Synthesis report and recommendations regarding the mid-term assessment of the Horizon 2020 initiative to de-pollute the Mediterranean.

May 2014

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the Horizon 2020 Initiative’s website
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Synthesis report and recommendations regarding the mid-term assessment of the Horizon 2020 initiative to de-pollute the Mediterranean

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Version 6 of the Synthesis Report – May 2014

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### Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>AFD</td>
<td>Agence Française de Développement (French Development Agency)</td>
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<td>Barcelona Convention</td>
<td>UNEP Convention for the protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean</td>
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<td>BAT</td>
<td>Best Available Techniques</td>
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<td>BP/RAC</td>
<td>Blue Plan Regional Activity Centre (UNEP-MAP)</td>
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<td>CB</td>
<td>Capacity Building component of H2020</td>
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<td>CB MEP</td>
<td>Horizon 2020 Capacity Building / Mediterranean Environment Programme</td>
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<td>CP/RAC</td>
<td>Cleaner Production Regional Activity Centre (UNEP-MAP)</td>
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<td>COP</td>
<td>Conference Of the Parties (of the Barcelona Convention)</td>
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<td>ECRAN</td>
<td>Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network</td>
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<td>EEA</td>
<td>European Environment Agency</td>
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<td>EIB</td>
<td>European Investment Bank</td>
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<td>EMP</td>
<td>Euro-Mediterranean Partnership</td>
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<td>ENP</td>
<td>European Neighbouring Policy</td>
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<td>ENPI</td>
<td>European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument</td>
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<td>EUWI</td>
<td>European Union Water Initiative</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>FEMIP</td>
<td>Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership</td>
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<td>FP7</td>
<td>The Seventh Framework Programme of the EU for the funding of research and technological development in Europe</td>
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<td>GEF</td>
<td>Global Environment Facility</td>
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<td>H2020</td>
<td>The Horizon 2020 Initiative (Euromed)</td>
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<td>H2020</td>
<td>The new European Framework Programme for Research and Innovation</td>
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<td>ICZM</td>
<td>Integrated Coastal Zone Management</td>
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<td>INFO/RAC</td>
<td>Regional Activity Centre for Information (UNEP-MAP)</td>
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<td>IGOs</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Organisations</td>
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<td>IFI</td>
<td>International Financial Institutions</td>
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<td>JASPERS</td>
<td>Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions</td>
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<td>KfW</td>
<td>KreditanstaltfürWiederaufbau</td>
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<td>MAP</td>
<td>UNEP’s Mediterranean Action Plan</td>
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<td>MED</td>
<td>Mediterranean</td>
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<td>MEDPOL / UNEP-MAP</td>
<td>Marine pollution assessment and control component of the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP-MAP)</td>
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<td>MeHSIP-PPIF</td>
<td>Project Preparation and Implementation Facility of the Mediterranean HotSpot Investment Programme</td>
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<td>MoE</td>
<td>Ministry of Environment</td>
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<td>MCSD</td>
<td>Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
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<td>MIRA</td>
<td>Mediterranean Innovation and Research coordination Action</td>
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<td>MSSD</td>
<td>Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>NAPs</td>
<td>National Action Plans</td>
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<td>NBB</td>
<td>National Baseline Budget of Pollutants' Emissions and Releases (MEDPOL/UNEP-MAP)</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organisations</td>
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<td>NIP</td>
<td>National Indicative Programmes</td>
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<td>National Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance Coordinator (EU)</td>
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<td>PAP/RAC</td>
<td>Priority Actions Regional Activity Centre (UNEP-MAP)</td>
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<td>PEIP</td>
<td>The Priority Environmental Investment Programme for SEE</td>
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<td>PR</td>
<td>Pollution Reduction component of H2020</td>
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<td>RACs</td>
<td>UNEP MAP’s Regional Activity Centres</td>
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<td>RENA</td>
<td>The Regional Environmental Network for Accession</td>
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<td>RMR</td>
<td>Review, Monitoring and Research component of H2020</td>
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<td>SAP</td>
<td>UNEP’s Strategic Action Programme</td>
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<td>SAP MED</td>
<td>Strategic Action Plan for de-pollution of the Mediterranean</td>
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<td>SCP</td>
<td>Sustainable Consumption and Production</td>
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<td>SCP RAC</td>
<td>UNEP/MAP Sustainable Consumption and Production Regional Activity Center</td>
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<td>SEA-ERA</td>
<td>Towards Integrated Marine Research Strategy and Programmes (FP7)</td>
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<td>SEIS</td>
<td>Shared Environmental Information systems</td>
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<td>SD</td>
<td>Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>SMEs</td>
<td>Small and Medium Enterprises</td>
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<td>SoED</td>
<td>State of the Environment and Development (report)</td>
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<td>SPA/RAC</td>
<td>Special Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre</td>
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<td>TDA</td>
<td>Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis</td>
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<td>UfM</td>
<td>Union for the Mediterranean</td>
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<td>UfMS</td>
<td>Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean</td>
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<td>UNEP</td>
<td>United Nations Environmental Programme</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organisation</td>
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<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
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<td>WeBTHSIS</td>
<td>Horizon 2020 study on a Hot Spot inventory for the West Balkans and Turkey</td>
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Introduction

The Mediterranean Sea is the largest of the semi-enclosed European seas, surrounded by 21 countries that share a coastline of 46,000 km. The Mediterranean region is home to around 480 million people living across three continents: Europe, Africa and Asia. More than 33% of its inhabitants are concentrated in its coastal administrative entities, covering less than 12% of the surface of the Mediterranean countries. During the 20th century, the Mediterranean environment has been progressively degraded. During the last decade, new and growing pressures have further contributed to its rapid deterioration. Fast-growing and uncontrolled urbanisation combined with unsustainable developments in the tourism, industry and agriculture sectors, as well as increased maritime traffic and over-fishing are exerting additional pressure on natural resources and the environment. These activities and the change of consumption patterns have generated a dramatic increase in the quantity and distribution of waste generated and in the volume of water used and disposed of. Progress in waste management and wastewater treatment has not been sufficient to counter balance these growing pressures. These challenges undermine the economic development of countries in the region.

Context of the assessment

The H2020 Initiative for de-pollution of the Mediterranean Sea

At the 3rd Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial conference on Environment in 2006, participating countries committed to substantially reduce the pollution of the Mediterranean by 2020. To this effect, Ministers launched the “Horizon 2020 Initiative”, a joint initiative open to all stakeholders, which invites them to work together to meet this target. Ministers also endorsed a timetable of key activities to be implemented during the first phase of the Initiative covering the period 2007-2013.

The H2020 Initiative builds on previous achievements of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (or Barcelona Process), which started in 1995 with the Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean Conference. It supports and complements the implementation of the commitments under the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (the Barcelona Convention). In particular, it aims at tackling the pollution “Hot Spots” identified by most countries in 2005 in the UNEP/MAP report “Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis in the Mediterranean Sea”1 and which became part of countries’ National Action Plans (NAPs). The NAPs included priorities to meet intermediate short-and mid-term targets (2010 and 2015).

The Horizon 2020 Initiative tackles the sources of pollution that are said to account for around 80% of the overall pollution of the Mediterranean Sea: municipal waste, urban waste water and industrial pollution. It has four components: pollution reduction, capacity building, review and monitoring, and research. The work on these topics is organised and coordinated within three sub-groups: (1) Investments for Pollution Reduction (PR) coordinated by the European Investment Bank (EIB); (2) Capacity Building (CB) for achieving H2020 objectives, coordinated by the NGO Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (Mio-ECSDE); and (3) Review, Monitoring and Research (RMR), coordinated by the European Environment Agency (EEA). Three EU-funded regional projects support the Initiative in the Southern Mediterranean countries, in complement with other activities.

2013 marks the halfway point of the Horizon 2020 Initiative. Under each H2020 component, a number of assessments, studies and reports have been conducted so as to feed into an overall Mid-term Review of the Horizon 2020 Initiative.2 These studies are the result of the joint collaboration of the EEA, the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfMS), the EIB and UNEP/MAP MEDPOL.

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1 UNEP/MAP/MED POL: Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) for the Mediterranean Sea, UNEP/MAP, Athens, 2005 - http://www.themedpartnership.org/med/documents/library/background-documents/tda/en/attachments%7Cattachments%3A000%7Cfile
2 The main information base for this Mid-Term Review has been: (i) Capacity Building/Mediterranean Environment Programme (CB/MEP) Mid-term Evaluation; (ii) Horizon2020 Mediterranean Report (EEA); (iii) Situation paper on the setting-up of the
The objective of this synthesis report is to present the achievements and challenges ahead and to propose recommendations for the next phase (2014-2020) for policy makers and other H2020 stakeholders.

Important changes have occurred in the region in the last years, which influenced the institutional picture (see Figure 1). The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) was launched in 2008 as a framework for political, economic and social relations between the European Union and the other Mediterranean countries and was inspired by the goals set out in the Barcelona Declaration. The UfM Secretariat has increasingly taken a more active role in H2020 and designated the De-pollution of the Mediterranean Sea as one of its flagship initiatives, building on Horizon 2020 with a particular focus on concrete projects. UNEP MAP is in the process of reviewing and updating the SAP and NAPs as well as the “hotspots” and its monitoring system. In December 2013, the two regional organisations signed a Memorandum of Understanding for future cooperation.

**Figure 1: Institutional relations in the Mediterranean**

![Institutional relations in the Mediterranean](image)

State of play: the achievements of the first phase (2007-2013)

1. What activities have been carried out so far?

Many actions in support of the H2020 objectives have been implemented during the first phase of the Initiative, both at national and regional levels; some with a direct “H2020 label”, others without; some with donors’ support, others without. The paragraphs below do not pretend to offer an exhaustive list of the activities but a hint at all the efforts and progress made within each component.

In the area of *pollution reduction*, important infrastructure investments have been made, in particular in wastewater treatment. The UfMS mapped investments in the entire region (operational, under construction/preparation and planned) that could directly or indirectly contribute to the H2020 goals. 796 (mainly wastewater) projects were identified, as well as 117 industrial emissions projects (related to air pollution, hazardous waste, industrial emissions and integrated projects). In 2009 the EU-funded Mediterranean Hot Spots Investment Programme - Project preparation and Implementation Facility (MeHSIP-PPIF) was launched to address the Barcelona Convention hotspots in the Southern Mediterranean.
countries through a EUR 7.2 million budget. Implemented under the responsibility of the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Facility developed a pipeline of projects. The Facility completed four feasibility studies (three of which are awaiting final financing decision while the integrated Lake Bizerte project is partially funded). The EIB was also in charge of maintaining a broader H2020 pipeline, which includes 113 projects with an expected investment value of approximately EUR 400 million and a leveraging grant element of approximately EUR 40 million. The project pipeline includes high priority sustainable investment projects that will make a significant contribution to de-pollution of the Mediterranean Sea and have a demonstration effect in sectors targeted. The current phase of the project ended in March 2014.

For the Western Balkans and Turkey, a similar inventory of required investments was carried out in 2011 under H2020 CB/MEP, i.e., the WeBTHSis. This indicated that most of the priority large-scale solid waste and wastewater infrastructure had been funded, with a remaining 35% still to be partly or totally financed. As in other cases, no systematic overview exists of investments in industrial pollution, the third H2020 priority sector. This inventory was taken into consideration, further developed and updated in the UfMS above mentioned mapping of investments.

As to EU Member States, they have the obligation to implement the EU acquis, in particular the Wastewater Treatment Directive, the Water Framework Directive and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, which incorporates international commitments under the Barcelona Convention. National and EU funds, including regional and cohesion funds, have supported these efforts, in particular with regard to Wastewater Treatment and Solid Waste. The UfMS study concludes that for EU Member States, most priority investments are already achieved although some countries are not yet in full compliance with EU legislation.

As regards capacity building, many activities have been carried out: UNEP/MAP, in particular through its MEDPOL/UNEP-MAP programme and its Regional Activity Centres, has supported countries at regional, sub-regional and national level in the implementation of their obligations under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, especially the Protocol on Land Based Sources. Capacity building activities through the EU’s and other bilateral donor cooperation also target the three H2020 priority sectors, amongst others.

The EU funded Mediterranean Environment Programme, better known as H2020 Capacity Building/Mediterranean Environment Programme (H2020 CB/MEP), has provided training and awareness raising activities through a EUR 9.25 million budget, in particular in the area of legislation and institutions, and on mainstreaming environment in other sector policies. It has carried out continuous institutional strengthening through 127 capacity building activities, trained 2730 people engaging 360 trainers, experts and lecturers in their regional sub-regional and national trainings without interruption. It has also supported the coordination of the H2020 Steering Group, the three Sub-Groups and the overall enhanced visibility of Horizon 2020. The programme is implemented by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) in a large consortium with diverse organisations and institutions and will come to an end by October 2014.

For Western Balkans and Turkey, the EU funded Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network (ECRAN) is helping beneficiary countries to build their capacity for a correct planning, transposition, implementation and enforcement of the EU environmental and climate acquis on topics relevant to the H2020 Initiative. The programme contains a strong element of exchange of experience between countries and of reinforcing NGO capacities.

Since 2010, the review and monitoring component has been supported by the EU-funded ENPI-SEIS project “Toward a Shared Environment Information System in the European Neighbourhood” through EUR 5.7 million budget. The project aims to enhance environment monitoring and reporting in 16 countries. In the Mediterranean region, the ENPI-SEIS project focused on designing and implementing a coherent indicator process for regular indicator-based reporting, fulfilling the mandate of the RMR subgroup of

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4 (i) Al Ekaider Integrated Solid Waste management (Jordan); (ii) Al Ghadir extension of Waste Water Treatment Plant (Lebanon); (iii) Kafr El Sheikh (Egypt), wastewater extension considered a model project based on a strong socio-economic assessment; and (iv) Lake Bizerte Integrated De pollution (Tunisia).
5 H2020 Study on a Hot Spot inventory for the West Balkans and Turkey.
7 The later edition of the Regional Environmental Network for Accession (RENA) and the Priority Environmental Investment Programme for Southern Eastern European (PEIP).
8 Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia (ENPI-SEIS South) and Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belorussia, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine (ENPI-SEIS East).
H2020. The project is built on the three pillars of the Shared Environment Information System (SEIS), i.e., content, infrastructure and governance. ENPI – SEIS is implemented by the EEA, which has a central role in collecting and providing environmental information in Europe.

### SEIS principles

According to the SEIS principles, environmental information should be:

- Managed as close as possible to its source;
- Collected once, and shared with others for many purposes;
- Readily available to easily fulfil reporting obligations;
- Easily accessible to all users;
- Accessible to enable comparison at the appropriate geographical scale, and citizen participation;
- Fully available to the general public, and at the national level in the relevant national languages(s);
- Supported through common, free open software standards.

The application of the SEIS principles will result in an open and shared environmental information system, accessible to decision-makers, civil society, and other international and national stakeholders.

The H2020 review process is a joint effort of the EEA and UNEP/MAP aiming at setting up a regular mechanism to monitor marine pollution. The ultimate goal is to increase our knowledge on the state of the environment so as to effectively inform decision-making.

As regards research, many EU-funded research projects relevant to H2020 have been implemented to date, such as MIRA,\(^9\) SEA-ERA\(^{10}\) and Perseus.\(^{11}\) Funded under the EU 7th Framework Programme for Research, they provide valuable results and experiences for H2020 at regional and national levels. For example, MIRA\(^{12}\) has identified challenges facing the Mediterranean and H2020, such as lack of common standards and harmonised data-bases, lack of accountability and transparency; or lack of regional integrated monitoring systems. It also indicates that systematic channelling of research results into policy making has not taken place.

### 2. Results to date

The most important question to be answered, as part of the Mid-term review, is whether the activities implemented can be considered effective in achieving the ultimate goal laid down by Ministers, i.e., “the progressive de-pollution of the Mediterranean Sea”. Assessing this scientifically is virtually impossible, so instead, proxies have to be used and intermediate questions have to be asked: Did investments increase and were they effective in tackling the hotspots? Did institutional capacity increase in the areas that are most crucial for reaching the ultimate de-pollution goal? Are we better equipped now to assess the state of the marine environment? The following sections look at these questions.

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\(^{10}\) The Mediterranean Innovation and Research coordination Action (http://www.miraproject.eu/).  
\(^{12}\) Protecting European Seas and Borders through the Intelligent use of surveillance (http://www.perseus-fp7.eu/).  
Is the Mediterranean marine environment in a better situation now than in 2006?

The key question is whether the Mediterranean marine environment is in a better situation now than in 2006. When evaluating the state of the marine environment with respect to pollution, a range of parameters need to be taken into consideration, which include impacts from differing origins: (1) bacteriological contamination of sea waters from coastal wastewater or run-off discharges; (2) contamination of sea waters by dissolved classical pollutants from the whole river basin through rivers; (3) eutrophication of sea waters either from the river basin, especially from agricultural activities or from urban sewage discharge; (4) contamination of sea waters and of the trophic chain by hazardous substances through rivers or air coming from agricultural activities (pesticides), industrial activities or households; and (5) marine litter mainly from coastal activities.

On wastewater, one of the proxies to determine whether the Mediterranean environment is in a better condition than in 2006 is the level of discharges into the sea without undergoing treatment. If these continue to increase or even remain at the same levels, then the environmental status of the Mediterranean Sea cannot improve. The joint EEA-UNEP/MAP report\(^{14}\) notes that while steady progress in access to improved sanitation services has been achieved, progress in municipal wastewater management is more difficult to assess as the data available do not provide sound evidence and trends at the regional level. An analysis carried out by MEDPOL/UNEP-MAP (2011) indicates that the type of discharge of treated and, in particular, untreated wastewater in the Mediterranean region is largely unknown, but, in general, the most common way of disposal is through discharges into the sea (direct or indirect). Also, although 63% of coastal agglomerations of more than 2,000 inhabitants operate a wastewater treatment plant,\(^{15}\) their distribution is not uniform across the Mediterranean region. Finally, the disposal of sludge is an issue not yet fully addressed and treated waste water could be re-used for agriculture or green spaces much more frequently.

As regards municipal solid waste, the joint EEA/UNEP MAP H2020 report notes that generation continues to increase mostly due to population and economic growth. Southern Mediterranean countries produce half as much waste as the EU countries (270 kg/per capita/year compared to 520 kg/per capita/year in the EU27), but in growing quantities while the proportion of biodegradable waste is decreasing as the share of plastics and other synthetic material increases. The collection and treatment of municipal solid waste is a significant issue for Southern Mediterranean countries and only few of them succeed in reaching full waste collection coverage, especially in rural areas. Although important efforts took place in the last decade to close unregulated dumps and open controlled landfills, the management of municipal solid waste in most of the Southern Mediterranean countries relies almost exclusively on open dumps. The part of recycling and composting is still small representing less than 10% of the collected volume.

A more recent concern across the Mediterranean is the impact of marine litter, concentrated through marine currents especially in bays and shallow areas.\(^{16}\) Local marine pollution from cities, industries and tourist resorts is large with significant presence of macro waste on beaches and in the high seas\(^{17}\).

As regard industrial pollution, industrial emissions and nutrients releases can be assessed using the data and information already reported by countries to the MEDPOL programme (2003 and 2008 data). Although data have not been updated lately, the analysis suggests that pressures from land-based sources remain high, and that attention needs to be given to the following key sectors: the production of energy, manufacture of refined petroleum products, treatment of wastewater, food processing and packaging, manufacture of cement and metals. As regards pollution from heavy metals, their concentration in seawater remains globally low and even seems to be improving but sufficient information is lacking with regards to concentrations in sediments and the trophic chain. Concentrations of nutrients have been increasing for 20 years, but these are limited to such zones as the North Adriatic Sea, the Gulf of Lions and the Nile delta.

Another source of information is the reporting of EU Member States under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). EU Member States have to report on the state of the environment in their

\(^{15}\) UNEP/MAP/MED POL and WHO 2010.
\(^{16}\) See the recently adopted UNEP/MAP, MEPDOL regional plan on marine litter, 2013.
marine waters, on what they consider as being a "good environmental status" and on the national objectives and targets that they have to reach by 2020. The first round of implementation of the MSFD is now complete. The Commission's assessment report, published in February 2014, indicates that the exercise has provided substantive new information on the marine environment, but the detail and depth of Member States' work vary widely. It also identifies significant gaps in regional and sub-regional coordination efforts. The report suggests that substantially enhanced efforts are needed if the EU is to reach its stated goals.

Conclusions

- The proxies indicate that there has been progress in wastewater treatment and to a lesser extent in solid waste; less is known of industrial emissions;
- In addition, it is clear that new challenges and pressures have emerged and are growing more rapidly than the remediation actions undertaken;
- Therefore, the H2020 Initiative objectives, scope and structure, including the three priority sectors remain valid and need to be further developed.

Recommendations for the second phase

- Countries should reaffirm the H2020 objectives and the commitment to comply with the Barcelona Convention obligations and, where relevant, EU policy and legislation frameworks;
- Work should continue focusing on existing commitments in the three priority sectors with a particular emphasis on Solid Waste and Industrial Emissions in phase 2. The challenges and bottlenecks in industrial emissions need to be better analysed and possible new approaches tested;
- Explore ways to address additional priority areas such as non-point sources as agriculture and new pollutants (e.g., POPs) within H2020 and integrate the pollution prevention dimension more systematically;
- The interface between research results and policy-making and policy development needs to be strengthened to support the improvement of the marine knowledge base and the update of research results in the Mediterranean countries.

Is our knowledge of the state of the environment better now? Has reporting improved?

In 2005-2006, as part of the process to establish National Action Plans addressing the pollution hotspots, the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention agreed on the establishment of a reporting system to track pollution reduction progress and hotspot elimination, named the National Baseline Budget (NBB). Two of the most important reporting obligations relate to (1) the inventory of pollutants entering directly and indirectly the Mediterranean Sea and; (2) marine pollution monitoring data (status data). In this context, several reporting tools and software support the contracting parties. An on-line information system allows the parties to upload pollution monitoring data. An online information system for NBB is currently under development and expected to become operational in the next year. The system will fully take into account the interoperability with other reporting requirements of the Barcelona Convention, and the broader Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR), which deals with industrial emissions.

For the NBB system to be effective, it is essential to harmonise the data scope and collection and ensure that data are treated in a consistent and transparent manner so as to enable analysis of impacts at national and regional levels.

19 Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) is a national or regional environmental database or inventory of potentially hazardous chemical substances and/or pollutants released to air, water and soil and transferred off-site for treatment or disposal.
The European Environment Agency's (EEA) set of tools and processes – Reportnet20 - developed to support international environmental reporting is an example of such harmonisation. The system integrates different web services. As part of these tools, the Reporting Obligation Database (ROD) includes all environmental reporting obligations that EEA member countries have towards EU legislation, European marine conventions, Eurostat, OECD, UN, UNECE, as well as the EEA itself. The system allows to deliver data to other national and international organisations in a very transparent way.

The ENPI-SEIS21 project, implemented by the EEA in cooperation with UNEP/MAP22 has contributed to harmonising reporting/monitoring systems by developing a common methodology to support indicator production and by building the capacities in the Mediterranean partner countries. Six H2020 indicators23 in the thematic areas of municipal waste, urban wastewater and industrial pollution have been identified and agreed on by all countries, and the initial data flows are being progressively established. An official reporting process is now in place for seven Southern Mediterranean countries. One of the successes recorded is the establishment and maintenance of a strong inter-institutional cooperation and coordination at the national level involving stakeholders beyond those directly implicated (Ministries of Environment, statistical offices), i.e., including data producers, data owners and data users of each indicator. The project has allowed for a strong contribution to the process from statistical offices and thematic expert networks. Progress has also been made in infrastructure development at national level.

Despite the progress, the joint EEA and UNEP/MAP report24 stresses that much remains to be done. Information is lacking about some pressures; data is not sufficiently or consistently collected nor validated; and inconsistencies remain among the various reporting scopes and different calculation methods. All these factors hinder the identification of reliable trends and thus the formulation of solid conclusions and recommendations. The report also indicates that monitoring activities are not systematically implemented, despite obligations under national legislation. For example, production of reliable data and the setting up of a regular monitoring of waste streams remains a key issue. The report also highlights that sharing of available data and information is an important constraint for most of the countries.

Finally, the six agreed H2020 indicators capture some of the main trends concerning the H2020 priority themes. However they are not sufficient to provide a complete information base for future State of the Environment reporting, and may prove insufficient to meet policy needs. A positive development is the 2013 Barcelona Convention decision on the “Ecosystems Approach” (ECAP), through which parties committed to apply the Shared Environmental Information Systems principles. As a follow up to this Decision, UNEP/MAP will refine its list of indicators and targets, in order to better monitor the state of the marine environment, as part of a future integrated monitoring and assessment programme. In this context, the need for additional indicators, among those developed under ECAP, would need to be explored.

Conclusions

- Monitoring undertaken to meet the obligations of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols has provided a starting point for developing a systematic monitoring regime with the needed information for the future. The ENPI-SEIS project has helped setting the first elements for a common reporting mechanism. However, establishing a coherent and sustainable system requires further efforts at regional and national levels. In addition, the implementation of the new commitments under the Barcelona Convention, in particular the Ecosystem Approach (ECAP), and the creation of a regional integrated monitoring

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21 In particular, the ENPI-SEIS initiative aims to strengthen the institutional infrastructure for environmental information management and sharing in the region by facilitating and encouraging the establishment of national environmental information networks. http://enpi-seis.eea.europa.eu/
22 MEDPOLL/UNEP-MAP, Plan Bleu and INFO/RAC.
mechanism, will require yet additional efforts and resources.

**Recommendations for the second phase**

- Countries should take further steps to implement their commitment to apply the SEIS principles agreed under the ECAP Decision;
- Countries should take further steps to set up an optimal information system allowing for a robust indicator-based reporting in close cooperation with MEDPOL/UNEP-MAP, and in support of the regional integrated monitoring system under the ECAP Decision of the Barcelona Convention also further integrating Western-Balkans and Turkey;
- There is a need to explore whether additional indicators, among those identified under the ECAP decision, are required to monitor H2020;
- Countries should strengthen and increase access to information and public participation on environmental matters, especially of local authorities and civil society, including by creating multi-stakeholder platforms. National good practices should be showcased and replication promoted.

**Are relevant infrastructure investments being made? Are they pertinent and effective? Which criteria have been used? Are the most polluting hotspots being tackled?**

Two studies assess the extent, relevance and effectiveness of the investments implemented or underway: The UfMS study (covering the entire Mediterranean region, including Jordan) and the MeHSIP Validation exercise of projects on the H2020 list considered to have secured finance (covering 7 southern Mediterranean countries). The UFMS study identified infrastructure investment having secured funding being “under construction”/operational, and compared them with the priorities under the NAPs. The EIB study analysed the 50 projects on the “H2020 list” with secured funding, entering further into the underlying causes for successful investments.

On this basis, it can be concluded that investments are taking place and are pertinent, in the sense that they are linked to pollution sources. The UfMS study indicates that 83% of the wastewater projects and 40% of the solid waste projects included in the original NAPs have secured funding since 2005. Substantial progress has also been made in implementing pollution reduction investment projects: 50% of the wastewater projects and 31% of the solid waste projects are operational, while 36% for wastewater and 29% for solid waste are under execution or preparation. Despite information gaps, evidence suggests that 25% of the hotspots included in the NAPs should have been tackled already (half of them in the EU) and by 2020, 60% of the original hotspots are likely to be tackled.

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25 Out of the 50 projects on the H2020 list whose preparation had led to a financing decision on the part of the bank, 10 had been dropped by their respective promoter. However, 7 new projects were found to have secured financing. For 5 projects, insufficient information was available so they were not analysed further. Out of the 42 remaining projects, 40 were in implementation phase and were analysed. Note however that the H2020 list of projects is dynamic. Based on the EIB MeHSIP progress report, H2020 projects include 113 projects.

26 The different lists of pollution reduction projects within H2020 are based on different targets, time horizons, geographical coverage, screening criteria and bankability criteria. Whereas all lists (UNEP NAPs, H2020 priority investment list under-MeHSIP, UfMS study) use the NAPs as their common screening base, the priorities spelled out therein are short- and mid-term priorities (2010 and 2015 targets). The various lists cover different geographical areas: (i) UNEP NAPs cover all countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea except Palestine; (ii) the “H2020 priority investment list” only covers Southern Mediterranean countries; (iii) Western Balkans and Turkey investment priorities were under the WeBTHSIS in 2011 but is not part of MeHSIP; (iv) the MeHSIP pipeline is based on the most mature and bankable projects within the H2020 list and has led to the main activity of the MeHSIP PPIF, namely the development of 4 feasibility studies. The projects cover all three sectors potentially whereas the wastewater sector is the most comprehensively assessed and represented. The UfM and H2020 lists include projects in varying stages of development: operational, under construction, under extension, or in need of upgrade or national priority project concepts (identified during MeHSIP of UfM missions). More projects were identified during these latter missions reflecting the fact that (i) the original NAPs were adopted in 2005 (based on earlier years data therefore) and MEDPOL/UNEP-MAP has evolved in its objectives and targets since that date; (ii) the H2020 list includes only the Southern Mediterranean countries and only those potential investments meeting the EIB eligibility criteria of size of over EUR 25 million.
The data above suggests that hotspots have provided a powerful tool to focus investments. However, most of
the NAPs were drafted to meet the intermediate UNEP/MAP targets of 2010, not the long-term targets of
2025. Therefore additional investment will be required to meet the long-term targets. Furthermore, new
pollution areas of concern have appeared leading to new emerging needs since the identification of hotspots
through the NAPs in 2005. This is reflected by the number of additional projects (outside the NAPs)
identified by the EIB MeHSSIP PPIF pipeline work and in the UfMS study. In fact, the UFMS study found
that more than half (around 64%) of the projects identified for wastewater are not in the original NAPs. Only
17% of these were not clearly linked to the identified hotspots. Furthermore, the studies show that protection
against pollution is a dynamic and continuous process, with population and economic growth up to 2025
creates additional investment needs and a real threat for not meeting the UNEP/MAP long-term targets,
even in locations that were well equipped in 2013.

The forthcoming revision of the NAPs over 2014-2015 will be an opportunity to review the hotspot
definition within the development of a comprehensive methodology for the identification and monitoring of
hotspots. This will be based on commonly defined criteria, and supported by clear guidelines for the
respective countries selection process. The UFMS study sets out elements of a methodology for estimating
pollution loads reduction attached to each project and linking these estimates to the investment cost needed
to meet the 2025 targets set out in the SAP. These elements could be usefully incorporated into the NAP
revision exercise.

**What are the challenges for successful H2020 investments?**

Even when investments are underway, they are often suffering significant delays, or are even abandoned, due
to issues that can partly be avoided. The EIB validation exercise concludes that from inception to operation
an investment project may require between 7 to 10 years, but that this could be reduced by adequate actions
in each phase of the project life-cycle.

The most important reason for delays, or abandon of a project having secured finance, is linked to a poor
preparatory phase. Good preparation needs to allow for: good consultation and participation of stakeholders,
including civil society and local communities; adequate definition of the project scope; sufficiently detailed...

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27 For example, 2010 targets include only cities above 100.00 inhabitants.
engineering studies and cost estimates; timely launch of administrative procedures for permits, land expropriation issues, etc.

During project implementation i.e., tendering and construction, further delays (beyond those linked to an inadequate preparation process) can accumulate during the procurement process, which can require highly skilled human resources. Among the lessons learnt are: the need for improving the expertise and building the capacities of sector institutions to enhance their understanding of the project cycle dynamics as well as installing a regular monitor mechanism to support project preparation.

An important obstacle to investments is the difficulties to ensure their financial sustainability, in turn caused by inadequate cost recovery mechanisms. A sustainable financing mechanism needs to be available for operation and routine maintenance, a challenge when tariffs do not cover basic and operation costs. Successful experiences exist among Mediterranean countries, based on increases of the water tariffs, including social pricing, or environmental taxes or fees based on polluter-pays principle.

The efficient and sustainable operation of finalised H2020 investments must be given strong attention. This depends on the soundness of the project preparation, which is required for a realistically priced construction contract, works built to a proper standard and with the quality/appropriate equipment operating at optimum efficiencies. In addition, where environmental laws are not enforced, this reduces the prospect of projects meeting the environmental norms and standards.

Investment needs in wastewater treatment, solid waste treatment and industrial emissions abatement might require different approaches and funding considerations. For one, there are investment needs mentioned in the NAPs other than the large scale infrastructure investments currently targeted in the H2020 list of priority projects. Often also the key stakeholders are different (public versus private); the drivers/incentives for investments are different; the size and delimitation of the required investment are different (regrouping of projects); and the possibility of cost recovery can vary substantially.

MeHSIP, through its support to project preparation, has helped addressing some of the above challenges, but more effort is needed to address these in a more systematic way and in full coordination with other IFIs and donors. The establishment of national donor coordination groups (including IFIs such as the EIB, KfW, the World Bank, AfD and others) in some countries has contributed to a more strategic approach to financing priority projects.

### Conclusions

- The UNEP/MAP hotspots have been a strong tool to focus investments. Projects are mostly constructed in areas identified as hotspots but new hotspots and associated investment needs are emerging. Furthermore, alternative funding mechanisms for smaller investments may be needed, namely in the industrial emissions sector. The revision of the NAPs, including the hotspots, by MEDPOL/UNEP-MAP should provide a new baseline for future priority project identification;

- MeHSIP-PPIF has been investing in the update of the MeHSIP and H2020 project lists and methodologically developing the MeHSIP pipeline with inputs from Government entities and stakeholders. The EIB validation exercise suggests the continued relevance of project preparation support from feasibility to construction phase;

- Solid project preparation is essential for successful investments and operations; as well as reforms to ensure an attractive investment environment, including the financial sustainability of the sectors.

### Recommendations for the second phase

- Countries should fully engage in the revision of the NAPs coordinated by the MEDPOL/UNEP-MAP. This revision should take into account the findings of the UfMS
Countries should fully engage in carrying out the necessary reforms to attract investments and ensure the sustainability of project operation and maintenance. Special attention needs to be given to financing of pollution abatement for SMEs and industries;

- Priority should be given to solid project preparation. Related capacity building should be strengthened, in full coordination with IFIs and including through the involvement of local training centres in the South. The integrated approach recognised worldwide by International Water Association or World Water Forum and such as that demonstrated in Lake Bizerte should be replicated;

- IFI coordination and the leveraging and blending of loans and grants need to be further enhanced to meet evolving financial needs with appropriate financial strategies (smaller investments in NAPs, SMEs, private sector). At national level, this should be done by strengthening inter-ministerial coordination, taking into account existing IFIs coordination mechanisms or other consultation mechanisms. At regional level, this should be done by reactivating the pollution reduction sub-group.

Has the regulatory framework in the countries been enhanced since 2006? Has enforcement improved? Has the capacity of countries improved? Are complementary tools to regulation developed?

Some studies mention an important increase in policy, strategy and legislative development relevant in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and in H2020 priority sectors since the start of the Initiative in 2006, especially in the Southern Mediterranean countries. The reasons for this are not always linked to H2020. For example, in Western Balkans and Turkey, the EU accession process has largely motivated the legislative development.

However, enforcement and compliance is lagging behind in the whole region, including in the EU Member States. Monitoring and enforcing the implementation of environmental legislation is therefore crucial. Challenges include the need to better define and strengthen capacities of national agencies, to avoid duplication of roles and resources, and to support the development of regular integrated monitoring mechanisms. The latter are not developed yet in many countries, and, if they are, monitoring results are not sufficiently taken into account when revising legislation. Coordination and cooperation among competent authorities is more institutionalised in the Northern Mediterranean region while less structured in the Southern countries, where the provisions for multi-stakeholder participation and dialogue still require better definition and articulation. Some of the improvements proposed in the review reports with respect to monitoring and enforcement include: the setting up of tight monitoring systems with regular inspections, self-monitoring to be instituted by legislation and encouraged through incentives for regular measurements and prosecution for non-compliance (in accordance with LBS protocol).²⁸

The capacity building trainings under H2020 (CB/MEP) have given particular attention to policy and legislative development in line with the Barcelona Convention obligations but also with the EU’s Marine Strategy Framework Directive. They have addressed many priorities of the Barcelona Convention (ICZM, SCP, BOD, Marine Litter, etc.) and essential principles of relevant EU policies, such as waste hierarchy, green economy, industrial pollution, polluter-pays and producer responsibility in both the technical and cross-cutting trainings. In addition; CB/MEP has assisted countries to carry out national consultations on key issues (e.g., integrated approach to Lake Bizerte pollution or solid management in Lebanon). At regional it helped moving forward the policy agenda, such as the finalisation and endorsement of the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development.

²⁸ Report on the Mediterranean Sea pollution situation addressed by the Horizon 2020 program of the ENPI, and challenges in the research domain FP7 INCO Net MIRA PROJECT WP 7, 2012.
RENA and now ECRAN have also supported Western Balkans and Turkey in meeting the H2020 objectives through the more general focus of approximation with the EU *acquis*. Both programmes remain highly relevant.

**Complementary tools and approaches**

The current H2020 activities have focused mainly on the themes of urban waste water, municipal solid waste and industrial emissions from policy/legislation and technical aspects. The CB/MEP programme has ensured a strong training dimension on environmental integration with a range of tools including awareness-raising, trainings, project preparation, and monitoring complemented by efforts toward better reporting and sharing of environmental information to support decision making processes. These can be further complemented with a range of economic instruments and pollution prevention tools in line with requests by countries for training on emerging issues (green economy and banking) and pollution prevention tools (Sustainable Consumption and Production- SCP). In that sense, the next phase of H2020 should target support on how to promote the necessary enabling environment to encourage financial sustainability, i.e., what needs to be in place for pollution reduction and prevention interventions to yield lasting results. These could include policy dialogues on governance and sustainable financing that promote legislative, institutional and regulatory frameworks supportive of investment, management and operations of infrastructures as well as a socially responsible private sector and civil society involvement.

Market-based incentives are not as yet very widely used in the Southern Mediterranean countries, with some exceptions, where financial support is provided to industries that adopt measures to reduce industrial pollution. Challenges and gaps identified are: lack of financial instruments and lack of incentive strategies to reduce pollution, and no clear provision to support and encourage innovation; as well as insufficient interrelationships between academia, stakeholders and industrial entities which could support this innovative approach (UIMS study, MIRA studies).

A number of countries have since 2006 benefited from training on new and emerging issues with the support of H2020 funds and some have also established national strategies and action plans for green economy. Together with market based incentives and financial instruments based on the “3Ts” approach (tariffs, transfers, taxes), other tools such as SCP related tools on green public procurement, green banking and Corporate Social Responsibility should be promoted.

It is therefore recommended in reports (UIMS study) and meetings (6th H2020 SG meeting, November 2013) to better address the root causes of pollution and waste generation and to adopt more exhaustive pollution prevention approaches and tools. This includes measures that are not always infrastructure investments, such as information campaigns aiming at (a) promoting sustainable production and consumption, (b) reducing waste generated or re-using treated wastewaters, or (3) reducing the amount of waste generated or discharged into the sewage systems by industries.

The recently launched SWITCH-MED project will be developing an SCP Action Plan for all Mediterranean countries as well as demonstration activities for the Southern Mediterranean countries. An additional SCP project for Western Balkans and Turkey (also to be labelled by the UiM) will provide complementary tools and approaches for the next phase of H2020.

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**Conclusions**

- The legislative framework required to meet the commitments of the Barcelona Convention and its Land based sources and activities (LBS) Protocol is largely in place. However, its implementation and enforcement as well as better mainstreaming of environmental aspects into sector policy remain key challenges for the next period;

- The CB/MEP Programme is appreciated by countries for the wide array of trainings offered responding both to regional obligations under the Barcelona Convention and national and local priorities. RENA and now ECRAN have also supported Western Balkans and Turkey in meeting the H2020 objectives through the more general focus of approximation with the EU *acquis*. Both programmes remain highly relevant.
Recommendations for the second phase

- Countries should ensure the full implementation and enforcement of environmental legislation as well as the mainstreaming of environment into other key-sectors (e.g., finance, tax, agriculture, industry, tourism, urban planning) by creating inter-ministerial/cross-sector structures;

- Stakeholders, including local authorities and civil society, the private sector and academia, need to be more involved in the decision making process as well as in the implementation and enforcement of existing environmental legislation. In addition, new environmental challenges require new approaches and complementary tools. Creating the right incentives, through a good mix of policy/economic/fiscal tools and awareness and education will be crucial for addressing both the investment and the prevention dimension of H2020.

- The capacity building component should continue, focusing more on implementation and enforcement needs, identified in the NAPs, as well as the mainstreaming of environmental policy into key sectors. It will be important that countries ensure the adequacy of the people selected for trainings and the practical use of the skills and knowledge acquired, including its transfer and concrete follow-up, for example through twinning. It should be further integrated and complement the other H2020 components, create synergies with other projects and initiatives (such as ECRAN, MedPartnership, and SWITCH MED,) and further develop activities on new emerging approaches such as SCP.

Which actors are presently on the scene? Is there a reasonable division of labour between them?

As shown in Figure 1 above many institutional actors are involved in the implementation of the H2020 Initiative. The need for cooperation and coordination amongst all the countries bordering the Mediterranean is well recognised. Many institutions, initiatives and programmes including the regional Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat (UfMS), the European Environment Agency (EEA) as well as the World Bank, the Centre for Mediterranean Integration, IFIs and bilateral donors are actively implementing activities related to pollution reduction in the Mediterranean. Local authorities and civil society have also played an instrumental role in consolidating and enhancing these efforts.

The H2020 Initiative, including the Mid-term Review process itself has created a further momentum and increased synergies between all the main actors, i.e., the UfMS taking the initiative to cooperate with MEDPOL/UNEP-MAP and the EIB on updating the priority hotspot investment projects and methodology; the MedPartnership programme supporting demonstration projects on reducing hazardous chemicals emissions (PCBs) or industrial emission at source (Medtest methodology); the EEA and MEDPOL/UNEP-MAP working closely on the implementation of monitoring and information systems in the countries covered by the ENPI-SEIS project. These regional cooperation synergies should be built on and further enhanced in phase 2 of the Horizon 2020 Initiative.

There seems to be a reasonable division of labour between the main partners with a now more active role of the UfM Secretariat in the latter part of phase 1 in the Pollution Reduction component. In line with their mandate, the UfM Secretariat could play a more active coordinating role regarding the overall portfolio of potential investment projects and mobilising resources. Also the cooperation with MEDPOL/UNEP-MAP has been strengthened through the update of the list of priority projects and is expected to continue during the planned review of the methodology and criteria for the selection of projects under the SAP/NAP revision process (MEDPOL/UNEP-MAP). A more active involvement of UNEP/MAP in the Review and Monitoring group as well as in the capacity building component seems appropriate.

The fact that the EU’s support to the capacity building component has been contracted to a large consortium of institutions from the EU and non-EU Mediterranean countries has been an asset to cover the diverse needs...
of the countries, while keeping flexibility, efficiency and ownership. A flexible Horizon 2020 Coordination mechanism among the three sub-groups was able to support and guide the process and to respond to emerging needs along the process.

As regards the Pollution Reduction sub-group (coordinated by the EIB), whereas there were active IFI coordination meetings involving all key IFIs (KfW, World bank, AfD) in the first two years of the Initiative, these meetings did not take place regularly after, nor to involve all active IFIs working in the region. In addition, other stakeholders should participate in the sub-group to create adequate interlocutors with IFIs.

The RMR sub-group has been led by the EEA in phase 1. The EEA worked closely with UNEP/MAP (mainly MEDPOL and Plan Bleu), UfMS and other key regional actors (EMWIS, CEDARE, League of Arab States) on the development of the H2020 reporting mechanism and its indicators. This cooperation should continue in phase 2, with a more active role for MEDPOL/UNEP-MAP in steering the process.

The Research part of the RMR group has been less integrated into the H2020 structures in this first phase. At the beginning the MIRA project was actively involved in H2020, making proposals for more concerted action on the science and policy inter-phase. However, no particular mechanisms was set in place for tracking results of research projects in the region nor for feeding these results back into the H2020 Initiative or national decision making processes. An appropriate mechanism could be developed to ensure the effective bridging of the science and H2020 policy interface. A Project Coordination Group (PCG) was established under the EU MSFD to improve the coherence of projects and the coordination and information exchange between the EU and the Regional Seas Conventions, including the Barcelona Convention. Its possible future contribution to H2020 components deserves to be examined.

The EU has been a major actor in supporting the H2020 objectives using various funding instruments. Still coordination and cross-fertilization among these could be improved.

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<th>Conclusions</th>
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<tr>
<td>• The H2020 Initiative has created a platform for cooperation among regional programmes and structures; some of these are well established such as the Barcelona Convention, some adding new dynamics such as the UfM Secretariat. The overall challenges for the effective participation of all the actors are continued, regular and systematic cooperation, coordination and communication at different levels through the H2020 governance structure: (i) between the three sub groups (ii) between IFIs and donors, (iii) at national level between the different agencies dealing with waste water, solid waste, industry, agriculture, water tourism, urban development, education and housing. The functioning of sub-groups can be improved to increase the effectiveness of their work;</td>
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<td>• The growing number of in-country focal points for the various relevant initiatives and projects increases the risk of duplication and could reduce the ability of countries to benefit from the projects and the efficiency of initiatives;</td>
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<td>• Finally, there are partners whose participation needs to be reaffirmed and strengthened such as civil society and the private sector.</td>
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<th>Recommendations for the second phase</th>
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<td>• Reactivate and strengthen the working groups: (i) UfMS should co-chair the Pollution Reduction sub-group; (ii) UNEP/MAP should co-chair or at least actively participate in the Capacity Building and Review, Monitoring and Research sub-groups; (iii) the sub-groups should further integrate with clear linkages between their work programmes. Reactivate and integrate the research component (either separately or under the CB component) more optimally integrating policy needs and research results;</td>
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<td>• Countries should explore streamlining focal points, especially those for the H2020 Initiative and those for the Barcelona Convention, or at least ensure good exchange of</td>
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| information and coordination;  
| • Countries should enhance participation of civil society and private sector as crucial actors to tackle the Mediterranean challenges. Their involvement at regional level within the sub-groups should also be strengthened. |

**Final note**

The H2020 Initiative can be considered successful since it has led to concrete developments within each of its different components. The hotspots have provided a strategic focus for investments and mobilisation of stakeholders; the capacity building activities have supported relevant policy and legislative development; and review and monitoring activities have laid down the ground for measuring progress in the future. There is a shared common awareness of the challenges ahead, political support at Ministerial level (UfM), and a well-qualified and connected community of stakeholders. This result is not to be underestimated in a very diverse geographical and cultural region and in a period characterised by changes. Finally, the H2020 Initiative has considerably assisted countries in complying with their regional commitments under the Barcelona Convention to reduce pollution from land-based sources.

However, while pressures from rapidly growing population and human activities that degrade the marine environment and ecosystems have increased over the last decades, and despite the large number of measures taken to control these, the Mediterranean environment remains under threat with an increase in pollution notably from hazardous substances, and an associated loss of important natural resources in the sea and coastal areas. Considerable efforts are still required to mitigate the impacts of climate change, to better manage rare natural resources, support regional dynamics, and genuinely promote cleaner modes of consumption and production.

This first phase of H2020 was about laying the bases; about visibility, assessing needs and state of play on the ground. Now with the first phase of the H2020 timetable completed, it is time to ensure smooth continuation of assistance and reinforced commitments for the next phase. Even though the H2020 supporting projects did not start implementation at the same time, important milestones were set by the 3 components in the first phase. Political commitment and ownership of countries are still very real; awareness raising has been achieved, regional exchanges and sub-regional integration fostered; and cooperation established with regional programmes and structures. There are partners whose participation needs to be reaffirmed and strengthened such as civil society and the private sector.

The second phase must build on the success of the first phase, incorporate the lessons learnt and address the problems identified and the new challenges ahead. The engagement and commitment by all Mediterranean countries towards the H2020 objectives needs to be reaffirmed and stimulated further. This engagement at country level must be accompanied by the renewed support of the international community, in particular donors and international actors to assist countries in achieving H2020 objectives and their international commitments. All countries need to send the right signals and take firm steps if the Mediterranean Sea is to be progressively de-polluted. The economic development of the region is inextricably linked to the protection and improvement of the environment in the Mediterranean basin. A timetable for the second phase, based on an integrated approach of all components, with common targets and milestones should guide the common efforts in the period 2014-2020. These efforts should also be made more visible. The challenge remains bigger than ever but much is at stake to preserve the livelihoods and the future of the people who live in the Mediterranean basin and whose lives depend on the resources provided by the Sea.