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Simplified Peer Review Mechanism of Sustainable Development Strategies in Mediterranean Countries

Summary Report 2016-2019

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
Barcelona Convention	Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution
BRICS+G	Dialogue on sustainability and growth in six countries - Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS) and Germany
COP	Conference of the Parties – Ordinary Meeting of the signatory parties to the Convention of...
DAC/OECD	OECD Development Assistance Committee
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
EPR	Environmental Performance Reviews
HFDD	Senior Civil Servants on Sustainable Development
HLPR	High-level political forum
KMS	Knowledge Management System
MAP	Mediterranean Action Plan
MCSD	Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development
MSSD 2016-2025	Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025
NETSSDD	National Ecological Transition Strategy Towards Sustainable Development
NSSD	National strategy/strategies for sustainable development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PB/RAC	Plan Bleu Regional Activity Centre (UNEP/MAP)
PRM	Peer review mechanism
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIMPEER	Simplified Peer Review Mechanism
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNECE	The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Simplified Peer Review Mechanism (SIMPEER) is a process to exchange experience, policies and good practice on implementing sustainable development at national level between the Barcelona Convention Contracting Parties, i.e., the 21 countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea.

Simple, effective and efficient, SIMPEER was inspired by existing peer review mechanisms:

- simple, because it requires a two to three-person project team to facilitate the analysis of strategic documents from the participating countries, draft national reports, and foster dialogue between peer countries;
- effective, as the countries commit: (i) to take part both as reviewers and reviewees, using a methodology approved at the outset of the exercise, (ii) to gather the information necessary to analyse national strategies for sustainable development (NSSDs), (iii) to mobilise stakeholders to consult and dialogue with during country missions;
- efficient in terms of resulting benefits for the countries in relation to the means used and delivery deadlines.

The human, financial and logistical resources needed for SIMPEER are actually quite small. There is no permanent secretariat nor specialists engaged for long periods. Country missions last two or three days while a review meeting takes two days at most. The peer review exercise can thus be scheduled during an intercession of the Conference of the Parties to the Barcelona Convention, i.e. over two years.

There are many resulting benefits for the participating countries. SIMPEER enables countries to review their NSSDs in relation to the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 (MSSD), used as a benchmark and means to apply the global guidelines of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to the Mediterranean region. SIMPEER emphasises the links between the dimensions of sustainable development and between the various SDGs, to facilitate their integration into sectoral policies. It also boosts cooperation with the international community, and helps incorporate recommendations and decisions of international agreements in national initiatives.

SIMPEER is an incentive and opportunity to gather and summarise strategic documents and research undertaken by a country, not just as part of 2030 Agenda and its SDGs but also as part of other thematic conventions and agreements (e.g. climate, biodiversity, desertification, pollution, etc.). It reflects progress made by countries to integrate these thematic policies into their development strategies, policies and actions. Its simple and easy format makes it an effective way of raising awareness about sustainable development and incorporating it into policy.

The success and effectiveness of SIMPEER involves participating countries sharing the same values, a commitment to sustainable development, mutual trust and open-mindedness. The contracting Parties have to be familiar with and understand the process. They must be firmly committed to implementing it and all participants must provide the right conditions, in particular sufficient resources to properly run the exercise.

SIMPEER was piloted in 2016-2017. The findings were reported to the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) and to the Conference of the Parties of the Barcelona Convention. The Contracting Parties reaffirmed their interest in this mutual learning exercise and recommended maintaining the process while:

- boosting stakeholder participation at national, regional and local levels in the participating countries;
- improving links between SIMPEER and the national voluntary reviews of SDGs presented at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum;
- involving countries having taken part in the first exercise to expand dialogue between Mediterranean countries and ensure the continuity of SIMPEER.

The methodology has been amended to account for these recommendations and:

- analyse the level of integration of the MSSD and 2030 Agenda together with its SDGs in the NSSD;
- forge greater links with the preparation and follow-up of voluntary national reviews;
- increase the role of SIMPEER as a support mechanism for the national NSSD implementation, review or/and design process;
- secure greater participation of a range of actors at national level;
- consider including local stakeholders based on needs expressed by the volunteer countries;
- draft various communication documents and infographics to ensure findings are disseminated, lessons learned, and SIMPEER is promoted in the Mediterranean region and beyond.

Plan Bleu, Regional Activity Centre of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), facilitated the 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 exercises.

The pilot exercise was run from June 2016 to April 2017, involving France, Montenegro and Morocco as volunteer countries.

Albania, Egypt and Tunisia voluntarily took part in the second exercise which ran from March to November 2019.

II. SIMPEER OVERVIEW

2.1. THE SIMPEER APPROACH

The approach adopted to design SIMPEER involves three main phases: preparation, consultation and review. The approach also focuses on disseminating and managing knowledge gained from the exercises to make the learning process even more effective.

The SIMPEER process stems, in particular, from the BRICS+G¹ approach. Contracting Parties volunteer to take part in the review, in which they are both reviewers and reviewees. The preparatory phase is run in close consultation with the national contact point. The latter gathers and sends relevant strategic documents to be analysed by the support team. This analysis helps identify questions to be raised during the consultation phase. This second phase of the exercise (consultation) seeks to involve as many national, regional or local sustainable development stakeholders and decision-makers as possible. It helps gather stakeholder feedback on the preliminary conclusions of the documentary analysis, and identify good practices to share with peer countries as well as pending questions. Phase three is the peer review. It involves exchanging national reports between all participating countries and a face-to-face meeting during which each national contact point presents the findings of the national consultation for peer discussion, comments and suggestions.

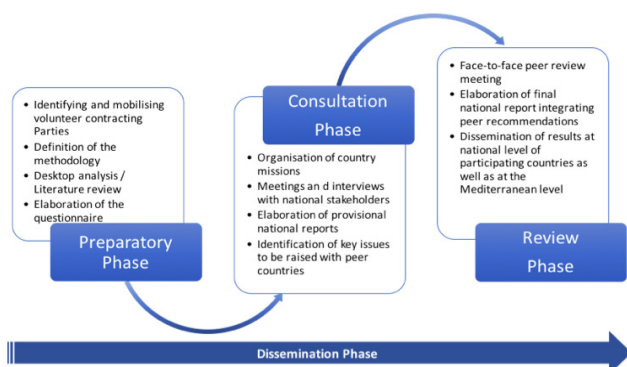


Figure 1: The three phases of the SIMPEER implementation process

The organisational chart to implement SIMPEER is provided in Annex. This chart features the main anticipated outputs, and attributes of the key stakeholders: the Barcelona Convention-MAP System including Plan Bleu, the volunteer countries, and the team of specialists.

2.2. THE SIMPEER ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The SIMPEER analytical framework is based on five common elements typical of sound, effective NSSDs, i.e.:

- leadership and empowerment by national decision-makers, and strong political commitments;
- integration, by taking into account links between the three pillars of sustainable development, i.e. economic, social and environmental goals mainstreamed in all sectors, regions and generations;
- governance, inclusion, participation, fruitful and institutionalised partnerships, trust between various stakeholders at different levels of governance;
- resources and means of implementation particularly through budgeting, and tracing approved investments for sustainable development;
- monitoring and reviewing the process, its outcomes and impacts.

To complete the analytical framework of SIMPEER, the aspects listed above are compared with the strategic goals and guidelines of the MSSD. Methodological guidelines from SIMPEER are formatted to facilitate the cross-cutting analysis of national policies and exchange of experience between countries, while allowing a certain flexibility to adapt to the specific national characteristics.



¹ Dialogue process on sustainability established by the group comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa and Germany https://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/wp-content/uploads/migration/documents/bricsplusg_booklet_09.pdf

III. MAIN FINDINGS FROM SIMPEER 2016-2017 AND 2018-2019 EXERCISES

3.1. VOLUNTEER COUNTRIES

In chronological order of participation in the first two exercises, Montenegro, Morocco, France, Tunisia, Albania and Egypt all applied to take part in the SIMPEER peer review exercise. Between them, these six countries provide a regional balance based on the participation of countries at various levels of development, as well as a range of practices and approaches in terms of the environment and development. Countries from each Mediterranean sub-region (North, South and East) took part in SIMPEER.

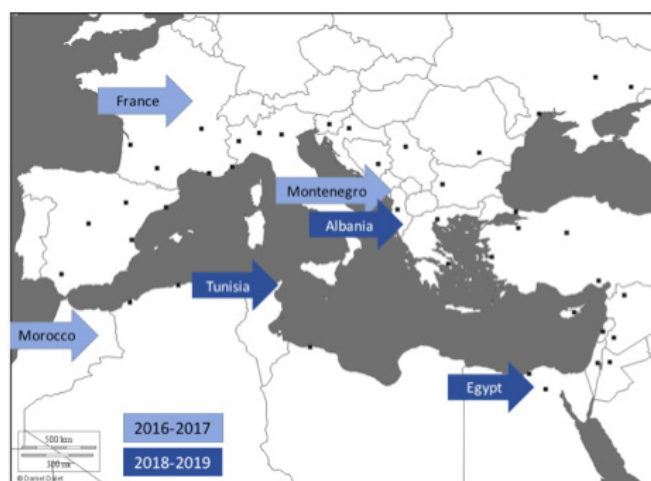


Figure 2: Voluntary countries participating in SIMPEER 2016-2017 & 2018-2019 exercises



	Albania	Egypt	France	Morocco	Montenegro	Tunisia
Population	2.8 m	97.55 m	66.99 m	36.03 m	0,62 Mo hab.	11,5 Mo hab.
GDP growth rate 2018²	4%	5.3%	1.7%	3.0%	4.9%	2.5%
Poverty rate (1.9 USD/day in 2011)³	1.1 % (2012)	1.3% (2012)	0.115	1% (2013)	1% (2013)	0.3% (2015)
Human development index 2019⁴	0.791 69 th	0.700 116 th	0.981 26 th	0.676 121 st	0.816 52 nd	0.739 91 st
Global competitiveness index 2017-2018⁵	4.18 80 th	3.90 115 th	5.18 21 st	4.24 70 th	4.15 82 nd	3.95 95 th
Environmental performance index 2018⁶	65.46 40 th	61.21 66 th	83.95 2 nd	63.47 54 th	61.33 65 th	62.35 58 th
Total ecological footprint 2012⁷	2.04	1.96	4.75	1.82	NA	2.19
Sustainable development index (SDGs) 2019⁸	70.3 60 th	66.2 92 nd	81.5 4 th	69.1 72 nd	67.3 87 th	70 63 rd

Table 1: Participating volunteer countries at 2016-2017 & 2018-2019 SIMPEER exercises, in figures

2 <https://donnees.banquemondiale.org/indicateur/NY.GDPMKTPKDZG>

3 <http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/country> for 5 countries except France, <https://data.oecd.org/fr/inequality/taux-de-pauvrete.htm>

4 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/2019-human-development-index-ranking>

5 <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GCR2017-2018/05FullReport/TheGlobalCompetitivenessReport2017-2018.pdf>

6 <https://epi.envirocentrale.edu/epi-topline>

7 <https://data.footprintnetwork.org/#/sustainableDevelopment/cn=all&yr=2014&type=BCpc.EFCpc>

8 <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/#/>

3.2. COUNTRY MISSIONS

Country	Dates and locations
Montenegro	10 to 13 January 2017, Podgorica
Morocco	7 to 9 February 2017, Rabat
France	27 to 28 April 2017, Paris
Tunisia	19 to 20 September 2019, Gabès & Kairouan 23 to 25 September 2019, Tunis
Albania	21 to 23 October 2019, Tirana
Egypt	27 to 29 October 2019, Cairo

Table 2: Calendar of country missions, exercises 2016-2017 & 2018-2019

The country missions demonstrated the ability of the national authority responsible for the environment and/or sustainable development to mobilise other public sector stakeholders, local authorities, civil society, academic circles and the private sector; the latter being the most challenging to meet.

Similarly, it was noted that all the participating countries shared a firm commitment from the national authority responsible for the environment, coupled with the proactive and voluntary involvement of national teams tasked with designing, implementing and monitoring the NSSDs and the sustainable development implementation process.

3.3. PEER REVIEW MEETINGS

The first peer review meeting was held in Nice, France, on 27 April 2017, following the Plan Bleu National Focal Points meeting. The second meeting took place on 19 and 20 November 2019, in Marseille.

Presentations of the national reports focused on five dimensions of the SIMPEER analysis so that each country could highlight its benefits and successes while probing the challenges to implementing the NSSDs. Other countries involved commented on these aspects by providing their assessments and formulated recommendations.

The second peer review meeting (Marseille, 2019) was attended by two of the countries from the previous exercise (France and Morocco). Those reported on measures taken after the exercise, and on the implementation of SIMPEER 2016-2017 recommendations. The presentations shed light on the benefits from the SIMPEER peer review mechanism, and emphasised several aspects in the NSSDs implementation process, frequently in connection with those of the SDGs.

Representatives from the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) and Plan Bleu's Board attended both peer review meetings. Marseille City Council hosted the Marseille meeting in addition to opening proceedings and gave a presentation about the role of local authorities in delivering sustainable development in France.



IV. ANALYSES ACCORDING TO SIMPEER DIMENSIONS

Aside from valuable discussions, SIMPEER resulted in the preparation of methodological reports, national reports and notes of peer review meetings. These are available on the Plan Bleu website at <https://planbleu.org/en/event/peer-review-meeting/>

These outputs are supplemented by the present summary document.

The recommendations and appraisals issued from the peer review meeting are outlined in each national report and summarised below for each of the five analytical dimensions.



4.1. GENERAL BACKGROUND TO THE NSSDS IN THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

Country	Sustainable development framework	SDG implementation framework	Voluntary national review at the High-Level Political Forum	MSSD SDG 14 ⁹
Albania	National development and integration strategy		2018	No specific reference to the MSSD Little progress on implementing SDG 14
Egypt	Sustainable development strategy: Egypt Vision 2030		2016 2018	No specific reference to the MSSD Little progress on implementing SDG 14
France	National strategy of ecological transition towards sustainable development 2015-2020	One roadmap per SDG	2016	
	2019: One SDG roadmap		2019	Specific roadmap for SDG 14 Study for the introduction of a voluntary dashboard monitoring their effects with the private sector/ CAC40-listed companies
Morocco	National sustainable development strategy, 2016 - 2030	Study on the level of SDG integration in the NSSDs	2016 2020 (expected)	MSSD serves as a reference to develop the NSSD
Montenegro	National sustainable development strategy 2016-2030, including 17 SDGs		2016	MSSD serves as a reference to develop the NSSD
Tunisia	National sustainable development strategy, 2016-2020	Delivery coordinated by the Ministry of Development, Investment and International Cooperation	2019	MSSD and NSSD running simultaneously, reference to the MSSD process in the preamble to the NSSD but no specific integration

Table 3: Sustainable development in SIMPEER participating countries: general context

9. Sustainable development goal 14: "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development" is most directly targeted in the Barcelona Convention.

• Albania

The Albanian government adopted the second National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI-II 2015-2020) in May 2016 as a key component of the integrated planning system. This strategic document reflects the vision, priorities, targets and social and economic development resources, together with the country's ambition to join the European Union. The NSDI-II, for the period 2015-2020, is an important political document that sets out the vision for development in Albania. As such, it is considered to be a planning instrument for sustainable development that coordinates development objectives with those of joining the European Union.

The NSDI-II 2015-2020 is built on plans to join the European Union (EU), which is the ultimate aim of the overall national development policy, supported by all political parties in Albania. The EU accession process is a key driver for development inasmuch as it provides a means of including all the European benefits in terms of governance and common policy development into national processes.

Albania's development strategy is built on the fundamental and cross-cutting bases of good governance, democracy and the rule of law. It comprises three main sector-specific pillars (Figure 3).



Figure 3: NSDI-II 2015-2020 base and pillars

- Pillar 1: Economic growth through macroeconomic and budgeting capacity;
- Pillar 2: Growth through greater competitiveness and innovation;

The government's top priorities as defined in the NSDI-II 2015-2020 are:

- innovative, citizen-focused, public services (governance);
- relaunch and financial consolidation of the energy sector;
- promoting innovation and competitiveness (direct foreign and national investment);
- integrated water management;
- integrated land management.

The NSDI-II will be reviewed in 2020, which should help define the country's 2030 Vision featuring the SDGs in the national development planning framework, with the adoption of an extended timescale (beyond 7 years).

• Egypt

Late 2015, when the political roadmap based on Egypt's new constitution was being introduced, the country began developing its vision for a better future by devising its Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS: Egypt's Vision 2030). The main aim of the SDS is to secure a competitive, balanced and diversified economy for Egypt based on innovation and knowledge, founded on justice, social integrity and participation. It calls for a balanced and diverse system of ecological governance that invests in both natural resources and human capital to deliver sustainable development and improve the quality of life of the Egyptian people. The process is State-driven with a large participation of relevant stakeholders. With reference to the three main dimensions of sustainable development, the strategy is based on pillars:

- the economic dimension comprises pillars of economic development, energy, innovation, scientific research, transparency and efficiency of government institutions;
- the social dimension focuses on the pillars of social justice, education and training, health and culture;
- the environmental dimension concerns the pillars of the environment and urban development.

Two other pillars are connected to foreign policy and national security, and domestic policy, providing an important overall framework for the strategy and the other pillars. In 2017, The Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform began a review of the strategy to address difficulties that hindered its implementation, and subsequent structural changes. These included, in particular, the introduction of the structural adjustment programme in 2016, the results from the 2017 national census, with a 2.56% rise in population growth, and the impact of this growth on an already stretched State budget for infrastructure and social services. The updated version of the SDS features 9 targets, two for each of the three sustainable development dimensions, as well as more cross-cutting targets on governance, security (food security, public health, etc.) and international relations. The water sector and climate change issues are more prominent in the updated strategy to account for their cross-sectoral dimension, matching the scale of the challenge they represent.

The Strategy should also clearly reflect the priority that the country gives to the implementation of food, water and energy security, its desire to secure and stabilize its economy, and to establish a business environment conducive to investment and development. Thus, the strategy review process is based on the following principles:



Figure 4 : Piliers de la SDS : Egypt's Vision 2030

- Reinforce the multidimensional and interconnected nature of sustainable development;
- Highlight the benefits of sustainable development, for example through embracing the green economy to achieve sustainable development.
- Engage stakeholders to ensure ownership.

The process involved the consultation and participation of many stakeholders to gather their contributions to the Strategy. Stakeholders involved include parliamentarians, unions, women, youth, civil society and the private sector. More than 60 workshops were organized and brought together the designated teams from the different ministries as well as representatives of the relevant stakeholders

• France

The national strategy for ecological transition towards sustainable development 2015-2020 (SNTEDD), adopted by the Council of Ministers on 4 February 2015, was devised to decouple economic growth and environmental impacts and shift to a new economic and social model. The current SNTEDD continues the process launched under the previous strategy with the intention to rally stakeholders around a societal project. The SNTEDD is based on two vital and inseparable strands: social and societal innovation coupled with technological innovation, and research and development in terms of organisation and industrial processes. The national strategy addresses four major ecological challenges. These are climate change, accelerated biodiversity loss, scarcer resources, and rising public health risks. All these challenges were identified by the Grenelle de l'Environnement process.

9 Objectives of the SNTEDD 2015-2020		
A more moderate society by 2020	Levers to boost and support societal change	Learning and governance to promote widespread ownership and action
Objective 1: develop sustainable and resilient territories	Objective 4: invent new economic and financial models	Objective 7: educate, train and raise awareness on the ecological transition and sustainable development
Objective 2: commit to a circular and low-carbon economy	Objective 5: support the ecological transition of economic activities	Objective 8: involve stakeholders at all levels
Objective 3: prevent and reduce environmental, social and territorial inequalities	Objective 6: guide the production of knowledge, research and innovation towards ecological transition	Objective 9: promote sustainable development at the European and international levels

Figure 5 : SNTEDD 2015-2020 priorities

The SNTEDD has nine cross-cutting goals (Figure 5) ranked in order of importance around "a common vision to switch to a lower carbon society by 2020 (goals 1 to 3), by providing suitable levers to accelerate and support the transformation of the economic and social model (goals 4 to 6) and by stepping up educational efforts and governance to foster the empowerment and action of all (goals 7 to 9)".

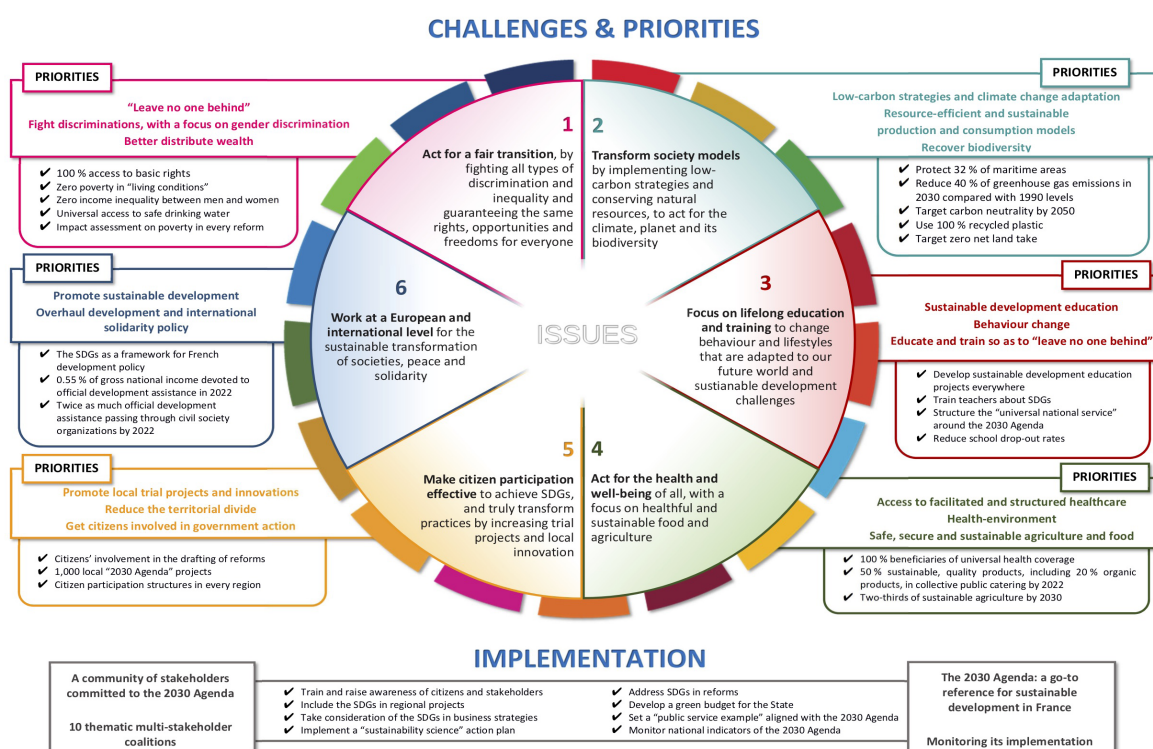
In 2018-2019, a community of some 300 public and private stakeholders from various backgrounds took part in jointly drafting a national roadmap, to follow-up on the previous SNTEDD while taking into account the SDGs. This work was supervised by a steering committee involving the National government and civil society, and presided over by government ministers (Minister for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs). Key challenges in France to reach sustainable development goals, and relevant implementation measures were subsequently defined in the roadmap. The roadmap does not solely belong to the State but to all stakeholders in French society. It was presented at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, in New York, in July 2019.

The purpose of the roadmap is to ensure consistency across sustainable development policies and to provide greater synergy between delivering the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. It is built on a Vision for 2030 and sets out the path for an entrepreneurial, inclusive and ecological France based on six key challenges¹⁰. In addition, a dashboard of 98 indicators was proposed in mid-2018, resulting from a consultation conducted under the aegis of the National Council for Statistical Information (CNI- Σ). This dashboard constitutes the national framework for monitoring progress of France in achieving the 17 SDGs. It is published by the French national statistical institute ¹¹(Figure 6).

At the same time, France will continue to feed in the international reporting of the 232 global SDG indicators elaborated by the UN agencies.

¹⁰ www.agenda-2030.fr

¹¹ <https://insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2654964>



• Montenegro

The Montenegro national sustainable development strategy for 2030 (NSSD 2030) resulted from a national process. Its content was influenced by the United Nations 2030 Agenda, with input from the MSSD 2016-2025 providing a regional strategic framework. The NSSD at Horizon 2030 learned from a review of the delivery of the NSSD 2007, part of Montenegro's contribution to the global debate on post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

Montenegro's NSSD also stands out for being the first strategic document to include and transpose the 17 SDGs adopted by the international community in 2015. This adaptation has been extended to the monitoring and review system to deliver the NSSD. This includes indicators defined and adopted by the United Nations to monitor the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs

The activities undertaken by the country to apply the NSSD at a local level in 13 municipalities form a significant achievement in the process to deliver the NSSD.



Figure 7: Vision, priorities and strategic goals of the Montenegro NSSD

• Morocco

Morocco's NSSD 2016-2030, officially adopted in 2017, is part of a proactive national policy framework defined by clear institutional references that make sustainable development an explicit goal for the country's development policies, namely the new 2011 Constitution and Framework Law N°99-12. The NSSD was prepared under the supervision of the Delegated Ministry in charge of the Environment via widespread consultation with representatives of sustainable development stakeholders in Morocco, including the public sector, private sector and civil society.

The NSSD 2016-2030 for Morocco covers social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Its declination in 29 action plans is an example of successful inclusion of sustainability principles in the most important economic sectors for the country's development (tourism, energy, agriculture and fisheries, trade, etc.). Morocco developed a policy on the exemplarity of public administration, around six objectives (energy efficiency, public procurement, public administration as a responsible employer, sustainable mobility, water, paper and waste rational management). This policy resulted in the development of cross-sectoral agreements as levers to involve other areas of the public sector in delivering the NSSD. Conventions were also concluded with regional governments to facilitate local implementation.

An inter-ministerial platform facilitates monitoring the implementation of the action plans and Pact on the exemplarity of public administration. Regional environment observatories and their interactions with the national environment observatory are key prerequisites to introduce the NSSD monitoring and review system and to limit the cost of gathering and processing data.



Figure 8: Strategic challenges and priorities of the Moroccan NSSD 2016-2030

Box I - Pact of exemplarity of the Administration in Morocco

Morocco's SNDD reflects the country's commitment to making sustainable development a new development model and a real societal project. Public administration, starting with all ministries, is called upon to set an example and become a model for other stakeholders. To achieve this goal, the Administration Exemplary Pact (PEA) promotes six goals:

1. Generalize environmental approaches in public buildings;
2. Engage public administrations in the logic of waste management and recovery;
3. Strengthen the initiatives of a «responsible employer State»;
4. Integrate a participatory approach and improve transparency;
5. Promote sustainable and responsible public procurement;
6. Develop the exemplary nature of public actors in terms of mobility.

The PEA, accompanied by a methodological guide, was sent to all ministerial departments by a circular from the Head of Government inviting them to set an example in terms of sustainable development by rationalizing the consumption of resources.

Priority quantified targets have been selected for the 2019-2021 period:

- Promotion of renewable energies and rational management or energy efficiency technologies. The goal is to reduce energy consumption by 5% in 2019, 10% by 2020 and 20% by 2021.
- Rational use of water resources by reducing consumption by adopting drip irrigation in public green spaces. The goal is to reduce water consumption by 10% in 2019 and 20% in 2020 with a view to ultimately achieving a reduction of 30%.
- The 30% increase by 2020 in the share of ecological cars (hybrid or electric) in the State vehicle fleet, while reducing fuel consumption by around 10% by 2020 and 15% in 2021.
- The waste sorting rate at source at the administrative level is increased to 30% in 2019 to reach 90% in 2021.

• Tunisia



Figure 9: Strategic challenges and priorities of the Tunisian NSSD 2016-2020

The NSSD 2016-2020 was produced in new social and political circumstances featuring a policy of decentralisation, local democracy and public affairs written into the constitution. This fosters and boosts the emergence of collective local governance for development in general and natural resources in particular.

The NSSD is part of long-term principles and overall guidelines but sets itself a shorter deadline for reaching targets and delivering actions. Indeed, given the political and social context, the priorities identified in the diagnosis phase coupled with far-reaching institutional reforms entailed in the new constitution, the outlook for the NSSD has been limited to 2020. The NSSD adopts a vision developed by Tunisia for the exercise "The Tunisia that we want". This exercise was conducted in the same timeframe as international consultations on post-2015 targets and sustainable development goals (SDGs) adopted by the international community in June 2015. In 2019, the NSSD entered a review phase which justified an expanded local, regional and stakeholder consultation during the country mission for the SIMPEER peer review exercise in Tunisia. A half-day workshop was organised in the three main regions of the country, in the south at Gabès, in the centre at Kairouan and in Tunis for the north.



4.2. LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

Country reference document	Reference framework	Political authority	Coordination mechanisms	Secretariat / Delivery mechanism
NSDI-II 2016-2020 Albania	Accession to the European Union 2030 Agenda	Prime Minister	Inter-Ministerial Committee	Ministerial department of the Prime Minister
SDS-Egypt's Vision 2030 Egypt	Constitution, 2011 2030 Agenda – ODD	President of the Republic	Inter-Ministerial Committee	Ministry of planning, monitoring and administrative reform
SNTEDD 2016-2020 France	Annual conference on the environment Environmental Code	President of the Republic	National Committee for Ecological Transition High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development	General Commissariat of Sustainable Development
France Vision 2030	2030 Roadmap	Ministries of Ecological and Inclusive Transition, Europe and Foreign Affairs	Steering Committee chaired by the Ministries of Ecological and Inclusive Transition, Europe and Foreign Affairs	General Commissariat for Sustainable Development
NSSD 2016-2030 Morocco	Constitution, 2011 Act 99-12	His Majesty, the King	Inter-Ministerial Committee National Council for the Environment	Secretary of State responsible for Sustainable Development
NSSD 2030 Montenegro	SDGs 2030 Agenda	Ministry of Tourism and Sustainable Development	National Council for Sustainable Development, chaired by the President	Department of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Integrated Coastal Zone Management
Tunisia	Constitution, 2014 Act No.	Ministry of Local Affairs and the Environment	National Council for Sustainable Development (has not met since 2011) Independent Constitutional Court of sustainable development and rights of future generations (currently being set up in 2019)	Directorate-General for Sustainable Development

Table 4: Leadership and empowerment

In SIMPEER participating countries, sustainable development and environment explicitly feature in national constitutions. In each country, the NSSD is administered by a National authority. The higher ranked the authority is, the more the other ministerial departments feel accountable to deliver the strategy.

The design of the national strategy is a participatory and inclusive process, based on an in-depth analysis of previous strategies, an assessment of the current situation, and lessons learned from past experiences. Some countries have also used international benchmarking to develop their strategy (Morocco, Tunisia).

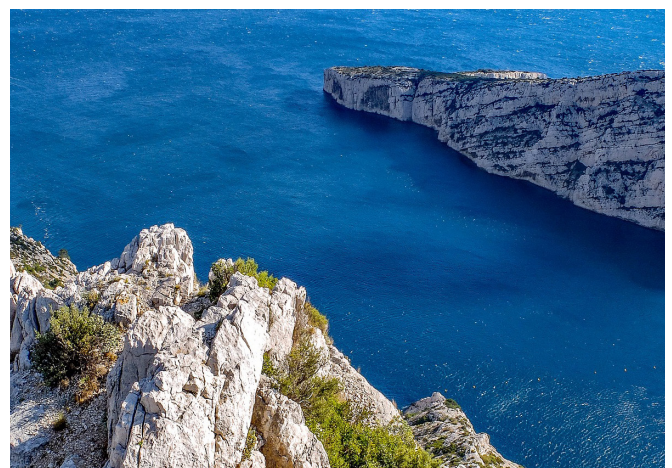
Stakeholders are consulted for the preparation of the strategy. However, getting stakeholders (including other public departments) to take ownership of the strategy is a real challenge for the countries. It would be useful for the NSSD coordination mechanisms to rely on a sufficiently robust and well-equipped network of institutional focal points. These could influence the decision-making process in their departments to more effectively apply the sustainable development strategy to policies and sector-specific action plans, using integrated and participatory processes. Even when leadership comes from the highest level of the State, it would be useful to boost the operational coordination framework (national council, inter-ministerial commission, etc.) by ensuring that other stakeholders, including the public sector, participate in the process at a high-level. It appears equally important to ensure that the leadership delegation at lower levels of responsibility does not result in watering-down Ministries duties and commitments with regards to delivering the NSSD.

To successfully switch from the NSSD conception to its implementation phase, the NSSD procedures and recommendations should feature in sector-specific policies via various mechanisms and instruments (regulations, economic instruments, information strategies and working arrangements for public and private bodies, etc.). When the government formally adopts these measures, this provides a legal basis and the mandate required to mobilise all the public sector stakeholders to jointly deliver the NSSD. There also needs to be an action plan setting out priorities, actions to be undertaken, as well as responsibilities and budgets to enhance stakeholder involvement when delivering the NSSD.

The role of the ministerial department tasked with overseeing the delivery of the NSSD (Ministry of the Environment, Sustainable Development, or other authority) is vital in the dynamic process to implement the NSSD. This role should be stepped up, where necessary, by a communication plan developed as a plea focused on the various ministerial department responsibilities and stakeholder interests (health, land productivity, etc.) rather than generic sustainable development concepts. In fact, the NSSD goes beyond environmental concerns by also including social and economic dimensions. As such, it requires increased ministerial joint-working arrangements. It also requires further coherency among various authorities tasked with coordination and dialogue, such as councils, commissions and other bodies with specific focus (gender, youth, etc.).

Involving all actors and stakeholders in designing and delivering the NSSD helps overcome changes in political agendas. Defining annual action plans that specify achievable targets and set the pace of transition as part of a participatory and inclusive process constitutes another way of making the strategy a public policy document which transcends electoral agendas and is not bound by the duration of political mandates. Similarly, the SDGs can provide a means of reconciling the long timeframe of sustainable development with the short-term of political cycles. That said, SDGs clearly are not legal obligations but they nevertheless represent a commitment for the country which has joined forces with the international community to reach them. The NSSD can be a tool to trigger down the SDGs into national development plans by expressing the 2030 Agenda in a 2030 National Vision, by prioritising its 17 SDGs and by building in regional and international instruments such as the MSSD and multilateral environmental agreements.

Involving regional and local levels in implementing strategic sustainable development instruments also constitutes a major goal in most countries familiar with the decentralisation process and new forms of democracy. Indeed, links between the various dimensions of sustainable development and the SDGs can be more easily drawn at local level. The role of local and regional authorities no longer focuses solely on delivering policy and development plans devised centrally. These bodies have responsibilities in development planning at a level where interactions between sustainability principles are more tangible and visible. The systemic approach lends itself more easily to smaller areas as part of a bottom-up approach. Dividing duties between various levels of governance must be based on the principle of subsidiarity. Central administration's role remains crucial to support local authorities in harnessing these new responsibilities by providing structural directions, capacity building, planning tools, participation, consultation, funding and suitable review processes.



Box 2 - Marseille's experience: The role of local authorities in promoting sustainable development

The importance of local action vis-à-vis sustainable development raises the question of the essential role of municipalities. States can initiate top-down regulations or planning processes, as they do on water, air and waste, but are not the most appropriate level for conducting integrated approaches directly on the ground. Reducing the size of the territories considered down to the level of a municipality makes it easier to manage the complexity of systemic and transversal approaches. Proximity makes it possible to rely on human creativity by involving local stakeholders, ultimately leading to sharing common challenges and building local synergies conducive to sustainable development. This level of concertation makes it possible to overcome the necessarily segmented nature of national sectoral strategies (which often apply already proven technological solutions), to mobilize «territorial creativity», more likely to induce significant changes in lifestyles.

In 2007, the City of Marseille had anticipated on the national directives by adopting its first Territorial Climate Plan (which revisited all municipal policies in the light of a broad vision of sustainable development, with a particular focus on energy). The concerted development of Marseille coastal management policy also demonstrate the capacity to innovate in an integrated approach locally.

Of course, the vocation of the municipality to be the place of citizen mobilization and integration of sectoral policies must be perceived by the other territorial levels as an opportunity to generate proposals, and must respect the prerogatives of each territorial level, in the spirit of the principle of subsidiarity, to also facilitate the harmonization of policies at territorial levels higher than that of the municipality. Designing a proper multi-level governance system is essential. Respective mandates of the different territorial levels often need to be clarified and articulated to ensure that fragmentation is not an obstacle to the systemic approaches essential to target the SDGs as a whole.

This clarification must take place in the context of the digital revolution which can foster new models of local development, collaborative, sober and inclusive, enabling "tailor-made" services partly implemented by the citizens themselves (such as dynamic carpooling, transport on demand, etc.). These new services, new ways of living, working, producing and consuming, will revolutionize urban functioning and probably even urbanization. Local authorities must be able to anticipate these transitions, including at the legal level. The SDGs, understood in their interrelations, will be precious to guide them.

Source: Jean-Charles Lardic, Director of Foresight, Marseille City Council, Marseille Meeting, 19-20 November 2019

4.3. INTEGRATION AND LINKS BETWEEN THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

Country	Horizontal integration	Vertical integration
Albania	The pillars of NSDI-II feature strategic economic development goals for the country	Local administration has an expanding responsibility to manage natural resources
Egypt	The action plan defines the roles and responsibilities of the various ministries to implement the SDS, "Egypt's Vision 2013" Defining development projects and programmes is based on integrated natural resource management	Local and regional levels are tasked with implementing projects and programmes devised centrally Coordination measures developed centrally cannot be transferred to local and regional administration
France	The role of high-level civil servants involved in sustainable development is vital to including SD in various sectors The annual report to Parliament reinforces cross-sectoral coordination	Local and regional stakeholder training Drafting and distributing guides
Morocco	The NSSD is designed to drive strategies for the main sectors of the economy The State exemplarity Pact and cross-sectoral agreements	Developing regional sustainable development plans to break down the NSSD and SDGs regionally and locally
Montenegro	The NSSD is an umbrella strategy that includes the 17 SDGs to provide guidelines for other sectors	Adaptation of the NSSD in the country's 13 municipalities
Tunisia	Sector-specific strategies refer to the SDGs in their subject area	Local and regional levels are not covered by the NSSD

Table 5 : Integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in the participating countries

12. Which justified French municipalities having a "general clause of competency")

Another common feature among the countries is the integrated dimension of the NSSDs. NSSDs are “umbrella strategies” that supplement or influence sector-specific strategies to ensure sustainable development is mainstreamed into public policy while giving a common, shared vision of the development sustainability. The links created between these three pillars of sustainable development are nevertheless compromised by difficulties in finding a balance between the imperatives of international competitiveness and national efforts to deliver sustainable development while covering related additional costs.

In addition to the participation of various ministerial departments in the coordination mechanisms, it would be advantageous to nominate a high-level senior civil servant in each ministry mandated to integrate sustainable development, so that recommendations and guidelines from the NSSD could be implemented in sector-based strategies.

Coordination, consultation and compatibility processes and practices with sector-specific strategies, SDG implementation processes and country commitments to multilateral environmental agreements should be stepped up. As such, the NSSD becomes a reference document to review the overall delivery of commitments by countries supporting sustainable development. It would then form a common platform involving all national departments and stakeholders taking part in the process.

A possible local peer review exercise could be arranged within interested countries to share information on good practice, exchange of experience and promote successes between different municipalities. Setting up a coordination mechanism to deliver and monitor the implementation of sustainable development policy is also vital to bolster the implementation of the NSSD locally.

The countries should build up an enabling environment to foster innovation and growth in sectors promoting innovative resources, while creating added value and prosperity. This would circumvent the deadlock of industrial development, social consumerism and overly carbonised economies and help switch to a circular and inclusive economy free of non-sustainable consumption of resources and natural capital. As such, the private sector must then be encouraged to seize these opportunities and nurture its knowledge and expertise to deliver the ecological transition of its production and marketing processes.

As for civil society, it should be part of this process by attempting to change consumption patterns. This can be done partly by informing, raising awareness and training consumers but also by staying alert to point out poorly sustainable practices. The media can play a key part by informing and raising awareness of consumers and the population in general. Targeted training programmes for journalists should be sustained and further developed by singling out NSSD challenges based on the priorities set out in the annual action plans.

Indeed, in addition to developing strategic guidelines for various sectors, a detailed implementation plan is required involving the government, the private sector, civil society and financial institutions.

The plan should be developed in a participatory and inclusive way. Coordination mechanisms in place could be used at forums for debate and adopting the plan.

Training local stakeholders, especially local elected members and civil society representatives, together with technical guides, are required to decipher the complex nature of ongoing changes and to ensure that any lack of understanding does not allow a gap to grow between institutions and citizens. The exchange of information on good practice, coupled with challenges encountered between various administrative regions, would be useful to bolster training programmes and foster a ‘knock-on effect’ between different areas.

The green and blue economies can be seen as necessary, efficient and achievable options to address economic and social concerns as well as alarming environmental situations combining short and long-term concerns on growth, sustainable development, jobs, cutting poverty, as well as anxieties about food security and energy. Recommendations from the Regional Conference (23 to 24 May 2012 in Marseille) should be broken down to the specific conditions in each country, nationally, regionally and locally¹³.

A ‘silo-based’ approach to sustainable development, the SDGs and strategies is needed for and in-depth sector-by-sector review. However, an integrated approach to sustainable development must not be reduced to sector-specific specialisation. Yet, there must be a mechanism providing overall consistency in the shift to sustainable development outlook. What is needed is a national 2030 Agenda or Vision that identifies specific challenges to development in each country, as well as priorities, strategic goals and main lines of action. This configuration highlights links that exist between various SDGs and between the different dimensions of sustainable development. It can also bring consistency to the development implementation process in relation to its different timescales, such as strategic planning (over five years), planning (five years), programming (two to three years) and budgeting (one year).

13 “Towards a green economy in the Mediterranean” Environment as an opportunity for job creation and growth, Regional Conference, Marseille, 23-24 May 2012, http://planbleu.org/sites/default/files/publications/green_economy_recommandationsfr.pdf

4.4. GOVERNANCE

Country	Civil society	Private sector
Albania	National Council for Civil Society and other specialised national councils (gender, youth etc.) Civil society consultation is required to review all strategies or programmes put to the government for adoption	The National Economic Commission chaired by the Ministry of Finance and Economy
Egypt	Unit of the Ministry of Environment tasked with coordination with civil society	Ongoing reform to improve the enabling environment
France	National Council for Ecological Transition Annual Environment Conference	
Morocco	Special civil society training programme Web platform to disseminate and share good practice and experience	Boosting incentives and the enabling environment
Montenegro	Youth forum Environment Week around 5 June	Boosting incentives and the enabling environment
Tunisia	Unit of the Ministry of Environment tasked with coordination with civil society	Pilot actions with municipalities to promote the development and delivery of Agenda 21 initiatives (ongoing)

Table 6 : Governance arrangements for sustainable development in the participating countries

The participation of all stakeholder categories in successive phases of the NSSD (preparation, delivery, monitoring and reviewing) is a participatory governance process that requires capacity building for all parties at all levels. As such, there are tools (surveys, website, forums, etc.) and expertise (contributors, moderators, specialists, etc.) backed up by scientific knowledge. These tools and approaches must be adopted or adapted to fit national contexts to mobilise national, regional and local stakeholders from the start of the development or strategy review phases, then switching to the delivery phase in the right way to ensure success.

Similarly, there are increasingly effective online training tools available on internet. These can be useful for capacity building for all stakeholder categories, to improve participatory governance in sustainable development.

Civil society capacity building through specific supervision and training programmes should be promoted and a web platform set up to encourage the exchange of good practice, successes and all relevant information about implementing NSSDs. Effective and efficient civil society participation must be fostered. The media must continue to be involved and their training stepped up on specific issues so that they can play their part in the NSSD empowerment and implementation process at all levels.

Addressing youth and women's interests is vital in the current climate where young people are increasingly protesting about environmental and social issues. Sustainable development provides opportunities for jobs and several citizens' initiatives are taking root in the majority of countries to tackle a number of these issues. The NSSD should promote them with a view to boosting their numbers and scaling them up. Similarly, the NSSD should help identify especially important, pressing, questions for these two groups of the population to define strategies, programmes and the means to cover them as part of a participatory and inclusive process. Finally, education is the foundation of behavioural change and developing paradigm shifts. As such, school and university curricula must be designed to better inform young people about the global changes at work, challenges that hinder progress towards sustainable development and job opportunities generated by the green and blue economies.

Generally speaking, there must be greater co-construction of sustainable development policy. This can be achieved by boosting civil society and citizen participation in specialist commissions on coordination mechanisms to become a catalyst for proposals. This way, participating in the exercise will not be limited to reviewing initial guidelines formulated by the administration.

The private sector is driven by market and profit considerations, so ensuring it is empowered to deliver the NSSD by 2030 requires a focus on profitability and improvements to production conditions. Aside from tools to be developed providing both incentives and sanctions, it would be advantageous to have a communication plan to promote the experiences of large national companies that have adopted sustainable development principles and effective measures to generate a domino effect in the economic fabric.

Information, awareness-raising and training local stakeholders is a necessary prerequisite for the NSSD to become a reference document to plan local development and ensure citizen involvement in actions targeting sustainable development and greener economies. Guidelines should be developed to adapt local authority actions that seek to incorporate sustainable development and to ensure that local and municipal information systems they introduce can operate in conjunction with each other and with the national information system. Developing and disseminating thematic and operational guides is also an area that needs capacity building for planning and operational procedures at this level of governance.

The interface between science and politics must be strengthened so that independent scientific expertise can be a proper lever to deliver NSSDs and SDGs. Fundamental and applied research must be encouraged as well as contributing to implementing NSSDs together with decisions on subsequent measures and actions.

Frameworks to work with civil society and the private sector must be developed, together with private investment incentives to ensure that the latter is fully involved in defining, delivering and monitoring the NSSD.

Ways of involving the private sector to help deliver sustainable development include green and blue economy capacity building in business, as well as environmentally-responsible corporate behaviour coupled with the implementation of specific related charters. Vocational training for different branches¹⁴ and improving the regulatory framework for reporting are also valid options.

Product certification and labelling together with consumer awareness are avenues worth exploring to introduce major market-driven changes to production methods.

Box 3 - The Albanian experience: The role and contribution of civil society in implementing the NSSD – creating educational tools for sustainable development

The Regional Environmental Center (REC Albania) helped boost sustainable development education in school curricula in Albania by developing a “Green Pack” educational tool in 2006 and a “Junior Green Pack” in 2018.

The Junior Green Pack and Green Pack are environmental education multimedia kits designed to teach environmental protection and sustainable development to children aged 6 to 15. They come with a range of teaching materials such as a teacher’s manual with lesson plans and information sheets for pupils, a set of films with animated clips and educational videos, an interactive website with detailed information on various environmental subjects and a dilemma game.

An international team of experts developed these educational tools, working closely with Albanian primary and secondary school teachers and specialists from recognised teaching and academic institutions in Albania. The aim of the “Green Packs” is to help pupils develop new values and new behavioural patterns to turn them into sustainability ambassadors in a community where they can share their new knowledge and behaviour with their friends and family.

REC Albania supported the educational approach by developing a policy document entitled, “Standards of Learning for Education for Sustainable Development”, which was adopted by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport on 1 November 2018. The document marks a further step towards implementing the 2030 Agenda and reaching SDG 4 for inclusive and equitable quality education.

weblinks:

<http://albania.rec.org/publication-eng.php?id=637>

<http://education.rec.org/>

¹⁴ “Recommendations from the aforementioned Marseille meeting.

Box 4 - The Growth of green businesses run by women in Albania (GEA Project)

The GEA Project has been developed by REC Albania to support the growth of existing businesses run by women that are focused on nature to deliver change in Albania. The project is supported by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) small grants programme.

Green business entrepreneurship provides women with social-economic opportunities to contribute equally to the national economy. The project has shown that green businesses managed by women tend to grow more rapidly and fairly, delivering gains in terms of reducing poverty, environmental sustainability, consumer choice, innovation and decision-making from a wider base. Some activities in the GEA Project are related to business management, growth and developing green products, as well as promoting green products and electronic marketing.

The main outputs from the project are:

- nature-based or low carbon footprint products, including three 'bundles' of products (eco-foods derived from local biodiversity, eco-products that reduce pressure on nature or biodiversity, wide-ranging eco-products that reduce the pressure on natural resources through recycling, re-use and redevelopment);
- at least 8 product lines with business plans to generate jobs, sustainable local development and growth centred on women's employability;
- approximately 45 to 50 women business owners or women involved in social enterprise or organisations have successfully completed training courses to develop business plans for their companies. They are now better informed about marketing methods and practices to promote their businesses more effectively and also have more information on the key principles underpinning the green economy and the development of green ideas

Sources: Stakeholder meetings held during the SIMPEER country mission to Tirana in October 2019, Mihallaq Qirjo, peer review meeting, 19-20 November 2019



Box 5 - The Egyptian experience: giving a voice to young people

The programme « Sharek* » aims to increase youth participation in the SDS-Egypt Vision 2030 review and update process.

In an effort to increase stakeholders' engagement, a mobile application, "Sharek" ("Participate"), was launched by the Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform as a digital platform to allow citizens and particularly the youth to actively participate in the process organized to monitor, review, and update Egypt's Vision 2030. The application also aims at raising awareness of sustainable development in general and of the goals of the SDS in particular.

The initiative is part of the SDS' review and update broad consultation process. It is also part of the broader framework of number of measures introduced by the 2014 Constitution, that aim at promoting the participation of the young. 2016 was declared the "Year of the Youth". Youth conferences have been organised as dialogue mechanism to promote the voice of youth. The Ministry of Social Solidarity has started an initiative to promote the participation of young people in the public sphere, implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Youth and civil society organizations, with the objective of reaching 45,000 beneficiaries.

Sources:

- *Voluntary National Review, 2018*
- *Compact for Economic Governance Stocktaking Report: Egypt, Deauville Partnership, OECD, 2018* <https://www.oecd.org/mena/competitiveness/Compact-for-Governance-Stocktaking-Report-Egypt-2018-EN.pdf>

4.5. RESOURCES AND MEANS EMPLOYED

Country	National budget	Other stakeholder participation
Albania	The sustainable development budget is part of the national budget to implement the NSDI-II and is not stand-alone	Civil society projects are mainly funded from external finances Private sector activities are limited to CSR agendas
Egypt	Ongoing changeover from budget process based on 'conventional' budget lines to results-driven budgeting	Civil society projects are mainly funded from external finances Private sector activities are limited to CSR agendas
France	Allocated to each Ministry	Private sector financial and tax incentives é Market pressure / Consumer pressure Environmental taxation
Morocco	Defined by the action plan Innovative sources to be mobilised	Enabling environment to be developed
Montenegro	Defined by the action plan Innovative sources to be mobilised	Enabling environment to be developed
Tunisia	No specific budget defined in relation to an action plan, each sector finances its programmes and projects	Civil society projects are supported by external funding sources Private sector activities are limited to CSR agendas

Table 7 : Background to assembling resources to implement NSSDs in the participating countries

Most NSSDs align with the MSSD 2016-2025 by advocating greater access for innovative sources to deliver the NSSD. Joint regional action in Mediterranean countries should be prioritised to help the countries to pinpoint the resources required and launch actions to meet this goal.

However, before considering a rise in funding for sustainable development, special attention must firstly be given to the efficiency of funding and conducting impact assessments on the overall tax system for sustainable development in the countries. These assessments should result in political measures being adopted to eliminate environmentally-harmful subsidies, including subsidies for fossil fuels, farming, unsustainable fisheries and construction in coastal and natural areas as well as transport. These measures should be predefined, pre-announced and applied gradually so that consumers and producers have enough time to adapt to them, while retaining social measures that directly benefit the most vulnerable members of society.

In addition, there needs to be a wider range of funding sources to make up for shortfalls in public finance. This includes public-private sector partnerships, microcredit schemes, 'greening' budgets, improving living conditions for the local community and access to ever more efficient services paid for at a fair price, etc. Mustering non-financial resources through civil society supported activities and including citizens as consumers or producers of goods and services also constitute key levers to consider. Similarly, the practice of paying for the true cost of goods and services provides an

option to preserve natural resources from a level of use resulting in them being over-exploited or degraded.

The public sector should more rigorously apply environmental criteria in public procurement and governmental tendering exercises. Switching from the "lowest bidder" concept to that of the "most cost-effective bid" in legislation governing public procurement must be better disseminated and promoted in public administration at all levels. Funding pilot projects to demonstrate that there are alternatives can be a lever to secure international funding.

Furthermore, the banking sector, supported by bilateral or multilateral financial institutions, has a major role to play in aiding "multiplier effects". It can also become a genuine promoter of sustainable development principles in the private sector by developing targeted instruments supported by financial and tax incentives (reduced interest rates, targeted loans and sustainable loan policies, etc.). The banks can greatly help the community and private sector transition process to more sustainable economies and societies. This role must be carefully planned as part of a tripartite effort to rally national authorities and urge them to introduce regulations and funding, international development and financing bodies and national funding institutions that have the technical and financial incentives to provide proper solutions for the private sector in the forms of loans or subsidies. As such, action plans can be introduced and delivered without the State needing to directly devise and manage new mechanisms.

Public policies resulting in 'win-win' solutions leading to more sustainable solutions that also benefit people and businesses in economic terms (such as incentives and sustainable building regulations or sustainable mobility) play a crucial role in redirecting resources to sustainable practices. These policies, resulting in a circular economy model, must be stepped up and feature in all sector-specific policies.



Box 6: Financing mechanisms for environmental upgrading and sustainable development in Tunisia

Tunisia has set up a set of mechanisms contributing to the financing of sustainable development, including special funds (National Fund for Energy Management (FNME), Fund for industrial depollution (FODEP), Fund for beautifying cities...) as well as financial incentives and taxes to encourage sustainable investment.

The legal framework for investment has been revised, it includes Law no. 2016-71 of September 30, 2017, Law no. 2017-8 of February 14, 2017 and Decree 2017-389 of March 9, 2017. It includes several financial incentives to encourage sustainable investments within the framework of the investment law:

- Among the priority sectors targeted by the premium for increasing added value and competitiveness are tourism (accommodation and tourist promotion projects carried out as part of the development of cultural, ecological, health, desert and golf tourism); agriculture, fishing, aquaculture, and related services; primary processing activities for agricultural and fishing products; assembly, recovery, transformation and treatment of solid and liquid waste; projects for the protection and enhancement of natural industries, biodiversity and the fight against desertification, etc.
- Regional development incentives for all economic activities are defined according to groups of regional development zones in favor of the least developed zones.
- The sustainable development bonus eligible for:
 - Water and air pollution treatment projects caused by the company's activity;
 - Projects adopting clean and non-polluting technologies, allowing the reduction of pollution at the source or the control of the exploitation of resources;
 - Collective pollution control equipment carried out by public or private operators, on behalf of several companies carrying out the same activity or releasing the same type of pollution.

The law on public procurement has been amended to introduce the concept of «better bid» to replace that of «least bidder» and to favour «sustainable purchases» by the Administration. However, working methods are difficult to change and these new provisions deserve to be better known and applied.

Source : <http://www.tunisieindustrie.nat.tn/fr/doc.asp?mcat=12&mrub=212#axe1>

4.6. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

Country	Sets of Indicators	Institution responsible/Coordination and access to information
Albania	3 sets of monitoring indicators for the NSDI-II (European Union, sector and sub-sector specific, macroeconomic) Indicator passports (currently being defined or adopted by all Ministries)	National system, including INSTAT, the Bank of Albania and the Ministry of Finance and Economy National monitoring platform (ongoing) Freedom of Information Act The role of the media
Egypt	SDS indicator set	National system, including CAPMAS and a supra-governmental body National strategy and statistics currently being developed
France	39 indicators for the strategy and 110 indicators for the SDGs	INSEE Freedom of information provided by availability of national reports and submitting reports to Parliament
Morocco	Two assessments planned (2020 & 2025)	Report to Parliament Freedom of Information Act
Montenegro	Full set of indicators including the 241 SDG indicators	Information reporting system MONSTAT, Ministry of the Environment and 24 other national bodies
Tunisia	50 indicators	OTEDD Freedom of Information Act

Table 8: Monitoring/assessment system for NSSDs and/or SDGs in the participating countries

All NSSDs highlight quantitative information. Indicators have been defined and systems upgraded to lend credibility to the strategy while providing qualities to help transparent decision-making.

The willingness of each country to incorporate the indicators defined for international, national, regional and local levels in the NSSD monitoring system requires:

- developing a monitoring system based on the existing architecture and robust partnerships with all structures that hold information and data needed to develop and report on indicators. This must also be done to introduce a joint framework and to define a set of indicators that meet a country's specific needs as a prerequisite to an effective monitoring and assessment system;
- ensuring that indicators are credible, disseminated and used for all information collected so that data gathering and processing procedures are adopted and national indicators used as benchmarks by all stakeholders, including development partners and cooperation agencies;
- coordinating all stakeholders to avoid duplication of efforts and to share and standardise information.

Often, external funding no longer covers the setting-up of information systems, so they must be part of a larger project, e.g. an infrastructure-based initiative to meet technical and financial partner requirements.

The indicators are important as they provide data prior to devising policies and make strategies more credible. It should however be borne in mind that a strategy is not an end in itself. It must be an instrument of change and to achieve this, it helps to measure strategy outputs and especially impacts.

The indicator system developed to monitor the delivery of sustainable development strategies as well as how effectively they have been implemented must be expanded regionally and locally. Given the specific features and constraints to data gathering and reporting, administrative partners as well as stakeholders must be involved in the process to check on, but also encourage participation.

Opening up to the private sector would also be a good way of reinforcing NSSD monitoring systems. The private sector could be involved in data gathering when the aims are clearly focused on their needs and interests.

As most countries are focused on specific commitments to deliver the SDGs through the voluntary national review process (national voluntary reviews at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum), there is a need to review including the NSSD approach with implementing the SDGs nationally. A key starting point is aligning the NSSD monitoring mechanism with the indicators and relevant targets for specific SDGs defined as a priority for the country. This subsequently provides the basis for a single monitoring system.

Finally, monitoring sustainable development strategies underpins building credibility of public policy in this direction. To achieve this, the information generated should be accessible to people, so the role of the media is key in communicating these indicators to the general public. This stage must not be left to statisticians and their institutions. They tend to reduce the quality of their output by constantly seeking to improve them. As for journalists, they must be trained and informed about the main challenges of the NSSD process to be able to provide this information to the community in an easily understandable form.

Box 7 - Developing a monitoring system with the private sector for SDG 14: French experience

The Ministry of the Ecological and Inclusive Transition, the Sea Foundation (Fondation de la Mer) and the Boston Consulting Group undertake to make available for free to all companies, across sectors, a reporting guidelines for SDG 14 and to work for its widest possible adoption. This reporting framework allows companies to assess and monitor their impact on the ocean to reduce it. Available in 2020 for French companies, it is planned to be gradually promoted internationally (notably in the framework of the SDG 14 International Conference in Lisbon).

This system aims at creating a single and reliable source, in free access, continuously updated and enriched for the measurement and the reporting of the impact of companies on the SDG 14. This tool, made available free of charge, will allow companies to understand, measure and monitor their impact on the ocean and communicate on it transparently. It can help them in their trajectory towards conservation and sustainable use of the ocean, seas and marine resources.

The commitment was validated by the French government in December 2019 (Interministerial Committee for the Sea and the guidelines presented to private companies and the general public in early April 2020).

Source : Anne-France Didier, Territorial Policy Advisor, SDG 14 Pilot, Delegation to the Sea and to the Coast, Ministry of Ecological and Solidarity Transition. Peer meeting in Marseille, 19-20 November 2019

V. CROSS-CUTTING CONCERNS AND INPUT FROM THE REGIONAL MEDITERRANEAN PERSPECTIVE

The circumstances in which sustainable development strategies are implemented have considerably changed since the MSSD 2016-2025, the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs and the Paris Agreement were adopted. Most countries have stepped up the pace of change, prioritised and integrated sustainable development principles in their development planning processes.

The European Commission subsequently developed its New Green Deal for Europe which provides guidelines for all development and the economy of the European Union for the next decade. As such, the Green Deal should significantly shape economic and social approaches of all EU countries, and also impact their neighbours (through accession targets, cooperation programmes, and trade) to such a point that unless specific and demonstrable sustainability concerns are addressed, it may be difficult for industries to remain competitive on the European market. The consequences are clear and sizeable, not only for EU Member States and accession countries but also for the entire Mediterranean region and can affect practically all the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

The UNEP/MAP system could, in turn, be influenced by global changes and measures taken in the New Green Deal for Europe, with the following consequences:

- the importance UNEP/MAP puts on sustainable development through the work of the MCSD together with related actions and programmes could become a must for environmental integration rather than a choice, to meet the needs of the Contracting Parties that would have to comply with far more stringent political conditions for sustainable development than in the previous decades;
- the work already accomplished to develop the MSSD I and MSSD II as well as work of the MCSD would be fully applicable to the new working framework outlined by the Green Deal. These new conditions could achieve some convergence with Contracting Party policies;
- the SIMPEER experience coupled with the two application cycles in the six (3 + 3) Mediterranean countries forms a major contribution to the Barcelona Convention in relation to broader debates about sustainable development in the region. It constitutes a solid base to use when developing the Convention's operational arrangements at Contracting Party-level;
- the MSSD II is still very relevant to the discussion and delivery of the SDGs in the countries, having aligned their development goals with specific SDGs and appropriate cross-cutting topics for several SDGs. As such, the MSSD forms a link between Mediterranean and global levels of discussion on the SDGs, especially to fine-tune objectives, strategic guidelines and actions proposed based on SDG goals and targets;

- the same need for alignment also applies to the MSSD monitoring mechanism (and the NSSD as appropriate), as the indicators must be closely aligned with the global discussion on monitoring the implementation of the SDGs, while recognizing Mediterranean specificities.

SIMPEER can help the Barcelona Convention further integrate its work in the SDGs. These environmental aspects addressed by the Convention could be bolstered by social and economic considerations, either by developing these qualities in specific new protocols or by working jointly with partners likely to provide this added value by completing its environmental work with related social and economic aspects.

SIMPEER reviews also highlighted that the private sector constitutes a specific stakeholder group of great importance to the future work of the Barcelona Convention. This sector, together with its sector-specific branches connected with the work of the Convention could become a close partner to the Convention, contributing to making its work a reality by providing technological solutions and the means to implement them.

In light of the above considerations, according to the first two implementation cycles of SIMPEER and taking into account points raised by various Contracting Parties during peer review meetings, the Convention could play a more active role in the transition to sustainable development. It can provide support and assist the efforts of the Contracting Parties to incorporate sustainable development principles into their national strategies and implement them. It can also provide a platform for exchanging best practice and experiences in this field, as has been the case of SIMPEER to date.

VI. CONCLUSION

The two 24-month SIMPEER exercises in 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 constitute the initial experiences to implement Annex II of Decision IG.22/17 of the COP 19 of the Barcelona Convention, which recommended putting in place a simplified peer review process “as a way to upgrade the very useful role of the MCSD as a regional platform for the exchange of experience”.

The six voluntary contracting parties, involved in a first review exercise with Montenegro, Morocco, France, and a second with Albania, Egypt and Tunisia, all took part with courage and determination in this unique initiative. They provided the resources needed to conduct the exercise according to the jointly adopted methodology. They also provided reference documents on sustainable development in their countries. National contact points were largely available to organise and undertake country missions while also actively participating in technical and peer review meetings organised during the process. SIMPEER comprises three phases:

- a preparation phase resulting in the adoption of the “methodological report on the simplified peer review mechanism of national sustainable development strategies” (available on the Plan Bleu website), the involvement of volunteer countries in preparing a questionnaire based on the review exercise and reference document analysis on sustainable development provided by the national contact points;
- a consultation phase with missions to the countries, organised in close consultation with the national contact points and undertaken by the project team. The entire project team meets the main sustainable development stakeholders to gather their feedback, comments and suggestions on the implementation of the NSSD, the MSSD 2016-2025 and the SDGs, to identify good practice to promote to peers as well as questions to raise with them;
- a review phase marking the culmination of the exercise. This phase enables the national contact points to present national reports and peer countries to respond with their feedback, remarks, suggestions and opinions.

The first peer review country meeting took place in Nice, in April 2016, and the second in Marseille, in November 2019. Those meetings helped draft a final version of the national reports, looking beyond the questions raised to move towards peer recommendations. The second peer review meeting involved representatives from countries that took part in the first exercise. Their presence helped assess to what degree recommendations issued during the previous exercise have been implemented, and added to discussions on continuing challenges.

The NSSDs of the six countries were reviewed at these meetings in relation to the MSSD, as a regional adaptation at the Mediterranean scale of the 2030 Agenda and its sustainable development goals. The SIMPEER review of the NSSDs focuses on five fundamental aspects that, according to the literature, are required for a sound and effective NSSD: leadership, integration and links between the three pillars of sustainable development, stakeholder governance and participation, resources and means employed to deliver the NSSDs and, finally, monitoring and evaluation.

The conclusions of the peer review meetings highlighted features common to all NSSDs, identified examples of good practice in each of the six countries and offered recommendations to support the countries in tackling the continuing challenges to deliver their strategies.

SIMPEER has fostered a dialogue between national stakeholders through country missions, meetings and contacts arranged during the missions. This physical presence helped promote the NSSDs and the MSSD to national stakeholders. In Tunisia, consultation was expanded to local regions.

There was useful dialogue between the countries to reach the aim set by SIMPEER of mutual improvement, learning and exchanging best practice.

Among the continuing difficulties to implement the NSSDs, sectoral administrations and the private sector are still not involved enough in addressing the many challenges to implement the NSSDs due, in particular, to a lack of capacity. This highlights the need for capacity building in sustainable development that extends beyond the institutions that are specifically tasked with its delivery.

Mobilising the necessary resources to implement the NSSDs is another major challenge that remains despite efforts made in the countries to build sustainable development into their strategies and sector-specific plans. This requires wide-ranging partnerships and continued consideration at regional levels to identify and secure innovative sources of funding.

While NSSDs provide a framework to foster synergies between various sectors, they are not yet able to overcome sectoral isolation and break up the existing “silo effect”. To achieve this, an alternative approach to governance must be promoted after assessing regulations and legislation to effectively address the SDGs. Developing a national vision for 2030 and defining national priorities to deliver the SDGs would help overcome the constraints of short-term political agendas compared to the long-term planning arrangements needed for sustainable development and ecological transition.

The NSSD monitoring and evaluation systems are a necessary prerequisite to effectively deliver the NSSDs.

These need common methods to be defined, shared and standardised to ensure that various stakeholders are involved in gathering and reviewing data. Sets of indicators matching national priorities must be defined, in conjunction with regionally and globally agreed indicators. Mechanisms overseen by existing institutions must then be set up to ensure that these indicators are credible and used as a benchmark by all stakeholders, including technical partners and bodies funding development.

The participating countries have widely welcomed the results of these first two NSSD peer review exercises in relation to the MSSD and SDGs. The lessons learned argue for new review exercises to be run in upcoming periods. It would be useful to continue involving the contracting parties from the previous review exercise as observers. Those could provide continuity in the learning and exchange process. Twinning arrangements could also be an interesting option to boost the exchange of experience and good practices.

Discussions during the peer review meetings highlighted cross-cutting questions common to all countries. These questions could provide guidelines for the future MSSD and mainly point to a new delivery mechanism for sustainable development shaped by the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs as well as the Paris Agreement and its goal of a 2°C limit to global warming. The countries are stepping up the pace to deliver on their commitments and the MSSD must continue to be the link in the application of global goals for the Mediterranean region. It must provide the necessary support needed by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to build its goals into their development planning processes and finally, to be a platform for exchange and sharing related to these goals.

In this sense, SIMPEER is an effective instrument to support the delivery of NSSDs, the MSSD and SDGs in countries in the Mediterranean region. It must continue to cover different Mediterranean sub-regions and different levels of development present in them. It must also promote examples of good practice found in the peer countries and highlight the findings on a dedicated web platform, while keeping the process as simple and easy as possible.



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ANNEX

PHASES/ACTIONS	Period	MAP / MCS Secretariat	Plan Bleu	Country contracting parties	Project team	Anticipated outputs
PREPARATORY PHASE						
▪ Mobilisation of volunteer PCs	Mo	Agenda (COP, Steering Committee meeting)				
▪ National commitment expressed	Mo+2			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Official letter of commitment ▪ Outline requirements 		
▪ Exercise launched	Mo+4		Terms of reference, consultation, identification and formation of a team of specialists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nominate national correspondent ▪ Validate methodology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revise methodology, add specific needs of participating countries 	Methodology report
▪ Analysis of reference documents	Mo+6			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gather reference documents ▪ Validate analysis chart and questions for stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft an analysis chart for reference documents with main questions to discuss with stakeholders 	pPT presentations for country missions
STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION PHASE						
▪ Country missions (2 to 3 days + 2 to 3 for regional and local meetings if necessary)	Mo+9		Country mission arrangements	Letters (information on the SIMPEER process, plenary meeting invitation, agree dates for bilateral meetings, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ List stakeholders to invite/contact ▪ Meeting schedule ▪ Prepare draft national report 	Identification of good practice and continuing challenges
▪ Prepare peer review meetings	Mo+10		Agree date with peer participants and MAP/MCSD members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Validate mission report ▪ Validate national report for submission to peers ▪ Study national reports from other participating countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft mission report ▪ Draft national report including findings from the analysis, cases of good practice and questions to raise with peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mission report ▪ Provisional national report submitted to peers
PEER REVIEW PHASE						
▪ Peer review meetings	Mo+14	Participation / Moderator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Logistics ▪ Facilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Present national report ▪ Discuss national reports ▪ Make recommendations and proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare presentations ▪ Draft: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Note of meeting ○ National reports featuring peer recommendations ○ Final peer review report of n and n+1 exercises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peer review meeting report ▪ National reports ▪ Final report
RESULTS DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION PHASE						
	Mo+18	Disseminate main findings and lessons learned and promote these in the MAP system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Translate documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disseminate nationally 		

Table 9: Organisational and planning chart to undertake a SIMPEER exercise, COP intersessions



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