrade risk management policies.
- Strengthen segregation of duties and governance mechanisms.
- Establish an Audit Committee to provide independent oversight and assurance.
- Adopt and implement a quality management system (e.g. ISO, CAF), benchmarking best practices applied in comparable international organizations.
- Reach an agreement (Cession of Use) with the Regional Government of Catalonia and define a timetable for the long-term settlement of the Secretariat's housing needs, centralizing all services in Palau de Pedralbes, in accordance with the Statutes and the (under review) Headquarters Agreement.

Introducing a Discharge Procedure

- Incorporate a discharge procedure into budgetary and accounting systems.
- Guarantee annual submission of UfM reports and audited accounts for approval.
- Produce IPSAS-compliant financial statements, consistently certified by independent external audits with positive results.

Accelerating Digitalization

- Expand e-procurement to streamline procurement cycles and increase transparency.
- Develop an exclusion policy, in line with EU regulations, to establish an Early Detection System (EDS) for safeguarding financial interests.
- Roll out electronic document management systems.
- Deploy a new Business Process Management (BPM) tool to enhance workflows and decision-making.

- Upgrade IT infrastructure for stronger performance, faster processing, and enhanced cybersecurity.

Protecting Personal Data

- Adopt a consolidated data protection policy reflecting GDPR requirements and the intergovernmental nature of the UfMS.
- Establish a Data Protection Officer (DPO) function, in coordination with the new Legal Advisory Unit, to ensure continuous monitoring and compliance as foreseen under the reform agenda.

Updating Staff Regulations

- Finalize the revised staff regulations and implementing rules in early 2026, reflecting organizational reform and the new organigram, in collaboration with the HR Unit.

Timeline: Throughout 2026.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders: UfM Secretariat, with the support of external experts and partners as required.