



Regional Activity Centre
for Sustainable Consumption
and Production



A BLUE ECONOMY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

CONCLUSIONS

**CONFERENCE UNDER THE UN Environment/MAP,
organised by Plan Bleu in cooperation
with the Split PAP/RAC and the Barcelona SCP/RAC**

Marseille, 30-31 May 2017



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The Conference was funded by the MAVA Foundation as part of the project “A blue economy for a healthy Mediterranean” and attended by around a hundred participants and regional stakeholders (national and local authorities, the private sector, NGOs and IGOs). It was organised by Plan Bleu, under UN Environment and MAP, in cooperation with the RAC for the Priority Actions Programme (Split) and the RAC for Sustainable Consumption and Production (Barcelona). The Conference agreed on the following conclusions.

1. THE BLUE ECONOMY IS A NEW FRONTIER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Conference highlighted that in the Mediterranean region the economy based on maritime sectors is considered as a new frontier for economic development and could double or even triple its share of the region’s Gross Value Added (GVA) between 2010 and 2030. This growth will be strongest in sectors such as offshore energy (natural gas, oil, wind), maritime and coastal tourism, maritime and port equipment related to freight transport and the cruise industry (including ship building, repair and breaking). Industrial and small-scale fishing and aquaculture provide many jobs. Exploitation of deep-sea resources (bio-resources and mineral extraction) is highly mechanised and generates few jobs.

However the Conference also underlined that many threats to the health of the Mediterranean include: i) pollution (e.g. from agriculture and industry, chemicals, nutrients, and plastic); ii) over-fishing and other issues associated with resource efficiency and sustainability; iii) ocean acidification, rising temperatures and sea levels, changing currents, loss of habitat and biological resources.

In a global context where the Mediterranean is connected to other global realities through major straits or canals (Gibraltar, Turkish Straits, Suez Canal) and economic and demographic interdependencies (such as the opening of arctic routes, or fluctuating oil and gas prices), the blue economy, which is part of the green economy, can and must contribute positively to inclusive sustainable development in the Mediterranean Region.

The Conference noted that international commitment to the blue economy in the Mediterranean dates back to 2012 and is rooted in the COP17 of the Barcelona Convention, the 2015 Ministerial Declaration of the UfM, the 2015 revision of the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development (‘2030 agenda’), with the International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Abeba), the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York (Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs), and the COP21 in Paris (Climate Agreement), and particularly SDG 14, which seeks to “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources” for the purpose of sustainable and inclusive development. The Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD 2016-2025), adopted in 2016 by the COP19 of the Barcelona Convention, seeks to ensure “sustainable development in marine and coastal areas” (Objective 1) and the “transition towards a green and blue economy” (Objective 5).

The Conference concluded that a blue economy must be implemented within the context of international agreements on the sea, on a global scale (e.g. UNCLOS¹, OPRC², CMS³, the Basel Convention⁴, CBD⁵ and its subsequent Nagoya Protocol and Aichi Targets) and a regional scale (e.g. UN Environment/MAP – Barcelona Convention⁶, OSPAR⁷, the Aarhus Convention⁸). The Mediterranean stands to benefit from these agreements and could be a regional laboratory for their implementation and future progress in international law. Implementation also needs to be considered in terms of international scientific progress on oceans and the Mediterranean Sea.

The Conference underlined the good level of cooperation between regional institutions on the subject and the potential for synergies between them, for instance, the UN Environment Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI), the Mediterranean Economic Foresight Institute (IPEMED), ANIMA Investment Network (ANIMA), the Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED).

2. THE CONFERENCE ADOPTS THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE MAVA PROJECT “FOR A BLUE ECONOMY”

The Conference approved the conclusions of the project aimed at measuring, monitoring and promoting a blue economy in the Mediterranean Region. In particular, it adopted a definition of the concept of a blue economy and adopted a set of selected and measured indicators (subject to a written amendment and commentary procedure).

These indicators were selected as scientifically reliable, understandable, available and relevant for inclusive sustainable development. They concern five sectors: fishing and aquaculture, tourism, shipping, offshore energy, and deep-sea exploration. They measure things like the economic weight of these sectors in terms of value and jobs. Together, they act as measurement tools that complement other analysis tools.

The Conference also wished to include a nursery of indicators to be developed further, and add context economic indicators (such as foreign direct investment, international trade, aid, and selected prices, taxes and subsidies).

¹ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982, Montego Bay

² International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation, 1990, London

³ Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, 1979, Bonn

⁴ Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, 1989, Basel

⁵ The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), 1992, Rio de Janeiro

⁶ UN Environment/Mediterranean Action Plan, Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean, 1976, Barcelona. Renamed the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean, 1995, Barcelona.

⁷ The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention), 1992, Paris

⁸ United Nations Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters



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3. TOWARDS A MODEL MEDITERRANEAN?

The Conference adopted conclusions and recommendations to be taken into consideration in existing governance processes in the Mediterranean Region, at a national or regional scale (monitoring of the MSSD 2016-2025, consultation of the Regional Action Plan on sustainable consumption and production in the Mediterranean, meetings of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development).

These conclusions include sector-based conclusions (subject to a written amendment and commentary procedure) concerning fishing and aquaculture, tourism, shipping, offshore energy and deep-sea exploration. A version submitted to the participants needs to be supplemented with the sector presentations from the conference, for example concerning Marseille's smart port, ship building and dismantling/recycling, exploration and use of deep-sea biological resources and minerals, fisheries and tourism.

They also include the following 5 conclusions and recommendations concerning national and international efforts for a blue economy in the Mediterranean.

1. Improve governance for a blue economy. This must first be dealt with by implementing existing international agreements relating to the sea on a global and regional level. These agreements must be signed, ratified and implemented in the interest of signatory countries and the region as a whole. Beyond existing agreements, the future development of international right and international cooperation on marine and maritime issues relies on the work of the UN, the World Bank, the OECD, and UN Environment, as well as the work of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the European Union (EU) and the UN Environment/MAP. Secondly, it requires the appropriate implementation of legislation, regulations and policies at a national and regional level, combining the suitable involvement of stakeholders and transparent decision-making processes.

2. Expand the use of economic instruments (prices, taxes, subsidies) by improving knowledge on economic distortions (e.g. those resulting from subsidies that damage the environment), by using greener taxation, and by expanding the incentive role of prices, especially for natural resources and pollution.

3. Support technological and social innovation by promoting suitable technologies, sharing best practices and social entrepreneurship. It is important to reduce the environmental impacts of the high seas and coastal economy and thereby increase socio-economic benefits (job creation, training and employment for young people, food security, reduced poverty).

4. Invest in the blue economy and increase related financing by including various funding tools - traditional and innovative, national and international (development banks, international funds), public and private (philanthropic or non-philanthropic).



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5. Promote the development and use of statistics and indicators to base blue economy policies on scientific and factual knowledge and to follow their progress in a consistent manner.

Of course governance organisations that apply to the Mediterranean Region and/or its neighbouring countries use a variety of documents and commitments (strategies, action plans, investment programmes, budgets, projects) and tools (e.g. regulatory, economic, information tools) to achieve more sustainable and more inclusive development, including the sustainable use of Mediterranean maritime and coastal assets. Several initiatives have already been launched to promote this transition or changes (including the MSSD 2016-2025, the SCP Action Plan, the EcAp Initiative and the UN Environment/MAP ICZM Protocol, UfM initiatives or the MSFD Directive and the EU Circular Economy Package). It is important to reduce remaining implementation gaps and shortcomings. This partially results from limited human and financial resources, administrative and political cultures, and the slow recognition of inclusive sustainable development problems. Policy-making focuses too often on the short term, overlooking long term issues and benefits.