

ANNEX 1 - GOVERNANCE OF THE INITIATIVE FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BLUE ECONOMY IN THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN

1. Introduction

The aim of this document is to define the governance of the Initiative for the development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean and to set it up while taking into consideration the competences and interests of the participating Countries, the European Commission and the UfM Secretariat

It is useful to recall that the idea of this Initiative first emerged in the Union for the Mediterranean in 2015, when the Ministerial Declaration on the Blue Economy¹ had invited the participating countries to explore the added value and feasibility of appropriate maritime strategies at sub-regional level, and build on the experience of the 5+5 Dialogue. In October 2016, the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the countries in question - Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia - encouraged further work on such an initiative in synergy with the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat².

As regards the European Union, on 26 June 2017 the Council has endorsed in its conclusions on Blue Growth the contents of the Communication from the European Commission adopted on 19 April 2017.³

At UfM level, general political and technical support have already been expressed respectively at Senior Officials Meetings (SOM) and UfM Blue Economy Working Group (BEWG) levels, while the ten countries have pronounced themselves at an Informal Ministerial meeting, which is being held in parallel to the UfM Regional Stakeholder Conference on the Blue Economy (on 29-30 November 2017).

There is both a *political* and a *operational* dimension to governance: after setting the strategic objectives, ministries and implementing bodies need to make sure that, the work is efficiently managed and closely followed up in order to achieve the goals of the Initiative.

2. Governance

Political coordination will be provided through ad hoc Ministerial meetings based on the initiative of the co-presidency of the WestMED Steering Committee (see below) and exploiting as much as possible, the existing mechanisms and processes of the Union for the Mediterranean, Senior Officials' and ministerial meetings.

Operational coordination will be ensured through a WestMED Steering Committee, which will be, within its functions (see chapter 5.1), the decision-making body of the Initiative. It will be convened as much as possible back to back with the Union for the Mediterranean Blue Economy Working Group (UfM BE WG) and it will also inform periodically the latter on the progress of the implementation of this Initiative. Ad hoc

¹ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/en/node/3846>

² <http://ufmsecretariat.org/foreign-affairs-ministers-of-the-55-dialogue-discuss-pressing-regional-challenges-and-highlight-the-positive-contribution-of-ufm-activities-to-the-enhancement-of-regional-cooperation/>

³ https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/sites/maritimeaffairs/files/com-2017-183_en.pdf

Technical Groups involving relevant experts and stakeholders may be established to ensure the appropriate level of discussion at operational level and to identify and promote the implementation of cooperation projects also through the WestMED Assistance Mechanism (see point 5.2).

3. Implementation and reporting

For the Initiative to work, a number of key conditions must be met, with clear decisions taken at an early stage. These conditions are the following:

- ministerial endorsement is required to start implementing the Initiative; countries need to acknowledge that the Initiative cuts across policies, ministries and levels of government; they set priorities, take ownership and responsibility, align policies and funds at country level, and encourage the participation of private investors within existing mechanisms and frameworks and provide the relevant means and resources, based on countries' capacity;
- the Steering Committee prioritizes actions and proposes/approves/labels⁴ projects for the implementation of the Framework for Action;
- the European Commission ensures a strategic approach at EU level, including coordination and, as far as possible, fund alignment with existing EU related initiatives and instruments⁵
- governments monitor and evaluate national progress at country level as appropriate, including with the support of the Assistance Mechanism, and provide guidance for implementation;
- coordination with the work of existing regional organisations is facilitated through the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat and in relation with the Co-Presidencies, with the view to avoid duplication;
- the key stakeholders should be involved, including national, regional and local authorities, economic and social actors, civil society, academia and non-governmental organisations. Public events and outreach of Virtual Knowledge Centre will also promote this involvement (for example annual fora, business to business and investors pitch/speed-funding events);
- the WestMED Steering Committee will make use of periodic and progress tracking to report to the political level, and will have the responsibility to ensure the implementation of the Initiative.

4. Funding

The Initiative is funded by channelling and coordinating existing EU, national and regional funding that is relevant to the three goals.

The fund alignment should be promoted mainly through three main avenues:

1. Earmarking of existing funds: an amount of funds is programmed to support the implementation of the initiative and its actions.⁶

⁴ Based on avenues of funding (see also chapter 4).

⁵ Subject and without prejudice to the assessment of the evaluation procedures and criteria for the concerned funds, programmes and projects.

2. Focussing of existing calls: the initiative's topics/priorities are mainstreamed in programmed calls. There is no geographical delimitation, however the initiative should be considered in the programming of funds⁷ and stakeholders could benefit from a comparative advantage.⁸
3. WestMED labelling of projects (including flagship projects): the Steering Committee may identify appropriate labelling criteria, and projects judged to contribute to the initiative's objectives would be assessed by the governance bodies of the initiative and advertised for possible funding (e.g. macro-regional strategies). Labelling should be used for complex projects requiring the involvement of several administrations, financial institutions and the matching of different funding sources.

One of the core mandates for the UfM Secretariat is precisely to assist project promoters, together with the Assistance Mechanism, in facilitating further funding of regional projects under the Initiative.

The WestMED labelling/flagging can always be combined with other approaches, while intermediary solutions between earmarking and focusing are also possible (e.g. partial earmarking through a MED focused call).

5. Governance architecture

5.1. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is the decision-making body of the WestMED Initiative that ensures the operational coordination for the implementation of the Initiative and its Framework for Action. Representatives from the participating countries should be duly empowered by the respective governments.

Functions:

- Acting as the main interface with the ministerial level, the UfM Senior Officials Meetings (SOM), the UfM Blue Economy Working Group (BEWG) and other relevant Technical Groups.
- Convening and preparing meetings at ministerial level, as appropriate.
- Revising the actions and targets of the Framework for Action, according to the rules of procedure of the Steering Committee. Each country can involve the political level as deemed necessary and based on the nature of the modification.
- Proposing revisions to the Initiative and to the goals and priorities of the Framework for Action to the political level (e.g. ad hoc Ministerial meeting).
- Prioritizing actions and proposing/approving/labeling⁹ projects contributing to the implementation of the Framework for Action.

⁶ E.g. assistance mechanism (funded by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Working Programme 2017), Facility point (EUSAIR) or geographically targeted calls.

⁷ E.g. Blue Labs call, H2020, Interreg and ENI, Cross-Border and Transnational Cooperation Programmes.

⁸ E.g. partnership in place, project concept defined, local resources available, market prospect assessed.

⁹ Based on avenues of funding (see also chapter 4).

- Providing guidance and inputs to the activities of the Assistance Mechanism.
- Issuing guidelines on information and publicity about the Initiative.
- Informing the UfM Blue Economy Working Group (BE WG) and as far as relevant the UfM Senior Officials meetings (SOM) of the progress made in the implementation of the initiative and the achievement of its objectives and targets.
- Providing guidance on the work of the Assistance Mechanism, and notably on events and Fora (setting the Agenda).
- Developing a monitoring and evaluation framework and reporting once a year to the political level.
- Liaising with Local Authorities, Managing Authorities/National Coordinators of EU programmes in EU and Southern Partner Countries as appropriate, as well as relevant regional organizations.
- Establishing temporary Technical Groups, if necessary, defining their mandates, objectives, deliverables and ensuring linkages between them. The technical groups should be based on a specific priority, result driven and limited in time (target against a deadline), and involve relevant experts and stakeholders (including from research and business communities) to implement specific actions and projects.

Members:

- National coordinators: each participating country decides, at its sole discretion, to be represented by either one or two representatives. Defining the competent representatives to be appointed to the Steering Committee is a countries' prerogative (the same applies to any possible Technical working group). However, the countries may consider designating the national Focal Point already appointed to the UfM BE WG (e.g. from the national authority and competent bodies responsible for the Maritime Policy/Blue Economy).
- European Commission services
- UfM Secretariat

To this aim the Steering Committee will be co-chaired by two countries (North-South) on a two-years rotation terms. It will follow a consensual approach and an alphabetical order (in English) based on countries' willingness/capacity. Every year a new North or South country will be replaced based on a rotation system as follows (e.g.):

Year 1: country A (AMU-Arab Maghreb Union) – country B (EU-European Union)

Year 2: country B (EU) – country C (AMU)

Year 3: country C (AMU) – country D (EU)

etc....

Based on the above the indicative order is the following: DZ-Algeria, FR-France, MA-Morocco, IT-Italy, LY-Libya, MT-Malta, MR-Mauritania, PT- Portugal, TN-Tunisia, ES-Spain).

The European Commission and UfM Secretariat will remain closely associated to the work of the co-chairs to support them in implementing the Initiative. In particular, the

European Commission will ensure the strategic approach at EU level, including coordination with existing EU-related policies, and initiatives (including the adjoining Atlantic Action Plan and the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region, as well as with the BLUEMED¹⁰ and PRIMA¹¹ Initiatives) and alignment to funds and programmes (including cooperation and Interreg programmes), whilst the UfM Secretariat will ensure coordination at UfM level and liaise with relevant regional organizations and institutions (including financial ones) to mobilize resources and capacities for the implementation of the Framework for Action.

The mandate, functions, co-chairing regime and composition of the Steering Committee are validated at ministerial level,¹² while rules of procedure will be agreed by the Steering Committee.

Observers

The Steering Committee may consider inviting as observer other participants or experts on a case by case basis (e.g. based on the agenda of the meeting).

Representatives from other organizations attending the UfM Blue Economy Working Group could be also invited to join the Steering Committee meetings by its members. However, the Steering Committee reserves the right to limit the number of observers attending a meeting to ensure its efficient functioning.

A non exhaustive list of observers is provided as follows:

- General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean;
- United Nation Environmental Programme-Mediterranean Action Plan;
- Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions;
- Committee of the Regions;
- European Social and Economic Committee;
- BLUEMED Initiative;
- Transnational Cooperation Programme for the Mediterranean (MED);¹³
- European Neighbourhood Instrument - Cross Border Cooperation - Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme (ENI - CBC -MED);¹⁴
- Relevant Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes (e.g. Italy-France Maritime, Tunisia-Italy, etc.);
- WestMED Assistance Mechanism;
- INTERACT.

Meetings

¹⁰ <http://www.bluemed-project.eu/>

¹¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index.cfm?pg=prima>

¹² [By endorsing the Ministerial Declaration and this annex.](#)

¹³ <http://www.programmemed.eu/>

¹⁴ <http://www.enpicbcmmed.eu/enicbcmmed-2014-2020/the-european-neighbourhood-instrument>

The Steering Committee should meet at least twice per year and as far as possible back to back to the UfM Blue Economy Working Group, to which will be kept informed on the progress of the Initiative. In this way it respects the UfM approach, while reflecting the sub-regional scope of the initiative. Additional meetings can be convened based on an agreed calendar (in the start up phase 3-4 meetings/year will be probably necessary) and on by using remote communication technologies (e.g. video conferences).

5.2. Role of the Assistance Mechanism

Technical and administrative support is of utmost importance for an effective and efficient performance of the functions attributed to the Steering Committee and the possible Technical Groups. To this aim, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund will fund the establishment of a WestMED Assistance Mechanism, which shall support governance and implementation of the Initiative and its Framework for Action and will carry out the following functions (not exhaustive list):

- Providing day-to-day technical and logistic support to the Steering Committee and the Technical Groups;
- Supporting the preparation of strategic actions/projects, in coordination with the Steering Committee and temporary Technical Groups;
- Monitoring and reporting on projects, mobilised resources and progress achieved;
- Ensuring communication, information, visibility, as well as awareness raising, including the maintenance and development of the existing website for the WestMED;
- Supporting the building of the knowledge base, including collection of reliable and comparable data for verifying/establishing sound baselines and development of relevant, evidence based result indicators and plausible targets;
- Assisting National Coordinators in the monitoring and alignment of funding for the implementation of the Framework for Action;
- Establishing a 'Match making' platform - bringing together project promoters and financiers - and facilitating the interaction with project managers;
- Supporting the networking and exchanges amongst stakeholders, the organization of events and Fora, including an annual Stakeholder Conference, following the guidelines of the Steering Committee.

The Assistance Mechanism should be built upon as far as possible previous experiences (e.g. Atlantic Assistance Mechanism) and existing platforms, including in close cooperation with the Axis 4 of the MED Programme, and complement the Virtual Knowledge Centre.