

Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development

The Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) 2016-2025 promotes education, awareness-raising and research for sustainable development. It also encourages the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (MSESD), which is also referred to in the Athens Ministerial Declaration of the 19th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols by which they “resolve to enhance public awareness and the role of education promoting sustainability and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Mediterranean”.

Background

The MSESD is the first regional strategy on ESD prepared on the basis of the ESD Strategy of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), adopted in 2005.

The Strategy was drafted through a participatory process carried out under the scientific and technical coordination of the UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Development Management and Education in the Mediterranean, with the support of the Mediterranean Educational Initiative on Environment and Sustainability (MEDIES) of the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE).

The process involved experts from Universities, Governments, Non-Governmental and Civil Society Organisations, from the North and the South of the

Mediterranean. Many of the consultations for the development of the MSESD were organised under the EU-funded Horizon 2020 Capacity Building / Mediterranean Environment Programme.

The MSESD was endorsed in 2014 by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Change.



Objectives

- Ensure that policy, legislation and other regulatory and operational frameworks support ESD;
- Promote sustainable development through formal, non-formal and informal learning;
- Equip educators with the competence to include sustainable development in their teaching;
- Ensure that adequate tools and materials for ESD are accessible
- Promote research on and development of ESD;
- Strengthen cooperation on ESD at all levels, including exchange of experience and technologies within the Mediterranean region.



The implementation of the MSESD is driven by countries' priorities and initiatives addressing their specific needs and circumstances and serves as a flexible framework for the fulfillment of their regional/global but also national agendas.

Leadership and partnership

- National focal points to ensure efficient regional governance and communication;
- Mediterranean Committee for ESD created in 2016 to facilitate the implementation of the Strategy;
- Members: Cyprus (Chair), Croatia, Greece, Jordan, Malta, Portugal, the League of Arab States, UfM, UNESCO, UN Environment/MAP, and UNECE.



Union pour la Méditerranée
Union for the Mediterranean
الإتحاد من أجل المتوسط



UNECE



Main achievements

The MSED Action Plan was adopted by the Conference of Ministers of Education (Nicosia, Cyprus, 8-9 December 2016) co-organised by the Government of Cyprus and the EU-funded SWIM-H2020 support mechanism Programme. The Action Plan mobilizes the Strategy through concrete activities and strategic directions, identifying four implementation areas in a comprehensive and concise way:

1. The priority areas for institutional and operational interventions, with recommended activities and an indicative roadmap;
2. A set of identified common regional programmes and projects of institutional and non-thematic nature;
3. The priority thematic areas for region-wide programmes;
4. Proposed indicators for monitoring the progress.

During the Conference, UNESCO, UfM, UN Environment/MAP, the League of Arab States (LAS) and UNECE, further committed to promoting and streamlining the MSED and the Action Plan priorities and actions in their respective agendas and work programmes:

- The Action Plan is included among the Flagship Projects of the UNESCO Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD (2015-2019). UNESCO acknowledged its importance in the Review Forum for GAP on ESD (March 2017).
- The 1st meeting of the UfM Working Group on Environment and Climate Change (March 2017) agreed to “Stress the importance of working to increase awareness and education on environmental and Climate Change issues, including by supporting the implementation of the Action Plan of the MSED”.

The EU SWIM-H2020 project supported capacity-building activities related to the promotion of the Action Plan, including four training-of-trainers sessions held in 2017 in Jordan, Palestine, Tunisia, and Algeria, and a major regional workshop on ESD in Cyprus (22-24 November 2017) which provided senior educators with the opportunity to meet and exchange views with the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development (COMPSUD), the media, and other stakeholders from the Mediterranean countries. Significant achievements are observed also in Malta where the National Plan on Sustainable Management of Water has taken into account the MSED and, in Cyprus where the overall National ESD Plan has been effectively linked with the Strategy.

Challenges and the way forward

- ESD although widely recognized as a prerequisite for the promotion of sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), does not yet receive the needed political backing and therefore, is still not fully and homogeneously developed throughout the Mediterranean region.
- Appropriate integration of ESD messages and content into the curricula of Primary and Secondary Education is needed, albeit they are frequently overloaded.
- Better coordination is needed between formal and non-formal/informal ESD initiatives which are frequently supervised by different Ministries: Education, Environment, Health, etc.
- Availability of adequate human and financial resources is lacking: needs for training and retraining a critical mass of educators.

Resources

MSED: <https://tinyurl.com/yce58r4t>

Nicosia Declaration: <https://tinyurl.com/y77a3xnh>

MSED Action Plan: <https://tinyurl.com/yjcwakje>

SWIM-H2020: www.swim-h2020.eu

MEdIES: www.medies.net

Ministerial Conference: www.esdmedcyprus.pi.ac.cy



United Nations Environment Programme
Mediterranean Action Plan Coordinating Unit
Barcelona Convention Secretariat
www.unepmap.org