

MEASURING, MONITORING AND PROMOTING
**A BLUE ECONOMY FOR A SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEDITERRANEAN
REGION**

Project* Conference**
Marseilles, 30-31 may 2017

* The project "A blue economy for a healthy Mediterranean - Measuring, Monitoring and Promoting an environmentally sustainable economy in the Mediterranean region", was financed by MAVA Foundation.

**Jointly organised by three UNEP/MAP Regional Activity Centres: Plan Bleu RAC (Sophia Antipolis); Priority Actions Programme RAC (Split); RAC for Sustainable Consumption and Production (Barcelona).

1. BACKGROUND

Worldwide, the ocean-based economy represents roughly 2.5% of the world Gross Value Added (GVA). It mainly includes offshore energy (gas, oil), maritime and coastal tourism, maritime equipments and ports. Industrial fisheries bring more than one third of the 31 million jobs, whereas maritime and coastal tourism bring some 25%. This ocean-based economy is sometimes considered as a new frontier for economic development and could more than double its contribution to world GVA between 2010 and 2030. Growth is particularly expected in marine aquaculture, offshore wind energy, fish processing and shipbuilding repair and dismantling. Particular threats to ocean health however include inter alia: i) acidification, sea temperature and level increases, shifts in currents, biodiversity resource and habitat losses, ii) pollution (e.g. from agriculture and industry, chemicals, nutrients and plastics) and iii) overfishing and other resource sustainability and efficiency issues.

The Mediterranean Sea certainly presents its own environmental and socioeconomic features, shaped by its riparian economies and populations. It is linked with the rest of the world realities, through major straits or canals (Gibraltar, Turkish straits, Suez Canal) and through economic and demographic interdependencies. In this context, the blue economy can provide a positive contribution to the sustainable development of the Mediterranean region.

Indeed, the blue economy, together with the green economy, is a pillar of inclusive sustainable development. The UN 2030 development agenda has been shaped in 2015 by the conferences of Addis (finance), New-York (sustainable development goals - SDG) and Paris (climate agreement). Among the SDGs defined, SDG 14 targets the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources. At the regional level, the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD 2016-2025), adopted by the COP 19 of the Barcelona Convention in 2016, has been formulated taking into account the UN SDGs, particularly in its Objective 1 (Ensuring sustainable development in marine and coastal areas) and Objective 5 (Transition towards a green and blue economy).

The implementation of a blue economy needs to be considered in a broader context of international agreements relating to the sea: worldwide (e.g. UNCLOS¹; OPRC²; CMS³; Basel Convention⁴; CBD⁵ and its subsequent Nagoya Protocol and Aichi targets); and regionally (e.g. UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention⁶; OSPAR⁷; Aarhus Convention⁸). It has also to be considered within the context of international scientific progress on oceans and the Mediterranean Sea.

2. THE BLUE ECONOMY PROJECT CONFERENCE

The Blue Economy Project Conference (Marseilles, 30-31 may 2017) will gather regional stakeholders (from national and territorial authorities, the business sector, NGOs and IGOs), as well as representatives of project partner organisations of UNEP - (MAP and its Regional Activity Centres (RACs)). The Advisory Board of the project will meet on 29 may 2017.

The project's Conference will:

- present and discuss the conclusions and outputs of the Blue Economy Project;
- propose recommendations to be considered in Mediterranean governance processes, nationally or regionally (review of the MSSD 2016-2025, consultation process of the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) for the Mediterranean, meetings of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD));
- highlight ongoing worldwide initiatives concerning the blue economy (e.g. World Bank, OECD, UNEP) and regionally (e.g. Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), European Union (EU), UNEP/MAP).

In addition, the Conference will focus on selected sectors and resources:

- fisheries and aquaculture;
- tourism and recreational activities;
- port activities and shipping recycling;
- offshore energy.

Governance structures applying to the Mediterranean region and/or its riparian countries rely on a variety of documents and commitments (strategies, action plans, programmes, budgets,

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

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

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

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

⁵ Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992, Rio de Janeiro

⁶ UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan, Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution, 1976, Barcelona. Amended as Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and its Protocols, 1995, Barcelona.

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

⁸ UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

projects) and instruments (e.g. regulatory, economic, informational) to achieve a more sustainable and inclusive development, including the sustainable use of Mediterranean marine and coastal assets. This includes emphasis on work, youth, innovation, inclusion, investment, and financing. Much is on the way to promote this transition or shift or switch (e.g. UNEP/MAP MSSD 2016-2025, SCP Action Plan, EcAp Initiative, IZCM Protocol, UfM initiatives, EU MSFD and Circular Economy package).

However, an 'implementation gap' remains. Part is due to limited human and financial capacities, part to administrative and political cultures, part to issues of environmental awareness. In fact, decision making often emphasizes short term economic and social benefits, without appropriate consideration of pollution and resource environmental issues, thereby undermining longer term development.

3. THE BLUE ECONOMY PROJECT

The project "A blue economy for a healthy Mediterranean - Measuring, Monitoring and Promoting an environmentally sustainable economy in the Mediterranean region" has lasted eighteen months and has been financed by the MAVA Foundation.

The project aims at promoting the blue economy paradigm in the Mediterranean region, building on several international and regional governance efforts on the matter (e.g. UNEP, OECD, World Bank, UNEP/MAP, UfM, EU).

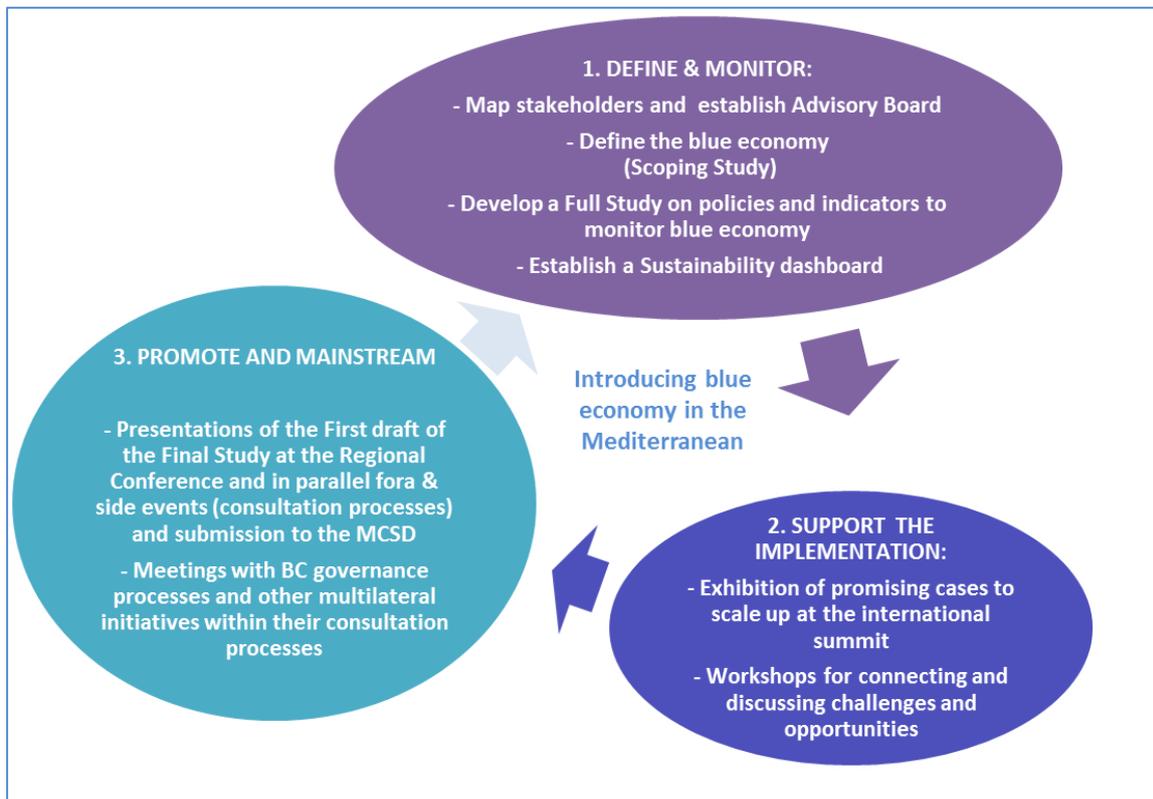
The project has several objectives, including:

- (i) defining a blue economy in the Mediterranean region, taking into account its economic, social and environmental features;
- (ii) monitoring it in the region through available indicators;
- (iii) selecting available commitments and instruments under ongoing regional governance frameworks;
- (iv) recommending policies to foster a blue economy across Mediterranean riparian countries.

The project was framed around three mutually supportive work components:

- Component 1: Define and monitor the blue economy, adapted to the Mediterranean context
- Component 2: Support the Implementation of an environmentally sustainable economy
- Component 3: Promote and mainstream an environmentally sustainable economy

The project has been implemented by three UNEP/MAP RACs, i.e. Plan Bleu, the Sustainable Consumption and Production RAC (SCP/RAC) and the Priority Actions Programme RAC (PAP/RAC).



4. OUTPUTS OF THE BLUE ECONOMY PROJECT

During the lifetime of the project, a number of outputs have been issued. They will be available for the project’s Conference.

First, the global conceptual framework for a blue economy in the Mediterranean region has been drawn, and synergies identified with other comparable sustainable development initiatives at the global level (e.g. UNEP, EU, and other frameworks, providing concepts of green and blue economy, green growth, resource efficiency, circular economy), and at the Mediterranean level (e.g. UNEP/MAP MSSD 2016-2025, the Mediterranean SCP Action Plan, the Ecosystem Approach, the ICZM Protocol). A concrete definition of the blue economy was proposed, adapted to the Mediterranean context (see box below).

Definition

“Blue economy is a low polluting, resource-efficient and circular economy based on sustainable consumption and production patterns, enhancing human well-being and social equity, generating economic value and employment, and significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. The blue economy allows preserving Mediterranean healthy marine and coastal ecosystems and ensures the continuous delivery of goods and services for present and future generations.

Progress towards a successful blue economy relies on the sustainable development of key socioeconomic activities: fisheries; aquaculture; tourism and recreational activities; maritime transport and port activities; bio-prospecting or exploitation of biological resources; exploitation of renewable energy sources”.

Second, a review of existing indicators led to propose a core set of indicators, particularly adapted to the Mediterranean regional context, to monitor progress towards achieving a blue economy.

Third, this core set of indicators was simplified into a dashboard displaying environmental, social and economic trends regarding the “Mediterranean Blue Economy”. This dashboard is to be further developed as a web-based interactive tool available on-line. The dashboard is envisaged to support users (policy and decision makers, researchers, scientists, students...) to track past, current and future trends, as well as impacts of their decisions.

Several workshops and events were organized as part of the project. They allowed reviewing challenges and opportunities in implementing the blue economy in the Mediterranean context, on the basis of promising cases driven by entrepreneurs, change-makers or policy innovations. Events were also organized within regional or national fora (e.g. European Roundtable on Sustainable Production and Consumption, Mediterranean Economic Week) to benefit from views of key stakeholders (e.g. of representatives of NGOs, business sector, local and national authorities, IGOs).