



2022 Edition

Switching to circular economy  
in the Mediterranean



# SwitchMed

This publication was developed by MedWaves thanks to the financial support of the EU-funded SwitchMed programme.

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## Abbreviation table

ARC	Agència de Residus de Catalunya (Catalan Waste Agency)	GHG	global greenhouse gas
BSO	business support organization	ILO	International Labour Organization
COP	Conference of Parties	HLPF	High-level Political Forum on sustainable development
DG MARE	Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs	MSSD	Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development
DG NEAR	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement	RECP	resource efficient and cleaner production
DGPA	Direction Générale de la pêche et de l'aquaculture de Tunisie (Tunisian General Directorate for fisheries and aquaculture)	SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	SCP-NAP	Sustainable Consumption and Production National Action Plan
ENI CBC Med	Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) initiative implemented by the EU under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) in the Mediterranean	SDG	UN Sustainable Development Goal
FENIP	Fédération Nationale des Industries de Transformation des Produits de la Pêche (National Federation for the Industries of Fish Products Transformation)	SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
GES	Good Environmental Status	UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for International Cooperation)	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
		UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
		UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
		UNEP/MAP	United Nations Environment Programme Mediterranean Action Plan
		UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
		UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
		USAID	United States Agency for International Development
		WESR	World Environment Situation Room



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We can no longer ignore the limits of our natural resources and planetary boundaries. The ways we live, consume and produce are directly linked to the evident environmental crisis that has started to affect our everyday lives. The Mediterranean region is greatly affected by dire environmental emergencies related to water scarcity, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change. A growing population, increasing energy and raw material demand puts additional pressure on the region's natural resources and ecological systems. A “business as usual” approach is no longer an option for the region. We need to find innovative ways to provide decent employment, socio-economic development and a green future for the region.

The opportunities associated with the adoption of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) practices and Circular Economy strategies have a clear link to supporting stabilisation of the region through sustainable and inclusive economic development.

Since 2013, the European Union has, over the SwitchMed programme, demonstrated the strengths and opportunities for building greener and more dynamic business models in the southern Mediterranean region that can address some of the region's pressing environmental, social and economic issues.

SwitchMed was launched to support and connect stakeholders to scale-up SCP in eight countries of the southern Mediterranean region through eco and social innovations.

Through its four components – Industry, Green Entrepreneurship, Policy and Networking Facility – it supports industry, emerging green entrepreneurs, civil society and decision-makers with policy development, demonstration activities and knowledge transfer.

It aims at achieving productive, circular and sharing economies in the southern Mediterranean by changing the way goods and services are consumed and produced so that human development is decoupled from environmental degradation.

The SwitchMed Connect is a unique opportunity to meet actors and experience some of the work from the SwitchMed programme, and we hope you take the chance to engage with the events that SwitchMed offers.



## INTRODUCTION

The SwitchMed programme was launched in 2013 by the European Union to speed up the shift to sustainable consumption and production patterns in the southern Mediterranean, notably through the promotion of circular economy approaches. The programme aims at achieving productive, circular and sharing economies in the Mediterranean by changing the way goods and services are consumed and produced so that human development is decoupled from environmental degradation.

The SwitchMed programme is implemented in eight countries in the southern Mediterranean, namely: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia. Through policy development, demonstration activities and networking opportunities, SwitchMed supports and connects stakeholders to scale-up eco and social innovations. The programme supports policy makers, eco-innovative small and medium sized enterprises, industries, start-ups and entrepreneurs in the Southern Mediterranean countries, which have identified job creation and natural resource protection as priority issues that also contribute to their economic stability.

The SwitchMed programme contributes to the achievement of several UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



The first phase of the programme concluded in 2018. Phase II of SwitchMed started in 2019 and is due to last until 2023. In addition to the European Union, SwitchMed is benefitting from funding from the Catalan Government and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and international Cooperation with a total budget amounting to 22 million euros.

	<p><b>Total Financing: €22 million</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EU-financing: €18,58 million</li> <li>Co-financing by the Catalan Government: €1,93 million</li> <li>Co-financing by the Italian Government: €1,5 million</li> </ul>
SwitchMed Phase I (2013-2018)	SwitchMed Phase II (2019-2023)
<p><b>Total Financing: €24 million</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EU-financing: €22,8 million</li> <li>Co-financing: €1,25 million</li> </ul>	

This second phase is funded by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Economy Division, and MedWaves, the United Nations Environment Programme Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) regional activity centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (formerly known as SCP/RAC). The initiative is carried out in close coordination with the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement (DG NEAR).

### The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

is the specialized agency of the United Nations that supports countries in accelerating sustainable industrial and economic development. As the lead implementing organization of the SwitchMed Programme, UNIDO supports the development of greener industries and sustainable production in the southern Mediterranean region. Through a comprehensive approach, UNIDO demonstrates the business case of a cleaner and resource-efficient production to industries and helps build local capacities to deliver sustainable production services matching the industry needs in the eight SwitchMed countries. In addition, UNIDO demonstrates circular business models that can transform the value chains in the textile and garment industry (Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia) and the plastic packaging sector (Israel).

### The Mediterranean Action Plan of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/MAP)

is a regional cooperation platform established in 1975 as the first regional action plan under the UNEP Regional Seas Programme. Under the auspices of UNEP/MAP, the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) was adopted, bringing together 21 Mediterranean countries and the European Union. Together, they have progressively erected a uniquely comprehensive institutional, legal, and implementing framework integrating essential building blocks for sustainability in the Mediterranean.

### MedWaves, the UNEP/MAP regional activity centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (formerly known as SCP/RAC)

was established in 1996 by means of a collaboration agreement between the Spanish Ministry of Environment and the Ecological Transition and the Government of Catalonia, based on the decision agreed by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. The centre is appointed with the mandate to promote SCP in the Mediterranean region.

Over the years, the centre has designed innovative methodologies and tools to transfer knowledge within the field of sustainable business development. It is providing trainings and networking opportunities to the green entrepreneurship ecosystem.

In addition to these activities, MedWaves works at the regional level to further embed SCP and circular economy approaches within the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and Coastal Region of the Mediterranean.

Moreover, MedWaves is collaborating with financial agents to establish mechanisms that enable entrepreneurs and small companies that provide SCP solutions access to finance.

MedWaves also hosts the Networking Facility which ensures visibility to SwitchMed as well as scaling up of the activities of the programme.

### UN Environment Economy Division (UNEP)

is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. The Economy Division provides solutions for economic decision-makers and helps change the business environment by offering platforms for dialogue and cooperation, innovative policy options, pilot projects and creative market mechanisms. It works through three main branches: Chemicals and Health; Energy and Climate and Resources and Markets.

# In the first phase of the SwitchMed programme (2013-2018),

## Policy

25

A Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) adopted by Mediterranean countries and a set of 25 SCP indicators aligned with the SDGs selected to monitor its implementation.

8

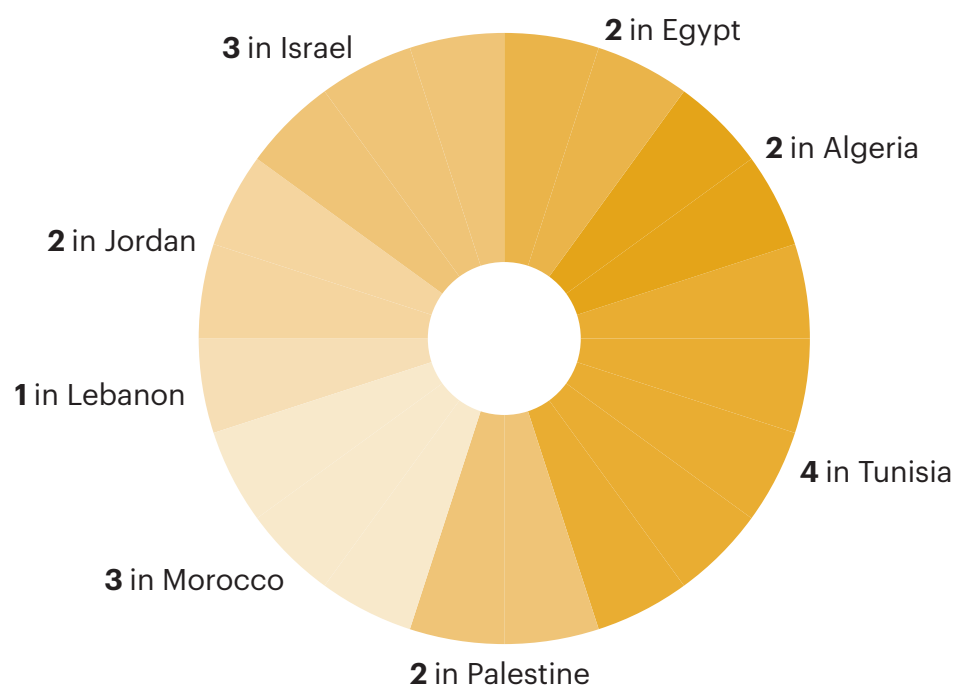
SCP national action plans (SCP-NAPs) developed.

20

Demonstration pilot projects implemented by the end of 2018:

1,500

over 1,500 national stakeholders from government, private sector, civil society, industry, academia and media trained.



## Industry

125

Industry demonstration projects on resource efficient and cleaner production (RECP).

44

Service providers qualified with hands on experience on resource efficient and cleaner production methodologies.

1,830

Identified RECP measures which annually save:

**707 GWh** of energy

**3,512,660 m<sup>3</sup>** of water

**33,623 t.** of raw materials

**197,525 t.** emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> eq.

**41.7 million Euro** in production costs for the 125 participating companies

8

National roadmaps on resource efficiency developed.

## Phase II of the SwitchMed programme aims at scaling up

the following outcomes were achieved:

## Green Entrepreneurship

**3**

Innovative methodologies for sustainable business model development created and transferred to local actors.

**48**

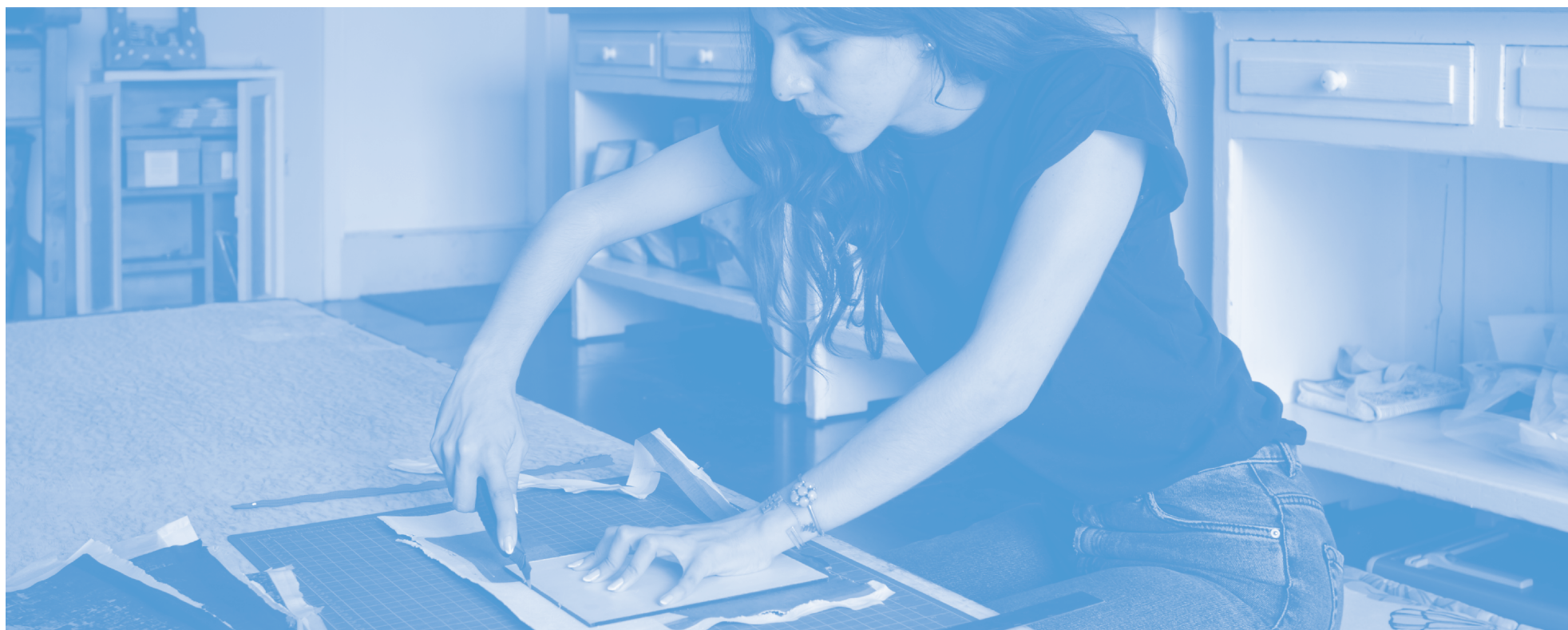
Circular start-ups incubated.

**+2,200**

Green entrepreneurs supported to develop and test their Green Business Models.

**+250**

SwitchMed contributed to the creation of +250 new sustainable companies.



## Networking Facility

**3**

SwitchMed Connect organised. It is the main gathering of SwitchMed bringing together leading start-ups and entrepreneurs, industry agents, initiatives, change agents, policy and financial institutions working on applications of productive, circular and sharing economies in the Mediterranean.

**+1,000**

participants from 16 different countries attended SwitchMed Connect

**+10,000**

followers on social media channels of the SwitchMed programme

**+400**

CSOs and entrepreneurs from the Mediterranean members of the Switchers Community

these achievements.



# Introducing resource-efficient and circular economy practices to industry

Preparing industry actors in the Mediterranean region to adopt more circular business and production models that apply a higher rate of resource efficiency; more intensive and productive use of products by reusing, refurbishing and re-manufacturing; and with a higher rate of recirculation through recycling, is a necessary step for businesses to meet changing global market conditions.

New evidence suggests that 45 percent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are linked to how we produce and use materials and goods. How we produce and consume goods matters today, tomorrow, and in the near future, this topic will become even more decisive for consumers and industries alike.

But it is also one of many ways to help reduce industry-related GHG emissions. We can already observe the environmental and economic consequences of a changing climate, leading to growing consumer awareness of how our over-consumption and current production systems affect our environment. As a result, rising demand for sustainably produced goods has pushed global brands to overlook their supply chains for better alternatives, including renewable and recycled raw materials and cleaner production processes.

At the same time, rising prices for energy and raw materials, together with disruptions and shortages in the global supply chain, have caused mounting costs for industries. This situation makes it challenging for businesses in the Mediterranean region to produce, stay profitable and generate the much-needed income and employment.

In a situation like this, industries in the Mediterranean region need to improve their environmental footprint and economic performance to maintain a competitive advantage and stay relevant in an ever more interlinked global market.

Under the SwitchMed programme, UNIDO demonstrates new innovative ways for producing more resource-efficient and explores circular production practices in selected industries of the southern Mediterranean. Helping the southern Mediterranean region's industry switch to more sustainable consumption and production standards could support more resilient economies in the southern Mediterranean region while reducing their environmental impact. In addition, circular business models are piloted in selected industries to allocate business synergies among value chain actors and the potential for reusing, re-purposing and recycling materials locally to reduce the dependence on imported virgin raw materials.

Activities under the SwitchMed/MED TEST III project focus on the uptake of industrial resource efficiency practices by reaching out to additional businesses, sectors, and regions. In selected countries and sectors, UNIDO is also

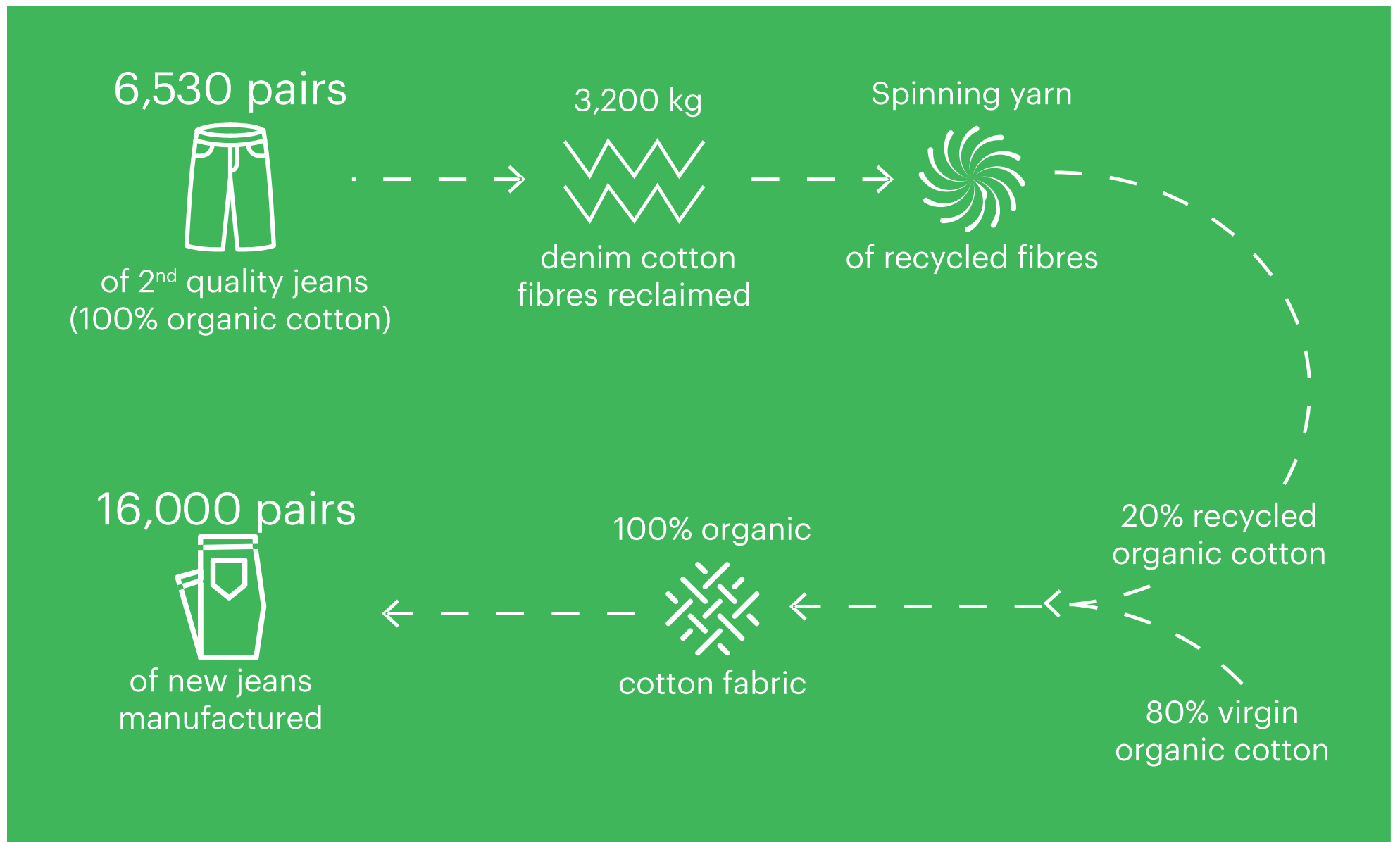
advancing closed-loop industrial systems to produce cleaner and achieve more value from products and materials along the selected value chains.

Taking into account the context industries operate under is essential to achieve a systemic change and uptake of resource efficiency strategies. Therefore, UNIDO cooperates with local industries, service providers, business associations, government bodies, and international brands to identify and undertake industry projects that can demonstrate the business case for more resource-efficient and circular production models. Outcomes from the demonstration pilots form the basis of a national roadmap that, at the end of the project, will be developed for each country to further the development of policies, incentives and financing mechanisms that can upscale the development of a more circular and resource-efficient industry in the southern Mediterranean.

**In 2018, by the end of the SwitchMed/MED TEST II project, the 125 companies that participated in the demonstration projects reported total annual savings of 3.5 million m<sup>3</sup> of water, 707 GWh of energy, 33,623 tons of raw material and avoidance of 197,525 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The results from the SwitchMed/MED TEST II project are conclusive as the average reduction achieved by the demonstration companies in water consumption was 20%, energy use by 24%, and raw material inputs by 5% per unit of product manufactured.**

**The 125 participating demonstration companies could, within their production, achieve 41.7 million euros of annual economic savings and invest a total of 88 million euros in measures and technologies that could improve resource efficiency. This highlights the economic saving potential for businesses when adopting resource-efficient production standards.**

**Based on the promising results from the SwitchMed/MED TEST II project, country-specific roadmaps were developed with local policy-makers and industry stakeholders. The national priorities from these roadmaps have, along with the present-day local situation, helped to formulate country-specific activities that can demonstrate how industries can unfold their potential in developing a closed material system that can shape the possibilities for a sustainable economic growth in the southern Mediterranean region.**



Outcomes from a demonstration project in Tunisia, undertaken in collaboration with Nudie Jeans.

Under the SwitchMed/MED TEST III project, Jordan and Palestine will continue to support the uptake of industrial resource efficiency practices by reaching out to additional businesses, sectors, and regions. The activities in Jordan and Palestine focus on industry demonstrations, training local capacities for resource-efficient production, and raising awareness of the business case of resource-efficient production among industries, policy-makers and academic institutions.

In Lebanon, UNIDO supports industries from the food and chemical sectors to promote the uptake of more resource-efficient production practices. This sector is vital for sustaining Lebanon's food security and import substitutions and has been identified as a sector with significant saving potential for energy efficiency measures, essential for businesses struggling with the ongoing energy supply shortage in the country. Consequently, UNIDO will provide technical assistance to at least ten demonstration companies in the food and chemical sectors and, together with international experts, conduct a whey valorization study and training activities in the dairy sector. In addition, policy actions will be promoted through a gap analysis and a roadmap to mainstream resource-efficient production practices in industrial zones and align them to principles of the international framework for Eco-Industrial Parks.

Developing a local value chain for recycling textile fibres and repurposed textile waste would allow the textile and clothing industry in the region to create new economic opportunities and retain the value of textile waste as a resource for the region's industry. Together with international experts, UNIDO has analyzed the textile waste streams of the textile and clothing sector in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. As a result, eight pilot projects have been developed and will, until 2023, demonstrate the potential for recycling pre-consumer textile waste, advancing closed-loop industrial systems and innovative circular design applications to achieve more value from products and materials.

In 2021, an initial pilot was concluded with the Swedish denim brand Nudie Jeans and its suppliers in Tunisia. The pilot repurposed 6,530 pairs of second-quality jeans into 16,000 new pairs of jeans with a composition of 20% recycled cotton. This pilot demonstrates the potential for developing a value chain in the textile and clothing sector that can support the supply for the growing global demand for recycled fabrics while repositioning the industry as a sustainable choice for the global fashion supply chain.

In this context, UNIDO, together with the ZDHC Foundation, also provides trainings and demonstrates the implementation of safer chemical management practices that can protect the environment and increase the ability of the textile and garment industry to produce in line with international standards for sustainable products.

In Israel, UNIDO supports the government on specific actions that can improve the circularity of the plastic value chain in Israel. The aim is to demonstrate steps that could advance a closed-loop system for plastic packaging waste that produces cleaner and achieves more value from products and materials.

In partnership with a pool of institutional stakeholders, guidelines have been developed for improving the recyclability of plastic packaging design. The guidelines aim to increase the quantity and the quality of sorted plastic waste while improving the ability of the local recycling industry to handle higher volumes of post-consumer plastic waste and to offer more sustainable plastic packaging alternatives on the Israeli market. By 2023, three additional pilot projects will demonstrate a system for collecting, sorting and recycling plastic waste from agricultural applications; the conversion of an existing plastic packaging application into a recyclable packaging design product; and a business model for recycling flexible packaging.



Müge Dolun

Industrial Development  
Officer at UNIDO

A development practitioner, Müge Dolun has over 20 years of experience in strategic research, technical assistance projects and programme evaluation. Since mid-2021, she is also managing a large portfolio of UNIDO projects, including the SwitchMed programme, in UNIDO's Circular economy and resource efficiency unit. With expertise in trade, gender and the environment, she brings valuable insight in why programmes like SwitchMed are important drivers for innovating the way we produce and consume, and how industries can manage the transition to a more circular production system.

“We must start to look holistically at the whole value chain, including all actors in this process and help businesses address potential solutions upstream.”

#### What do you associate when you hear the term “circular economy”?

I see the concept of a circular economy as an opportunity and a challenge we must act upon together. Moving away from the conventional way of producing and consuming is not only necessary to reduce resource depletion, waste and the associated environmental pollution, but maintaining materials at their highest possible value in a close loop economy is a way of reducing the carbon footprint of industries. Just think about the energy and the associated emissions required for extracting, refining and transporting raw materials. Therefore, circular business models are critical to address limited resource stocks and will contribute to a low carbon industries.

At the same time, we must be careful with our expectations of the circular economy concept and avoid the simplistic framing of it as a “silver bullet”. For instance, the circular economy concept is often very simplistically associated to recycling, while the social implications or role of the informal sector or consumer behaviours are rarely mentioned. But, we know that recycling is an energy-intensive process that still faces many technical challenges and by itself will not help us solve issues related to waste, climate and natural resource depletion. We must start to look holistically at the whole value chain, including all actors in this process and help businesses address potential solutions “upstream.” For producing industries, this means conserving materials using a more resource-efficient production, extending a product's lifetime through circular design, repair and reuse, and applying recycling at the end of a product's lifespan. At the same time, circular production systems should integrate social dimensions and decent work principles, to ensure a just transition to the new economic paradigm.

#### Why is resource efficiency important?

Well, to put it simply, we all know that all good things come to an end, and the same goes for our natural resources. The only route to support sustainable development in the long run, is to become more resource efficient. But, resource-efficient production is also often the first step toward a circular economy for productive industries. It demonstrates the economic benefits of reducing resource costs on a practical, business-oriented level and makes it evident for businesses that changing their business model can also be an opportunity that makes sense for the company and the environment.

#### If the concept of resource efficiency is so promising, why are businesses not embracing it right away?

I think we need to understand the situation many industries are struggling with in their everyday operations, especially SMEs, who

often are core suppliers in the global supply chain. Businesses, in particular from the Mediterranean region, face a volatile cost situation for energy and raw materials. In addition, the uncertain economic prospects makes investments or a change of their business model a risk that they are unwilling to take.

A vital task is to raise awareness of the “business case” that resource-efficient production offers to industries and provide them with means to reduce their perceived risk when they make investments into new methods through technical assistance. I think the first phase of SwitchMed did a great job demonstrating this business case, and the fact that the 125 participating businesses invested over 41 million euros in solutions that could drive more resource efficiency in their production underscores the potential and need for resource-efficient production solutions. So, we are on the right path, and we need to continue expanding the offer of local expertise to help industries in the Mediterranean move in this direction.

#### How can organizations like UNIDO contribute to promote the uptake of more circular production processes?

UNIDO's mandate to promote and accelerate sustainable and inclusive industrial development requires us to support developing countries with technical assistance and policies that can enable a just transition to circularity. The EU-funded SwitchMed programme is an excellent example of how this can be done. Through industry pilots, we can demonstrate the potential for more resource-efficient and circular business models, where the outcomes then eventually are used in developing roadmaps that can guide industry stakeholders and policymakers to continue the process in the country after the project.

As already mentioned, demonstrations and awareness raising on the benefits of circular production business models play a crucial role in this process. Businesses also need to see the opportunities and the economic potential the circular economy concept can offer. For instance, understanding that a ‘waste product’ still has value to someone else and can bring additional profit to the business needs to be demonstrated, proven and communicated within the local context of the industry.

“Sustainability” is becoming increasingly critical for consumers and businesses alike. If we want to tackle the challenges we are facing today, we must include companies throughout the value chain and give them an option to adapt their production to meet future requirements. UNIDO can connect small supplying SMEs and global brands with the latest technical expertise and include local policymakers to develop more closed-loop global production systems.







# Strengthening policy framework at the regional level

The Mediterranean region has one of the world's highest ecological deficits, it is highly affected by climate change (the Mediterranean region is warming 20% faster than the global average), and there is a growing pressure of consumption and production on the region's resources, biodiversity and environment.

In order to adapt human activities to the carrying capacity of the Mediterranean ecosystems and to achieve their Good Environmental Status, it is necessary to accelerate the dynamics embracing approaches allowing decoupling human development from degradation of the marine and coastal environment of the Mediterranean.

The circular, green and blue economy approaches, which include SCP are a response to this necessity. The leadership of UNEP/MAP in the development of the regional policy component of SwitchMed, through the work of MedWaves, has enabled the programme to accomplish in a short period of time its goal of contributing to the integration of SCP and circular economy within the medium-term strategies of UNEP/MAP and several instruments of the Barcelona Convention.

Led by the Policy Area of MedWaves, the Regional Policy Component aims to create an enabling environment for SCP and circular economy in the Mediterranean region, in particular by further integrating those approaches within the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean.

For most Regional Policy activities, the MedWaves team does an extensive research, often in coordination with local experts on the topic, to prepare the technical reports, briefs and policy recommendations. MedWaves then prepares a proposal based on the findings, and submits it for consultation of a group of national experts nominated by the countries and regional policy bodies, such as Focal Points representing Barcelona Convention Contracting Parties, the Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, etc. After incorporating the revisions and comments made by these bodies, the UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit submits the final document, accompanied by a proposal of Decision for endorsement of the 22 Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention at their Conference of Parties (COP).

Since the Regional Policy Component started in 2013, the following Decisions have been adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention:

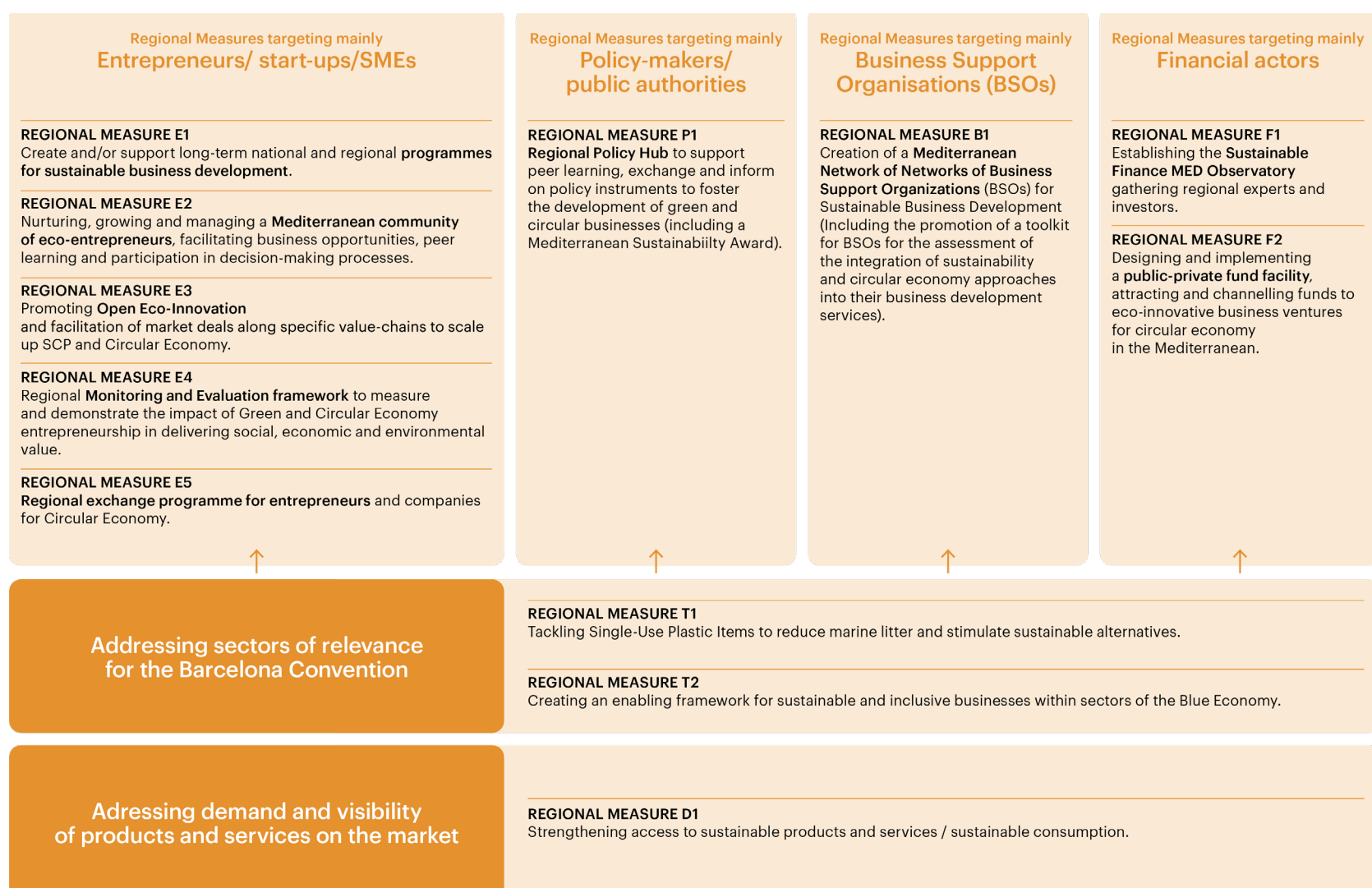
- 1 a Regional Action Plan on SCP focusing on 4 key economic sectors: food and fisheries, housing and construction, tourism and goods manufacturing (COP19 –February 2016);
- 2 the 2016-2025 Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development integrating the strategic Directions of the SCP Action Plan;
- 3 the 2016-2021 UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy including SCP as a crosscutting theme (COP19);
- 4 a framework of SCP indicators for the Mediterranean (COP20 – December 2017) to follow-up the implementation of the Regional Action Plan on SCP;
- 5 a Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter integrating SCP and circular economy measures (COP19 - February 2016 Initial Plan and COP22 – December 2021 Updated Plan);

In addition, a specific toolkit was developed in order to guide national policy makers in the development of SCP measures focusing on the key 4 economic sectors identified by the SCP Regional Action Plan, and 11 pilot projects supporting these priority sectors were implemented.

Under the second phase of the SwitchMed programme, the Regional Policy activities have the following objectives:

<p>1 Developing a set of regional measures to acknowledge and support the development of green and circular businesses, and to be adopted by the signatory countries to the Barcelona Convention</p>	<p>The 12 regional measures proposed were successfully adopted at COP22 of the Barcelona Convention (December 2021). This regional perspective will allow for a broad overview of the conditions among countries at different stages of transition towards a green economy. Furthermore, SwitchMed is working on the implementation of some of the measures. One of them is the creation of a Regional Policy Hub, that will allow for exchanges among countries to share experiences, best practices and lessons learned.</p>
<p>2 Monitoring progress on the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean</p>	<p>The list of SCP indicators was reviewed, its database was updated and fact-sheets for each of the selected indicators were prepared. Moreover, they have been integrated as interactive maps within MapX, an open-source tool of the World Environment Situation Room (WESR), the UNEP digital platform for online data sharing.</p>
<p>3 Celebrating WeMed, the Mediterranean Sustainability Award</p>	<p>In November 2021, MedWaves finalised the preparation, and successfully launched the first edition of the WeMed Award, open to Green Entrepreneurs in early and growth stage and to the public authorities supporting them. The second edition took place in Autumn 2022 and focused on the textile sector. The next editions will focus on circular economy (2023) and Blue Economy initiatives (2024).</p>
<p>4 Identifying strategic opportunities for the integration of circular economy principles in blue economy sectors</p>	<p>In June 2022, SwitchMed published, together with the Interreg MED Blue Growth Community, the report entitled <i>A Circular Blue Economy for the Mediterranean: Current Practices and Opportunities</i>. The publication describes the state of play of the integration of circular economy within selected sectors of the blue economy in the Mediterranean, namely fisheries and aquaculture, nautical tourism and port activities, including shipbuilding and repair. SwitchMed joined forces with the Blue Growth Community and BLUEfasma projects (Interreg MED) to co-organise a hybrid international forum on 10 May 2022 in Barcelona, “Fostering Circular Blue Economy in the Mediterranean”, that convened around 120 participants from all over the Mediterranean in its in-person format.</p>

Overview of the 12 regional measures to support the development of green and circular businesses in the Mediterranean







**Tatjana Hema** UNEP/MAP Coordinator

Tatjana Hema is UNEP/MAP Coordinator. She has strong experience of intergovernmental processes, especially in the area of marine and coastal environment, backed by solid scientific knowledge on chemical engineering and marine pollution issues.

“The SwitchMed programme has both contributed to and benefitted from the strong and unique nature and capacity of the UNEP/MAP system related to SCP and Circular Economy.”

#### What was the contribution of SwitchMed to the Barcelona Convention?

The contribution of programmes like SwitchMed is instrumental in order to keep the UN Environment/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) - Barcelona Convention at the forefront of the new strategic approaches to decouple human development from environment degradation, in line with global commitments.

The Barcelona Convention and its Protocols represent a unique, legally binding regulatory and governance framework in the Mediterranean region that provides UNEP/MAP with a robust and successful structure for policy dialogue, action and cooperation on SCP involving the 21 riparian countries and the EU. The SwitchMed programme has both contributed to and benefitted from the strong and unique nature and capacity of the UNEP/MAP system related to SCP and Circular Economy.

This is a win-win situation. On one hand, SwitchMed has contributed to this framework through the work of MedWaves, the UNEP/MAP Centre for SCP (SCP/RAC) by developing the technical content for new policy instruments such as the SCP Regional Action Plan and its list of SCP Indicators for the Mediterranean that provide crucial support to Mediterranean decision makers in integrating and monitoring progress made towards SCP and Circular Economy at the national level. On the other hand, SwitchMed has benefitted from the Barcelona Convention, since all the knowledge and experience generated by the SwitchMed Programme is being transferred to a more permanent regional policy and regulatory framework that ensures the long-term commitment of the countries. In addition to the adoption of the SCP Regional Action Plan, SwitchMed supported the preparation of a set of regional measures to support the development of green and circular businesses in the Mediterranean. The latter were adopted by the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention at their COP22. We are very grateful for the long-term financial support of the European Commission in implementing the SwitchMed Programme.

#### How do you think this integration of SCP and Circular Economy into the Barcelona Convention will contribute to the Good Environmental Status of the region?

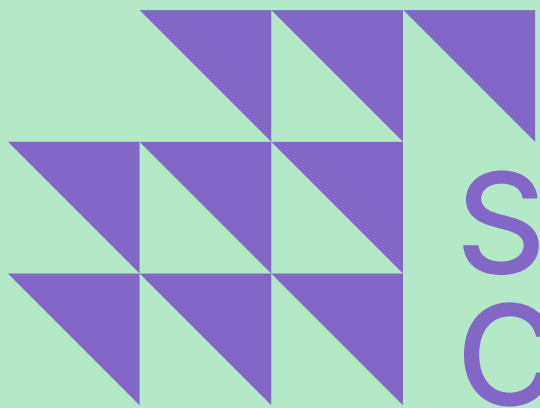
Since its inception in 1975, the scope of UNEP/MAP's endeavor has gradually expanded from combating marine pollution to encompass all the themes pertaining to land- and sea-based pollution prevention and control, biodiversity conservation, coastal management and sustainable development.

The Mediterranean is facing the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss. This enormous environmental pressure is due to unsustainable consumption and production patterns.

We have a Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD 2016-2025) that provides an integrative policy framework for all stakeholders to translate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs into action at the regional, national and local levels in the Mediterranean region.

The Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean and the State of Environment and Development in the Mediterranean Report (SoED 2020) both recognize that patterns of consumption and production need to be changed to decouple human development from degradation of the marine and coastal environment. Similarly, the MSSD recognizes that a combined implementation of diverse actions, involving policy makers, businesses, retailers, academia and civil society is needed in order to redesign the way in which goods and services are produced and consumed in an innovative manner to drive the revitalization of industrial and socio-economic development towards non-pollutant, no-waste, low-carbon, resource efficient, socially inclusive, green and circular economies.

The implementation of Circularity and SCP approaches is an important part of the solution in achieving the Good Environmental Status (GES) of the Mediterranean Sea and coast.



# SwitchMed Connect 2022

## PROGRAMME

## Day 1

9:00–9:30

Arrival of participants and registration procedures

9:30–9:50

Official opening  
(Sala Arengo)

Official opening and welcoming:

Moderation: **Mr. Alessandro Miraglia**, Team Leader of the Networking and Communication Facility at MedWaves

Welcoming: **Mr. Stefano Dotto**, Head of sector at DG NEAR (online)

Intervention 1: **Ms. Müge Dolun**, Industrial Development Officer at UNIDO

Intervention 2: **Mr. Ilias Mavroeidis**, Programme Management Officer at UNEP/MAP

Intervention 3: **Mr. Luc Reuter**, Programme officer at UNEP

9:50–10:00

Keynote speech  
(Sala Arengo)

Opening keynote speech

SwitchMed key stakeholder to deliver a keynote speech highlighting the importance of Circular Economy for the ecological transition and in the Mediterranean and how SwitchMed is relevant to the transition.

**Mr. Hossam Allam**, Regional director for sustainable growth at CEDARE

10:00–11:00

Plenary session 1  
(Sala Arengo)

A collaborative partnership to drive circular economy transition in the Mediterranean

This plenary session will address the state of play of the initiative, presenting key results achieved by the different components and how they are effectively contributing to the transition to a circular economy in the Mediterranean by addressing common challenges and proposing integrated solutions:

Moderation: **Mr. Alessandro Miraglia**, Team Leader of the Networking and Communication Facility at MedWaves

Intervention 1: State of play of the Industry component within the SwitchMed programme  
**Ms. Roberta de Palma**, Chief Technical Advisor at UNIDO

Intervention 2: State of play of the Green Entrepreneurship component within the SwitchMed programme  
**Mr. Giorgio Mosangini**, Green Entrepreneurship and Civil Society Team Leader at MedWaves

Intervention 3: State of play of the Policy Regional component within the SwitchMed programme  
**Ms. Magali Outters**, Policy Team Leader at MedWaves

Intervention 4: State of play of the Policy National component within the SwitchMed programme.  
**Mr. Luc Reuter**, programme Officer at UNEP

11:00–11:30

Coffee break

11:30–13:00

Plenary session 2  
(Sala Arengo)

The SwitchMed LAB

This plenary session will dive deeper into SwitchMed impacts, presenting and analyzing best practices and case studies while promoting cross-exchange among the different components.

Opening and moderation: **Ms. Julia Pierraccini**, Communication Manager, MedWaves

Intervention 1: Launch of TheSwitchers Policy Hub and the Euro-Med Week for Waste reduction

Moderation: **Ms. Ananda Alonso**, Impact Investment and Policy Manager at MedWaves  
**Mr. Ilias Mavroeidis**, Programme Management Officer at UNEP/MAP  
**Ms. Roksolana Shelest**, Associate Economic Affairs Officer at UNECE  
**Ms. Serena Lisai**, Project Officer, AISBL ACR+

Intervention 2: The Green Entrepreneurship programme of SwitchMed: supporting the emergence of eco-innovative start-ups.

Moderation: **Mr. Daniel Pelufo**, Green Entrepreneurship Manager at MedWaves

How is SwitchMed strengthening Business Support Organizations?  
**Ms. Meriem Hachami**, Public relations officer at CTPES

Examples of sustainable business projects supported by SwitchMed  
**Ms. Enas Radwan**, Founder of eRecycleHUB  
**Mr. Makrem Ghidaoui**, Founder of Blue Octopus  
**Ms. Batoul Hakim**, Founder of Savvy Element

Intervention 3: Cases from the SwitchMed industry component

Moderation: **Ms. Roberta De Palma**, Chief Technical Advisor at UNIDO

Promoting continued adoption of TEST and circular practices in Lebanese industries  
**Ms. Gabriela Cordoba**, Resource Efficiency and Cleaner Production Expert at UNIDO

Promoting Circular textile value chains in Egypt  
**Mr. Ayman Elzahaby**, TEST Coordinator at UNIDO

Promoting a sustainable and resource-efficient aquaculture in the Mediterranean  
**Mr. Benoit Wuatelet**, SwitchMed Blue Economy Team Leader at UNIDO

## Palacongressi

13:00–14:15

Networking lunch  
(Sala Castello 2)

14:15–15:30

Hands-on workshop 1  
(Sala Ponte)

Access to Finance: tools and opportunities

Round-table and debate:

Moderation: **Ms. Ananda Alonso**, Impact Investment and Policy Manager at MedWaves

Intervention 1: **Mr. Daniel Sorrosal**, General Secretary at FEBEA

Intervention 2: **Ms. Carola Carrazzone**, Vice President at PHILEA

Intervention 3: **Mr. Gianluca Gaggiotti**, Research Manager at EVPA

Intervention 4: **Mr. Giacomo Pinaffo**, Project Manager at Fondazione di Comunità di Messina

14:15–15:30

Hands-on workshop 2  
(Sala Arengo)

Plastics in a Circular Economy

Marine litter represents a pressing environmental challenge in the Mediterranean region. Upstream actions are urgently needed to close the plastic tap and reduce marine litter. The session will dive into the complexity of managing plastics within a circular economy.

Opening and introduction to the session:  
**Mr. Benoit Wuatelet**, SwitchMed Blue Economy Team Leader at UNIDO  
**Ms. Magali Outters**, Policy Team Leader at MedWaves

Interactive session: How to redesign a package for recycling?  
**Dr. Shira Rosen**, Chairman of the Israeli packaging institute

Intervention 1: Circularity in plastics – How to tackle a vicious problem?  
**Mr. Avi Blau**, Director of Afeka institute of circular engineering and economy

Intervention 3: Examples of circular design practices to safely prevent or minimize plastic waste from single-use plastic products (SUPPs)  
**Ms. Alessandra Pomé**, international expert

Closing – Take away messages

14:15–15:30

Hands-on workshop 3  
(Sala Porto)

Open Eco-Innovation: co-creating solutions for circular business challenges

This workshop will offer participants insights on the Open eco-innovation manual for circular economy enablers and will serve to identify and formulate real circularity challenges, develop and share ideas answering to these needs and come out with concrete innovation concepts.

The workshop is directed to Business Support Organizations, industries and practitioners willing to gain knowledge about Open eco-innovation and how to develop open eco-innovation processes.

Moderation: **Ms. Anna Ibañez**, Open eco-innovation Manager at MedWaves

Intervention 1: **Mr. Ignasi Clos**, Managing Director at SDLI

Intervention 2: **Ms. Neveen Badr**, Operations Lead at Yomken

Living Lab: working groups involving all participants

15:30–16:30

Networking break  
(Foyer)

16:00–17:30

SwitchMed Steering Committee  
(Sala Sala Castello 1)

SwitchMed Steering Committee

It will be organized and led by UNIDO. It will convene donors' representatives, focal points and managers to discuss the state of play and propose strategic adjustments to the action.



## Day 2

9:00 – 9:30

Arrival of participants and registration procedures

9:30 – 11:00

High-level panel

A just transition to Circular Economy in the southern Mediterranean

The High-level panel provides a global context for the following thematic conferences. Panellists will share their perspectives on the current regional landscape, particularly focusing on those leverage points which can enable a transition to a just Circular Economy in the Mediterranean.

The discussions will help convey a genuine picture and understanding of the regional background, depicting multiple intersecting challenges and potential solutions catering to the needs of the private sector and society as a whole.

Moderation: **Ms. Müge Dolun**, Industrial Development Officer at UNIDO

Opening statement by DG Near: **Mr. Maciej Popowski**, Acting Director-General – Directorate General Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) (online)

Intervention from UNIDO: **Mr. Stephan Sicars**, Director of the Division of Circular Economy and Environmental Protection at UNIDO

Intervention from UNEP/MAP: **Mr. Ilias Mavroeidis**, Programme Management Officer at UNEP/MAP

Intervention from UFM: **Mr. Almotaz Abadi**, Deputy Secretary General for Water, Environment and Blue Economy at Ufm (online)

Intervention from UNECE: **Ms. Elizabeth Tuerk**, Director of the economic Cooperation and Trade at UNECE (online)

11:00 – 11:30

Networking break

11:30 – 13:00

Thematic conference 1

Moving the Mediterranean textile and fashion industry towards greener and circular business models

This conference will shed some light on how businesses in the Mediterranean are launching platforms, collaborations and initiatives to reach sustainability targets such as; implementing recycling technologies; increasing the use of sustainably produced fibers; implementing safer chemical protocols; and improving the valorization of post-industrial and post-consumer textile waste.

Welcoming:  
**Ms. Roberta De Palma**, Chief Technical Adviser at UNIDO

Keynote speech  
**Mr. Paolo Sandri**, Senior Policy Office, Euratex

Thematic contribution 1: SwitchMed pilot projects from Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco, in collaboration with the ZDHC Foundation, targeting safer chemical protocols in the textile industry.  
**Ms. Elisa Gavazza**, Southern Europe Hub manager at the ZDHC Foundation

Thematic contribution 2: Safer chemical management in the textile industry and the impacts of hazardous chemicals on the circularity in the textile value chain.  
**Ms. Marie Louis Bishara**, President of the Apparel Export Council of Egypt

Thematic contribution 3: Sustainability challenges and opportunities of industry in the North African Region, strategic partnerships and collaborations in place to advance circularity of the local industry, traceability and transparency for textile waste recycling value chains.  
**Ms. Sara Mariani**, Chief Sustainability Officer at OTB Group

Thematic contribution 4: Circular business opportunities in Tunisia? What is needed to support textile and garment industries in Tunisia in becoming the suppliers of the future?  
**Mr. Haithem Bouajila**, Managing Director at Tunicotex

Thematic contribution 5: Circular business models for valorising post-industrial textile waste and business opportunities for localizing textile recycling value chains in the Mediterranean.  
**Mr. Khalid Kairouch**, Production manager at EVLOX

Moderation: **Ms. Anna Ibañez**, Open eco-innovation Manager at MedWaves

Thematic contribution 6: Creating new business and entrepreneurship opportunities through revalorisation of pre-consumer textile waste in Jordan  
**Ms. Burcu Tuncer**, Co-lead Circular Economy at Adelphi

Thematic contribution 7: Circular business opportunities in the south Mediterranean: how can businesses lead the way to sustainable fashion?  
**Ms. Ferda Ulutas Isevi**, Sustainability and Circular Economy expert

Thematic contribution (Case Study 1): Circular business models for post-consumer textile waste: attaining the sustainability triple bottom line, integrating and scaling up entrepreneurship in Lebanon.  
**Mr. Omar Itani**, CEO and Founder at Fabric Aid

Thematic contribution (Case Study 2): Recovering resources after disposal: eco-innovative recovering value and upcycling strategies in the fashion sector in Egypt.  
**Ms. Mai Hossam**, Founder and Managing Partner at Darjee

## Rimini Expo Fair

13:00 – 14:30

Networking lunch

15:45 – 17:30

Thematic conference 2

SwitchMed: sustainable and circular fish food systems for a Blue Economy in the Mediterranean

This conference will discuss how more resource efficient modes of production will be key for the future sustainability of the fish processing industry, saving water and energy per unit of product. Innovative solutions for processing fish waste into co-products with a high added value could help the industry become more profitable, diversify the product portfolio, create new jobs, improve the resilience of businesses, and better retain the value from maritime resources into the economy.

Fishery and aquaculture production with its steady upward trend over the last decades plays an essential role to ensure food for human consumption. Considering the relevance of both sectors and the existing challenges in the production chain (ghost gears, by-catch, discharge and waste of sea-food products, waste generated from transportation and packaging, etc.), the opportunity to develop circular economy initiatives in the Mediterranean is great and would largely benefit both the economy of the sectors and the marine environment.

Opening remarks  
**Mr. Benoit Wuatelet**, SwitchMed Blue Economy Team Leader at UNIDO

Thematic contribution 1: State of play of circular blue economy practices in the Mediterranean and future opportunities.  
**Ms. Magali Outters**, Policy Team Leader at MedWaves

Thematic contribution 2: Biotechnological applications of co-products valorisation in the fish processing value chain. The Moroccan experience for biomedical, nutraceutical, cosmetic, agro-industrial applications.  
**Dr. Mariem Kharroubi**, Research Director and Head of the CVSTPM (Centre Spécialisé de Valorisation des Produits de la Mer) of the INRH (National Institute of Halieutic Research)

Thematic contribution 3: Identified business models and opportunities to increase the circularity of the fish processing value chain in Morocco.  
**Mr Charles Delannoy**, CEO and General Manager at Procidys

Thematic contribution 4: The UNIDO SwitchMed pilot project in Tunisia for a sustainable aquaculture: Improving the FCR (Feed Conversion Rate) using SMART Technologies for resource-efficient production systems.  
**Dr. Mohamed Salah Azaza**, Senior research scientist and Director of the Aquaculture Laboratory at the INSTM (Tunisian National Institute of Marine Sciences and Technology)

Innovative Business Case 1: Use of insect-based dry protein and lipid product for aquaculture - the case of Next Protein  
**Ms. Syrine Chaalala and Mr. Mohamed Gastili**, Founders of Next Protein

Innovative Business Case 2 – Blue Economy emerging sector: algae production - the case of AlgaeCore producing spiruline  
**Mr. Baruch Dach**, Co-founder of AlgaeCore

14:00 – 18:00

Free visit to Ecomondo

18:00 – 18:45

#EYESONBLUE Award ceremony

#EYESONBLUE Award Ceremony

This ceremony will award the winners of the #EYESONBLUE competition. The competition was jointly organized by the European Commission Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG-NEAR), EU Neighbours South, and the SwitchMed programme, aimed at selecting the best 3 Blue entrepreneurs whose projects focus on water or the Blue Economy.

Moderation: **Ms. Maya Karkour**, Founder of EcoConsulting and Environmental Consultant

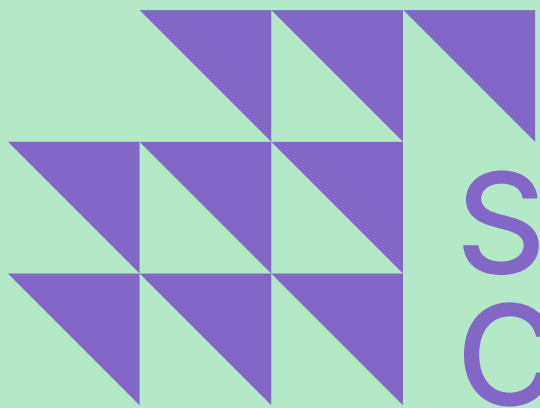
Welcome note. Throwback at the contest and the campaign #EyesonBlue at a glance.  
**Ms. Joumana Brihi**, Team Leader & Strategic Communication Expert at EU Neighbours South  
**Mr. Alessandro Miraglia**, Team Leader of the Networking and Communication Facility at MedWaves

#EyesonBlue: discovering eco-innovative solutions addressing water scarcity and blue economy in the Mediterranean.  
**Prof. Fabio Fava**, Full Professor of Industrial & Environmental Biotechnology  
**Prof. Michael Scoullas**, Team Leader of Water and Environment Support (WES) in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood region

Announcements of the 3 winners: the winners and their projects under the spotlight.

18:45 – 19:30

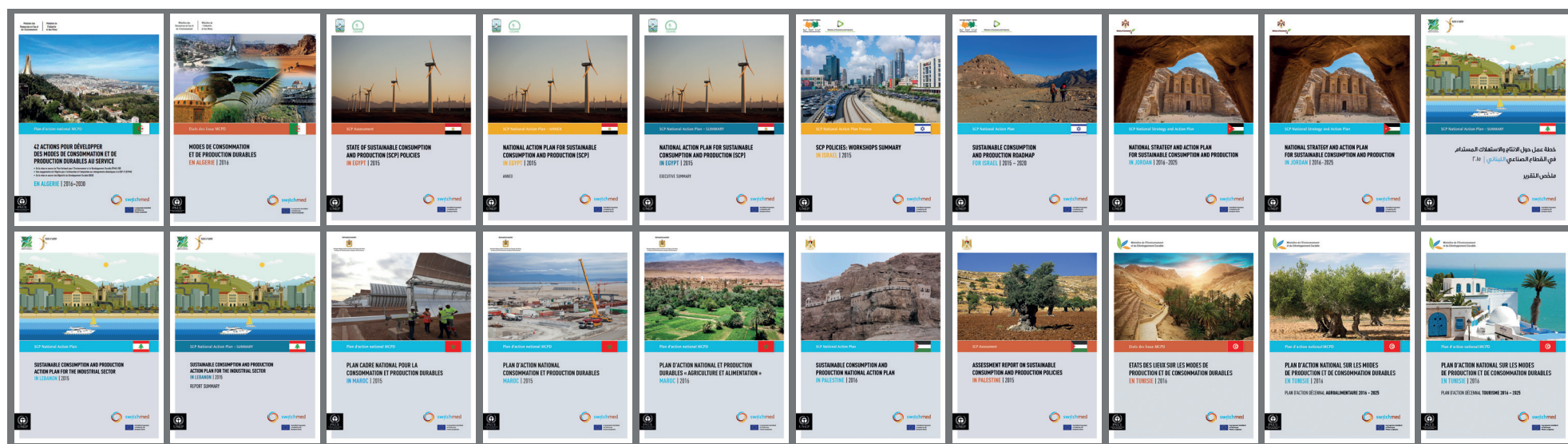
Closing Ceremony + cocktail



# SwitchMed Connect 2022

## PROGRAMME

# Strengthening policy framework at the national level



SwitchMed is assisting governments reorienting consumption and production patterns toward sustainable development. UNEP is responsible for the Policy component at the national level.

UNEP has been providing advisory services and technical support to the eight southern Mediterranean countries in the development of their Sustainable Consumption and Production National Action Plans (SCP-NAPs) and a variety of demonstration projects in Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Palestine during the first phase of SwitchMed (2013-2018). The eight national action plans have been developed through multi-stakeholder processes (government, civil society, private sector, media, academia, international community) and validated during technical national workshops. Among others, more than 25 multi-stakeholder national workshops and roundtables were organized with over 1,500 participants and demonstration projects based on the respective SCP-NAPs were implemented in four countries (Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Palestine).

The second phase of the project focuses on enhancing economic opportunities for businesses following green and circular economy models, enabling resource-efficient circular economies at national and regional levels, and coordinating and communicating to ensure a cohesive regional approach. Under phase II of SwitchMed (2019-2023), UNEP continues the efforts from the first phase and supports the implementation of the eight SCP-NAPs through progress monitoring, which allows integration of lessons learned by all countries' partners working on SCP — including the outcomes and decisions from the High-level political forum on SDGs (HLPF) and the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA). UNEP further cooperates with national partners on NAP implementation through the activities on monitoring and review of the SCP-NAPs and the implementation of demonstration projects of SCP-NAPs as well as support the SCP mainstreaming into the Blue Economy in the eight countries in which SwitchMed is implemented.

A special focus concentrates on establishing strong linkages between the country owned SCP national action plans and the growing international experience between SCP and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as national responses to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. UNEP collaborates with countries to (i) ensure effective monitoring of progress in the implementation of the SCP-NAPs and support to their annual SDG reporting and (ii) supports implementation through concrete projects at country level that address specific needs expressed by national stakeholders and that translate into tangible “on the ground” action in the countries. Each country process is tailored around national priorities and government-led.

This is being achieved through:

Multi-stakeholder, nationally-owned and driven processes — in-line with international agendas (SDG, UNEA resolutions, Paris agreement, biodiversity);

Engagement of governments, public and private sector, consumers and civil society organizations;

Implementation of behavioural changes and development of sustainable products, services, and markets;

Support to the emergence of more sustainable lifestyles oriented by available and accessible consumer information tools.



# Supporting start-ups and entrepreneurs develop circular business models

Prevailing production and consumption patterns have led to significant environmental degradation and rising inequalities. The main environmental challenges facing the Mediterranean region include greenhouse gas emissions causing climate change, rising waste and emissions, desertification and water scarcity or accelerated loss of biodiversity. To meet these challenges, a new type of business must emerge, providing commercial solutions which create ecological value and safeguard the environment (addressing environmental challenges and reducing environmental impacts) while being economically viable and socially empowering.

SwitchMed Green Entrepreneurship programme is led by MedWaves and promotes national ecosystems supporting the emergence of innovative sustainable businesses in the southern Mediterranean countries. Engaging diverse stakeholders, such as business support organizations (BSOs), trainers and mentors, financial institutions, policy makers, and the sustainable entrepreneurs themselves, the SwitchMed programme is responsible for promoting the development of sustainable business models which have a beneficial impact on the planet, the people and the economy.

MedWaves calls these innovative sustainable entrepreneurs “The Switchers”. The main objective of the SwitchMed Green Entrepreneurship programme is to support national ecosystems aimed at creating these innovative and new circular businesses. Sustainable businesses, which are active in a variety of sectors (such as sustainable farming, renewable energies, waste management, green building, sustainable textiles and cosmetics, or eco-tourism), can achieve triple bottom line benefits in the Mediterranean region:

1. **Environmental benefits:** by helping the implementation of low-carbon and SCP circular economies to tackle climate change, promoting biodiversity protection, reducing waste and emissions, increasing renewable energy use, enabling land and water conservation, etc.;
2. **Social benefits:** boosting decent employment creation, especially for women and youth, promoting gender equality, etc.;
3. **Economic benefits:** creating new sustainable businesses, increasing the availability of sustainable products and services, leveraging funds for circular business models development, etc.

To achieve enabling ecosystems for sustainable business development, MedWaves through the SwitchMed Green Entrepreneurship programme, works closely with multiple stakeholders who should align their actions with the common goal of supporting circular business development. Thus, MedWaves works closely with green and circular entrepreneurs

and companies, business support organisations, trainers and mentors, financial institutions, policy makers and other relevant actors.

First of all, in support of all stakeholders, MedWaves creates innovative methodologies and tools for sustainable business development, not only oriented towards economic value creation, but also to environmental and social value creation, addressing ecological and social challenges and needs. Thanks to MedWaves business development methodologies, eco-design and life cycle thinking are embedded in the tools used, among others, to develop a business model, draft a business plan or assess the environmental and social impacts of a start-up.

Regarding **BSOs**, MedWaves is bringing them together under the “Switchers Support National Partnerships”. These partnerships are non-institutional networks gathering public, private and non-profit BSOs under the common objective of promoting sustainable business development.

With respect to **trainers and mentors**, MedWaves develops extensive training of trainers’ programmes to transfer sustainable business development tools and methodologies to them in order to enhance their capacities for circular business creation.

Regarding **start-ups and entrepreneurs**, MedWaves supports them in collaboration with the BSOs members of the National Partnerships and the trainers appointed for the trainings. The programme supports Switchers at every stage of their business development (ideation, early-stage and growth), providing them with a comprehensive set of support services to design, develop and accelerate their green and circular businesses (green business model and green business plan development, mentoring and coaching, technical assistance, access to finance, etc.).

Finally, concerning **financial actors**, these are key stakeholders mobilized by MedWaves at regional and national levels to promote access to finance for sustainable entrepreneurs. With this aim, the programme organizes match-making activities to facilitate financial deals between Switchers and financial actors at national level. At the regional level, the programme is developing the Switchers Fund, an Equity Fund investing in circular and social businesses in the Mediterranean.

During SwitchMed phase I (2013-2018), MedWaves created unique and innovative methodologies to support entrepreneurs in developing and testing their green business models and plans. In cooperation with local BSOs in the 8 southern Mediterranean countries in which SwitchMed is implemented, more than 120 local trainers were trained in sustainable business development and supporting programmes targeting green entrepreneurs were developed. As a result, more than 2,200 green entrepreneurs (38% women and 38% under 29 years old) were supported to develop their green business models. The best 48 green business projects were incubated (44% women), combining mentoring and external technical assistance, to launch their companies. The most represented sectors were sustainable waste management, organic food and agriculture, renewable energies and sustainable building. The programme raised 2.5 million € through match-making activities between the green entrepreneurs and financial actors. It is estimated that phase I of the Green Entrepreneurship programme contributed to the creation of 250 new sustainable companies.

Under phase II of the SwitchMed programme (2019-2023) and building upon the results of phase I, MedWaves is aiming at scaling up the approach fostering national ecosystems of stakeholders supporting sustainable business development, thus promoting the establishment of the Switchers Support National Partnerships. More than 110 BSOs (public institutions, private companies and non-profit organisations) are currently members of these partnerships working toward sustainable business development.

As a basis for the entire programme, and to ensure the transfer and free access to its methodologies, MedWaves has launched **The Switchers Toolbox** ([www.theswitchers.org/toolbox](http://www.theswitchers.org/toolbox)), digitalizing existing tools and developing new ones for circular business development. The online platform, available in Arabic, English and French, offers its tools to green entrepreneurs, sustainable businesses, BSOs, trainers and mentors and financial actors in the following fields:

Green business model development

Green business plan development

Eco-design

Access to market

Impact measurement

Start-ups and entrepreneurs can use the tools in an autonomous way. The platform also allows interactions between the different users, including for the implementation of supporting programmes. So far, the platform has more than 6,000 entrepreneurs registered as users.

In line with the objective of building local capacities, a major effort has been devoted to the trainings of trainers. Thus, far exceeding initial expectations, more than 260 local trainers (50% women) have been trained in sustainable business development in 8 southern Mediterranean countries. 94% of participants have rated the training of trainers as very good or good and 97% intend to include the content of the training and the web platform in the programmes provided by their BSO and provide other trainers with its content.

Regarding direct support to green entrepreneurs, the Switchers Support National Partnerships have already trained more than 850 green entrepreneurs in green business model development (49% women) and are incubating more than 90 circular start-ups (56% represented by women) under phase II of the SwitchMed programme. A specific training and incubation programme will also be delivered for entrepreneurs in the Blue Economy sectors.

MedWaves will also continue enabling access to finance for sustainable start-ups it supports, engaging financial actors in the different countries. Furthermore, thanks to a collaboration with an Italian financial cooperative, it is expected to convert The Switchers Fund into a legal financial structure, building an Equity Fund providing patient impact capital to circular and social start-ups in the Mediterranean.

Finally, at the end of the programme, with the aim of demonstrating the added value of sustainable enterprises, the ecological, social and economic impacts of various supported start-ups will be assessed using the impact measurement tool available in The Switchers Toolbox.



**Cynthia  
Kreidy**

**Sustainability consultant  
and analyst**

Cynthia Kreidy is a sustainability consultant and analyst. She works as a development policy analyst and modeller at the Millennium institute and the UN Environment Program. In Sharing Municipalities, Cynthia is in charge of the outreach, follow-up with partners, and the team's organization and management.

**Christelle  
Bou Harb**

**Renewable energy  
and logistics expert**

Christelle Bou Harb is a renewable energy and logistics expert with a mechanical engineering background. She is currently working at the Environment and Sustainable Development Unit of the American University of Beirut (AUB) as a renewable energy specialist. In the Sharing Municipalities initiative, Christelle is responsible of the technological development of the project.

**Talar  
Kokjian**

**Communication  
and project officer**

Talar Kokjian is a communication and project officer at cewas, with a background in project management and marketing. In Sharing Municipalities, she is currently handling communications and the operations.

“Through Sharing Municipalities, we have committed to finding a sustainable and responsible solution to the problem of waste in Lebanon.”

Christelle, Cynthia and Talar are three promising Lebanese green entrepreneurs who participated in SwitchMed Green Entrepreneurship programme, enabling them to turn their green business idea into a developed green business model and plan through an intensive training and mentoring process. They are now in the incubation phase, receiving technical assistance for building capacity regarding waste management.

#### Can you describe your sustainable project?

Through “Sharing Municipalities”, we have committed to finding a sustainable and responsible solution to the problem of waste in Lebanon. Our primary objective is to stop the unorganized disposal of waste and find a cost-reduced approach to manage it through establishing a sense of independency for municipalities so that their waste treatment is no longer subject to the uncertainties of national contractors. The concept of “sharing” resources will allow municipalities to collect, sort and recycle waste in a cost efficient and sustainable manner.

We will do this by creating a coalition of municipalities and assisting them in developing a collaborative strategic waste management plan based on sharing resources between them (equipment, machinery, trucks, know-how, etc.). The process has started by gathering 3 municipalities from the Keserwan area (Lebanon) with whom we had a first meeting where we presented our solution. Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) were signed subsequently with all of them.

#### How did/do the SwitchMed programme help you?

We were able to scale up our knowledge on the business model canvas and business model plan. Through the help of our mentors, we were able to be specific and strategic at the same time in whatever innovation we wanted to bring to the areas we

are covering in Sharing Municipalities. The mentoring sessions helped us depict our needs and come up with a clear roadmap for our initiative as well as strengthen our model of operations.

The strengths of the SwitchMed programme are its interactive platform, TheSwitchers.org, and the well-structured modules of the Green Entrepreneurship programme that provide tips and explanations. They guide the entrepreneur in establishing his/her business plan.

#### What are the key achievements/results of your collaboration with SwitchMed?

We received support from our mentors who helped us identify our gaps, how to address them, and plan the way forward. When we were working on our business model canvas and business model plan, they have guided us and advised us to be precise and concise about every supplier we would like to get involved with while keeping the safest approach possible for our initiative.

The next step for Sharing Municipalities is to put our green business plan to action and combine it with the knowledge that we gained from the SwitchMed expert.





# Connecting key Mediterranean stakeholders

Connecting, exchanging and exploring synergies with others  
is key to foster the transition to the circular economy.

The Networking Facility, implemented by MedWaves, supports the effective coordination and visibility of the SwitchMed programme.

The Networking Facility identifies, analyses and disseminates results and impacts of the different components of the programme, facilitating a smooth exchange of information among internal and external partners. It is also connecting them through networking opportunities and exploring synergies for cooperation, including through the organization or participation to events. In addition to this, the Networking Facility is working on the elaboration of a network of stakeholders to support green entrepreneurs and connect them to existing value chains and new markets, stimulating the demand for sustainable products and services, based on open innovation methodologies and financial scalable solutions.

Under phase I of SwitchMed (2013-2018), the Networking Facility launched a website dedicated to the programme that recorded more than 500,000 page views as well as several other online platforms for specific activities related to the programme such as the SwitchMed Connect website or The Switchers Fund.

It organized many events and 3 editions of the SwitchMed Connect, in 2015, 2016 and 2018. More than 1,000 participants from 16 different countries attended this gathering.

It also established social media channels, engaging more than 10,000 followers.

Under Phase II (2019-2023), the Networking Facility is communicating about the activities implemented by the SwitchMed programme as well as its results.

SwitchMed has set different channels to disseminate information. It has a dedicated website gathering the essential information of the programme: <http://switchmed.eu>. It displays all updates and publications of the programme and offers the possibility to register to its newsletter that is sent quarterly to more than 2 100 contacts. The website records an average of 2 500 visitors per month. To further disseminate information and connect with its audience, SwitchMed is also active on social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and Flickr) with about 20 000 followers.

Thanks to online tools and with the support of its local partners, the Networking facility is tracking the visibility of the SwitchMed programme and its presence in the media.

The Networking Facility, which is constantly searching for new synergies to develop partnerships and therefore carry out joint activities, is also collaborating with its partners on joint communication campaigns to further increase the visibility of the SwitchMed programme.



The #EyesonGreen competition

The #EYESONGREEN regional competition is an initiative of the European Commission’s DG NEAR, the EU Neighbours South regional communication programme, and the SwitchMed programme.

It aims at selecting the best sustainable entrepreneurs whose projects are having significant positive environmental and social impacts in the Southern Mediterranean region. The first edition was organized in 2021 on the occasion of the World Environment Day while the 2022 edition, entitled #EYESONBLUE was launched for the World Ocean Day and focuses on water and Blue Economy.

The Networking Facility ensures the visibility of the SwitchMed programme through events that it is organizing or participating to. It is screening the different events that are taking place and that can be of relevance for the programme, trying to make the most out of these opportunities. These happenings, which can be both in-person or online, are also suitable occasions to enable networking with relevant stakeholders.

The flagship event of the programme is the SwitchMed Connect. Organised once a year, this event is a gathering of Mediterranean stakeholders that aims to build synergies, exchange knowledge and scale up eco and social innovations. It hosts a representative sample of SwitchMed key audience, namely leading start-ups and entrepreneurs, industry agents, change agents, policy and financial institutions working on applications of productive, circular and sharing economies in the Mediterranean as well as the focal points of the programme and other high-level representatives of the SwitchMed ecosystem.

SwitchMed Connect 2022, organized on 9-10 November 2022 in Rimini (Italy), is the second edition of the event under phase II of the programme. Learn more about this edition on page 16 and 17.

In addition to these communication and networking activities, MedWaves, through the Networking Facility, is supporting entrepreneurs to access to sustainable finance.

They are financially supported thanks to The Switchers Fund, and also through the creation of stakeholder networks that are mobilized in order to support their access to finance. MedWaves is working to unlock access to finance for green and circular economy start-ups and MSMEs. Task Forces on sustainable finance were established in partnership with relevant local partners in different SwitchMed countries. Several reports, available at the Resources section of the website, were published for these occasions.

The Networking Facility is responsible for integrating green entrepreneurs in the value chains through networking activities and open eco-innovation activities.

It is doing so by supporting the consumption of sustainable products and services. To this end, it launched **The Switchers Products** online platform. Integrated within TheSwitchers.org, The Switchers Products provides users with a wide range of services to improve their green and circular businesses while ensuring utmost visibility to their products and services. As for the eco-innovation activities, another online platform, which is part of TheSwitchers.org ecosystem as well, was recently launched: **The Switchers Open Eco-Innovation**. The open eco-innovation approach is used on this platform to match the seekers of green and circular business solutions (companies and public institutions) with the providers (start-ups and entrepreneurs). The objective is to bring together eco-innovation actors to strengthen the Mediterranean ecosystem by supporting the development of sustainable innovations. It also provides the tools to support entrepreneurs fund and develop their innovative ideas that respond to the challenges hosted on the platform.

MedWaves has also developed a manual addressed to organisations willing to facilitate open eco-innovation processes. The manual covers the whole open innovation process, from engaging solutions seekers and identifying open eco-innovation challenges to the development of solutions by innovators and start-ups. The manual is made of 8 parts in which enablers will find processes, tools and services associated to each stage.











Joumana  
Brihi

Team Leader,  
EU Neighbours South

Joumana Brihi is a strategic communication and market research consultant with more than 15 years of experience in providing analysis to a broad variety of clients. She has worked with SMEs, start-ups and established companies, as well as public institutes and international organizations. She started working as an independent consultant in 2009, and created a consulting network called ‘remark’.

In the past ten years, she has been mostly working with international organisations, governments, donors and public institutes. Her latest and most significant project consists of leading a team of experts in charge of running the EU-funded regional communication programme: EU Neighbours South. The programme creates communication campaigns, develops and nurtures a network of journalists, media and influencers, carries out opinion polls and provides strategic communication consulting services to EU Delegations in the South Mediterranean region.

“SwitchMed is a reference for us at EU Neighbours South whenever we wish to communicate about the EU’s Green Deal and green solutions.”

#### How did you know SwitchMed?

SwitchMed is a reference for us at EU Neighbours South whenever we wish to communicate about the EU’s Green Deal and green solutions. In the past years, we have been committed to communicating on the basis of major ‘themes’ of importance to all of our audiences across 10 countries of the EU southern neighbourhood, and the environment is of course one of them. We have therefore identified all bilateral and regional programmes and projects that can be taken as best practices and examples of how the EU puts policy to practice. Switchmed is of course one such example with whom we have partnered already twice for environment-related campaigns.

#### How did/do you collaborate with the programme?

We have collaborated on two environment related campaigns: Eyes on Green: in 2021, a contest between green enterprises from the Switchmed programme to mark World Environment Day by showcasing 14 participants who offer sustainable solutions to real environmental issues in their countries. Three winners were selected by a jury, and an online closing ceremony was organised to announce the winners and hear from them.

Eyes on Blue: in 2022, the concept was further developed and narrowed down to the issue of water scarcity and Blue Economy, hence Eyes on Blue. The campaign expanded to include a number of strategic awareness messages about water and Blue Economy issues in the region, and to include a series of 8 videos with 8 influencers from across the region whereby each highlights specific water-related issues in their countries, and showcases EU projects and programmes that address these issues.

In both collaborations, SwitchMed and EU Neighbours South worked very closely together on all aspects of the campaign, with our team more focused on creative content and communication, and SwitchMed on the technical aspects of the contest.

#### What are the key achievements/results of your collaboration with SwitchMed?

The campaigns are very successful, and highly engaging. They help us together raise awareness about key environmental issues, and highlight the solutions that are being offered by the EU to tackle such issues. They also showcase opportunities for young green entrepreneurs in the EU Southern Neighbourhood.

#### What are the strengths of the SwitchMed programme according to you?

It is a unique programme in the sense that it provides very comprehensive tools for young entrepreneurs to help their businesses thrive and address the growing environmental challenges in the region. The community of Switchers has grown and become of renown regionally, it is something many young individuals aspire to. SwitchMed brings together unique expertise, being in terms of human resources or know-how, that is helping improve people’s understanding about the environment and the opportunities that exist to tackle various challenges. The programme manages to reach a large number of people thanks to all of its events, competitions and contests.

Thanks to SwitchMed, we were able to reach the right audience for our campaigns.

#### What future collaborations do you envisage with the programme?

We will always work with SwitchMed when talking about the environment. There will be an environment campaign every year as long as EU Neighbours South is operating, and hence future collaborations in 2023 may focus on a different issue affecting the environment.

# Promoting principles of sustainable consumption and production in blue economic sectors

For centuries, the sea has enabled trade, offered livelihoods, and defined the socio-economic development of the Mediterranean region. Economic activities from the sea continue to play an essential role in providing the region's income and food. But to ensure that economic activities can continue to shape growth and livelihoods for the region, practices in these sectors must protect ocean ecosystems, biodiversity, and the long-term viability of fish stocks for future generations.

The SwitchMed blue economy component seeks to demonstrate and promote sustainable consumption and production principles in key "blue" economic sectors. Each SwitchMed implementing partner has integrated specific blue economy actions within their area of expertise to support the adoption of more sustainable business practices in key activities that can support the development of more resilient blue economy sectors in the southern Mediterranean region.

With funding from the European Commission Directorate-General for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), and the support of the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs (DG MARE), the second phase of the SwitchMed programme is, until 2023, extending circular economy principles to the eight SwitchMed countries through this additional component.

Under the SwitchMed Blue Economy component, SCP practices, policy recommendations and eco-innovative business models are being demonstrated in vital marine economic sectors, selected in line with the EU Blue Growth Strategy, to support the development for more resilient Blue Economy sectors in the southern Mediterranean region.

UNIDO has identified priorities that can reduce the environmental impact and increase profitability and resilience in Morocco's fish processing industry and the aquaculture sector of Tunisia. Together with industry stakeholders, UNIDO will provide technical support to address inefficiencies in resource consumption and demonstrate the best available technologies

and practices to showcase the potential for business models that can turn challenges into opportunities while managing marine resources in an eco-efficient way.

In Morocco, UNIDO, in cooperation with the Fédération Nationale des Industries de Transformation des Produits de la Pêche (FENIP), will demonstrate business models with better energy, water and material consumption standards and develop new business opportunities that can better utilize fish co-products from Morocco's fish processing industry.

In Tunisia, UNIDO will, together with the Direction Générale de la pêche et de l'aquaculture (DGPA), and a consortium of national and international experts and stakeholders from the aquaculture value chain in Tunisia, investigate the applicability of eco-innovative technologies and solutions that can improve efficiency and the environmental performance of Tunisia's aquaculture sector.

A selection of eco-innovative technologies that can optimize the feed conversion ratio, improve fish feeding efficiency and the environmental performance in aquacultures will be demonstrated within an aquaculture facility in Monastir Bay to assess the technologies in the industrial context of Tunisia's marine aquaculture. The data, information and experience gathered from the demonstration pilots in Morocco and Tunisia will, together with stakeholder consultations, flow into the development of blue economy roadmaps that can showcase the potential for more sustainable aquafarming and fish-processing in the southern Mediterranean region.



**The Blue Economy concept aspires to manage a sustainable transformation of associated maritime economic activities, such as fisheries and aquaculture, coastal and maritime tourism, port activities and shipbuilding, to reduce their negative impact on marine and coastal ecosystems.**

Under the Regional Policy component, MedWaves, the UNEP/MAP regional activity centre for SCP, aims at mainstreaming Circular Economy within Blue Economy sectors in the Mediterranean policy frameworks. For this, it has prepared the report *“A Circular Blue Economy for the Mediterranean: Current practices and opportunities”*, analysing the state of play in the development of circular economy in some blue sectors in the Mediterranean, also providing some keys to strengthen such developments and foster the transfer process across the sea basin territories. This activity, as well as the organisation of a joint workshop in May 2022 in Barcelona, were carried out in synergy with the Interreg Med Blue Growth Community. MedWaves is also working with countries of the Adriatic region to plan pilot activities on circular blue economy, inspired by the best practices presented in the report. Finally, an upcoming edition of WeMed, the Mediterranean Sustainability Award, will focus on recognising successful blue economy solutions.

At the national level, the Policy component led by the Economy Division of UNEP focuses on piloting innovative projects in three of the key industries and value chains of the Blue Economy, namely fisheries, shipping and/or tourism, in selected port cities in all eight countries in which SwitchMed is implemented. It hence promotes and supports the transition towards circular and blue economies in the southern Mediterranean region. The selected projects will be implemented through developing and strengthening tools and methodologies to support Blue Economy initiatives at country level with, whenever possible, a special focus on activities linked to the countries’ national priorities as mentioned in their SCP-NAPs developed under SwitchMed I. Multi-stakeholder, nationally owned and driven processes will engage governments, municipalities, port authorities, private sector, consumers and civil society organizations in the implementation of the behavioural changes required to promote, support and strengthen Blue Economy.

The SwitchMed Green Entrepreneurship programme, implemented by MedWaves, also includes a Blue Economy component. MedWaves seeks to demonstrate that green entrepreneurs can be active actors in embedding a sustainable and inclusive approach in the Blue Economy, providing circular business solutions to environmental and social challenges faced by the related sectors. MedWaves will strengthen the Switchers Support National Partnerships and the BSOs so they can better support green entrepreneurs identify the main opportunities for them and promote sustainable business development in the Blue Economy sectors.

MedWaves, also responsible for the Networking Facility component under SwitchMed, aims at sharing knowledge and information in order to accelerate the uptake of Blue Economy sectors in green entrepreneurship, raise public awareness about the impact of Blue Economy circular businesses, inform the Blue Economy actors about the programme’s activities and results and set networking opportunities for them. This is being implemented through the enhancement of the SwitchMed channels with the Blue Economy activities carried out under the other components and specific campaigns as well as the organization of or participation in events in that field where regional dissemination and networking opportunities are ensured. In addition to these networking and communication activities, MedWaves will be working on increasing support to the consumption of sustainable products and services for the Blue economy.



Alessandra Sensi

Head of Sector  
- Environment,  
Green and Blue  
Economy; Union for the  
Mediterranean (UfM)

Alessandra Sensi has a University Degree in Political Science/Economic Branch, and a Master's degree in Management and Economics of Energy and Environment. She is Head of Sector, Environment and Blue Economy, at WEBE – the Water, Environment and Blue Economy Division of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean since March 2013. She was Programme Manager of the environment/green economy/climate change portfolio at the European Commission, EuropeAid, between 2009 and 2012.

“SwitchMed supports the aspects related to sustainability and circularity, which are at the core of blue economy activities and overall current Mediterranean challenges.”

Could you introduce the work you are doing in the field of the Sustainable Blue Economy?

At the UfM, together with the European Union and Jordan Co-Presidency, we are working to steer the implementation of the 2nd UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy adopted by the 42 UfM countries in February 2021.

Since then, a “Roadmap for the implementation” on the ten priority areas (such as fisheries and aquaculture, marine litter and coastal and maritime tourism) of the above mentioned Ministerial Declaration has been shaped with countries and a wide range of stakeholders.

Currently, a series of short-term actions are under implementation, including technical assistance, blue finance, upscaling and fund-raising, webinars, participation to events, such as the upcoming COPs (in particular, the Med Pavillion at COP27 in Sharm El Sheikh, with a dedicated session).

How did/do you collaborate with the SwitchMed? Why/How is SwitchMed important to your actions?

The UfM collaborates and supports SwitchMed since the very beginning. SwitchMed is among the key regional programmes on green/circular economy mentioned in the 1st UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate change of 2014.

Since then, the UfM has actively funded many technical assistances and participated to all the most relevant events of SwitchMed.

SwitchMed is also acknowledged within the 2nd UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate change of 2021, under the UfM 2030GreenerMed Agenda and implementation plan aiming to accelerate the transition towards green, circular economy (Priority Axis 1).

What are the key achievements/results of your collaboration with SwitchMed?

The achievements of the collaboration between the UfM and SwitchMed are as follow:

- Building and growing the necessary support among stakeholders to move forward the green transition in the Mediterranean region, at all levels (policy, finance, etc.)
- Support networking and building alliances with other key regional programmes and actors, engaged in the same endeavour at the Mediterranean level (ex. Interreg Med, ENI CBC Med, EBRD; etc.)
- Support also the involvement of the Balkan countries

What are the strengths of the SwitchMed programme according to you?

SwitchMed ensures coordinated actions and relevant financing to the southern Mediterranean countries to support the transition to a green and circular economy. Nowadays, and through other programmes, it is important to consolidate alliances with other regional programmes and actors (through the Interreg Euro-MED and Interreg NEXT MED programmes, among others).

How SwitchMed and its community can contribute to mainstream UfM's strategy on Sustainable Blue Economy?

Building on the experience of the past years, SwitchMed supports the aspects related to sustainability and circularity, which are at the core of blue economy activities and overall current Mediterranean challenges, in particular on 'blue' industry and entrepreneurship/start-ups as well as on sustainable consumption aspects.







