



Stakeholder News Brief 1

July 2014

An important step forward in reviewing the [Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development](#) (MSSD 1.0) was taken last month by the Steering Committee (SC) of the [Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development \(MCSD\)](#) during its meeting on 11th-12th June in Malta, when a provisional vision and structure for the reviewed strategy were recommended. This news brief summarises the outcome of the MSSD review consultation process (Phase 1 of the review) undertaken in April-May 2014 and shows how this consultation informed the discussion on structure and vision.

BACKGROUND

Adopted in 2005 by the Contracting Parties (CPs) to the Barcelona Convention, the MSSD 1.0 provides a regional response to the global sustainable development agenda and the Millennium Development Goals. It provides an integrated policy framework for achieving the vision of a sustainable Mediterranean region and for the elaboration of national sustainable development strategies in riparian countries. The four objectives of the MSSD 1.0 sought to: contribute to economic development; reduce social disparities; change unsustainable production and consumption patterns; and improve governance. Accordingly, it established seven priority fields of action:

1. Better management of water resources and demand;
2. Improved rational use of energy, increased renewable energy use and mitigation of and adaptation to climate change;
3. Sustainable mobility through appropriate transport management;
4. Sustainable tourism as a leading economic sector;
5. Sustainable agriculture and rural development;
6. Sustainable urban development; and
7. Sustainable management of the sea, coastal areas and marine resources.

The decision to review the MSSD 1.0 was taken by the CPs to the Barcelona Convention at their 18th Ordinary Meeting in Istanbul in December 2013, with view to submitting a reviewed strategy - MSSD 2.0 - for consideration and adoption next meeting of the CPs in 2015 ([UNEP\(DEPI\)/MED.IG.21/9](#)). The revision of the MSSD 1.0 is led by the MCSD with the assistance of the Secretariat to the Barcelona Convention. The technical work supporting the revision of the MSSD 1.0 is being carried out by UNEP/MAP through its Plan Bleu Regional Activity Centre (PB/RAC), with the contribution of the other RACs. Key opportunities for the MSSD review are the link to the global process to develop Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thus ensuring that the Mediterranean region remains a frontrunner in the area of environmental and sustainability governance, and the building on synergies between the MSSD and other regional initiatives.

MSSD REVIEW PHASE 1: CONSULTATION ON ISSUES AND VISION

The review process of the MSSD was launched on 14 February 2014, by Malta's Minister for Sustainable Development, Environment and Climate Change ([see press release](#)). In April 2014, a wide stakeholder consultation was launched on the basis of a consultation document aiming at eliciting stakeholder feedback on the set of issues to be addressed in the strategy, as well as the vision for the new strategy. Detailed responses were received from 60 organisations and individuals, which included the key stakeholders from the region.

Issues to be addressed in the MSSD Review

The consultation revealed that many of the critical issues affecting the Mediterranean region were captured well in MSSD 1.0, and should be retained in its revision, while new themes were highlighted. The themes emerging from the consultation are summarized in Table 1 below and represented graphically on Figure 1 (see page 2).

Table 1: Themes emerging from MSSD review consultation, with number of mentions

Green economy (26); Environment/Biodiversity (18); Urban development (17); Agriculture, rural development, and forests (14); Water (13); Social issues (12); Energy (and extractive sector) (12); Governance (10); Sea and coastal areas (9); Tourism (8); Climate Change (7); Transport (7); Waste (7); Population/Demography (1).

These themes link well, with an important (for the Mediterranean context) exception in the case of tourism, to the emerging focus areas for the SDGs, as shown in Table 2.

Structure of MSSD 2.0

On the basis of the consultation results, during its meeting on June 11-12th in Malta, the MCSD SC discussed whether there is a need to revisit the structure of the MSSD in its review, or whether the current structure, based on key environmental or economic sectors, and governance, is still relevant. One of the main constraints with the current structure is that, being focussed on key environmental media and economic sectors for the Mediterranean, it does not allow for the consideration of cross-cutting approaches and tools such as the green economy, which is a key output from Rio+20, as well as climate change, a key issue for the Mediterranean and surely not to be addressed solely with energy. At the same time, the stakeholder community is well-structured around these environmental themes and economic sectors, so an element of synergy in this respect would be lost if these themes do not retain some prominence in the reviewed MSSD.



MCSD Steering Committee at work

A second option considered was to base the MSSD 2.0 structure around a set of themes that relate both to the issues emerging from the MSSD Consultation, and the emerging SDG Focus Areas. Given the convergence between these two (as shown in Table 2), as well as the ability to link back in a broad sense to most of the axes of the MSSD 1.0, the SC agreed on this second option, with the understanding that the structure might need to be adjusted during the process of drawing up and agreeing the MSSD 2.0.

Echoing the decision taken at the Istanbul meeting of the CPs, the SC highlighted that the revised MSSD should focus on the interface between environment and development. In this regard, it was recommended that the MSSD 2.0 focuses on themes that lie in the interface between the environment and socio-economic concerns, so that these interfacing themes (or axes of the MSSD 2.0) would be addressed as priorities directly. Socio-economic matters would be addressed in as much as they relate to the interfacing themes (axes). It was also agreed that a set of guiding principles for the MSSD 2.0 are required, to inform the strategy under each of the axes. The guiding principles would include concepts such as: integrated approach, balanced development and openness to a plurality of future development models. The SC also recommended that due to its importance in the region, tourism is featured strongly in the MSSD 2.0, possibly under the axis related to the green economy.

The SC therefore recommended that the revised MSSD focus on the following thematic areas:

1. **Seas and coasts**; including efforts towards reaching Good Environment Status of Mediterranean marine and coastal ecosystems;
2. **Natural resources, rural development and food**; including links not only to marine and coastal, but also terrestrial habitats, and to fresh waters;
3. **Climate**; including the impacts of climate change on natural resources and socioeconomic sectors and possible responses;
4. **Sustainable cities**; including coastal urbanization and [Integrated Coastal Zone Management](#), land transport, waste management, infrastructure, housing and energy;
5. **Transition towards a green economy**; including [sustainable consumption and production](#), circular economy;
6. **Governance**; including financing, Aarhus Convention–related issues such as public participation, and cooperation.

Vision statement for MSSD 2.0

The current MSSD 1.0 envisages ‘...a “sustainable” Mediterranean that is politically stable, prosperous and peaceful ... based on a proactive choice of a “win-win” scenario in which the co-development of the North and the South is promoted, while exploiting the positive synergies of efficient environmental, developmental and economic management.’ Based on the 2013 Istanbul Declaration and the [Ecosystem Approach](#) (EcAp) vision, the April 2014 MSSD Review consultation document presented the following draft updated vision for the MSSD 2.0:

A sustainable Mediterranean region that is politically stable, prosperous and peaceful. Socioeconomic development as well as human health and wellbeing are jointly sought and depend on healthy Mediterranean marine and coastal ecosystems that are productive and biologically diverse.

The outcome of the Phase I consultation regarding the vision statement is presented in Table 3 below in terms of ‘elements’ of the vision mentioned by respondents. It must be noted in this respect that respondents often re-iterated the elements of the vision proposed in the consultation document.

Table 3: Elements of the MSSD 2.0 vision by number of mentions and sustainable development pillar

<p>Environment (11): productive, biologically diverse, healthy ecosystems (6); resource sustainability (2); ecological limits/carrying capacity (1); long term conservation of key elements of marine biodiversity (1); landscape approach (1).</p>
<p>Society (13): Health (4); territorial imbalance/migration (3); quality of life (1); culture (1); community (1); higher education/research/science/innovation (3).</p>
<p>Economy (25): Well-being (5); Prosperous (5); Development (3); Sustainable energy (3); Livelihoods (2); wealth creation (1); international trade (1); ecosystem services (1); economically vibrant (1); generating jobs (1); Bio-economy (1); Decoupling (1).</p>
<p>Governance (26): Stability (5); Peace (5); collaboration/cooperation (3); participatory/democratic (3); Inclusion/equality (3); united/collectively desirable/shared objectives (3); Transparency (1); future generations (1); Risk management (1); international community (1).</p>

Additional general comments were received about the MCSD vision as follows: 'balance all elements of sustainable development'; 'link to September 2014 SDGs report'; 'remove reference to stability'; 'strengthen environmental pillar of the MSSD'; 'remove words "socioeconomic" and "marine and coastal"; and, 'the words 'sustainable' and socioeconomic' are redundant'.

Overall, the results indicated some convergence on how to state the environmental elements in the vision, as well as strong emphasis on both economic and environmental-economic concepts *and* governance. The overall expectation expressed in the consultation was that rather than deliver on the specific social aspects of sustainable development, the MSSD 2.0 is expected to deliver on environmental and economic goals, particularly focusing on synergies in these two areas, while not leaving out social issues. On the basis of these considerations, the Steering Committee agreed the following vision to guide the development of the MSSD 2.0:

A prosperous and peaceful Mediterranean region in which people enjoy a high quality of life and where sustainable development takes place within the carrying capacity of healthy ecosystems. This is achieved through common objectives, cooperation, solidarity, equity and participatory governance.

It was agreed that the vision would be accompanied by explanations of the terminology used: for example, what is meant by healthy ecosystems (e.g. productive and diverse) and equity (which includes the concept of equal access to the benefits deriving from ecosystems). It was agreed that the vision statement could still be updated later on in the review process as necessary.

NEXT STEPS

With the agreement on a provisional vision and structure, Phase 2 of the MSSD Review has commenced. Based on the provisional structure, multi-stakeholder thematic working groups, whose responsibility will be the drafting of the specific axes of the reviewed strategy, will be convened. Organisations interested in participating in the thematic working groups are kindly requested to contact [Plan Bleu](mailto:atila.uras@unepmap.gr). A first draft of the revised strategy is expected by December 2014. Beginning in 2015, Phase 3 of the Review process will constitute a wide consultation process on the first draft of the MSSD 2.0, culminating in the approval of the revised Strategy by the CPs to the Barcelona Convention at their 2015 meeting.

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