



UNEP Contribution to the European Commission Consultation “Towards a new European Neighbourhood Policy”¹

Summary of UNEP key recommendations:

- *The ENP should aim at further alignment with the sustainable development goals (SDGs).*
- *The mainstreaming of sustainable development objectives in its three pillars, economic, social and environmental needs further attention.*
- *Making better use of existing partnerships with organisations with specific expertise for doing so at country, regional and global levels, incl. UNEP and MEAs, would be an asset and an added value for the countries and the regions. Partnerships should build on existing common goals and commitments, and the achievements of the ENP shall also be closely connected to existing and long-standing regional/sub-regional forums, organizations, with strong country ownership.*
- *The ENP would also benefit from taking a broader approach, reaching out to the neighbours of neighbours, incl. by strengthening linkages with and building on existing regional/sub-regional organizations, foras and processes.*
- *As environment and climate change are key for stability and sustainable development, it is advisable that environment and climate change are considered as a specific dedicated priority area in the ENP.*

PART 1. LESSONS LEARNED AND QUESTIONS ON THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF ENP

Question 1. Should the ENP be maintained? Should a single framework continue to cover both East and South?

The ENP as a framework, is valuable to the EU neighbourhood countries, and the ideals upon which it is based provide for focussed development-oriented cooperation. However, the single ENP framework has proven, at times, **not to be the most conducive framework to address the regional and cross border cooperation on environment and climate change** issues where natural ecosystem boundaries stretch beyond political boundaries. This also has a negative impact on the EU's policies and efforts to address challenges such as climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity, water management in a transboundary context, resource efficiency and trade flows.

Therefore the revised ENP could entail the adoption of a **multilevel approach based on a mixture of regional and sub-regional partnerships**. It should also foresee mechanisms that would (1) **address the whole region beyond the current ENP border** – thereby including some key neighbouring countries and natural regions (e.g. Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, Caspian Sea, etc.) and (2) reach out and interact with **regional and sub-regional organizations, foras and processes** which have a strong buy-in and ownership by the countries in the region. This would contribute to addressing environmental and climate change challenges in a more consistent and efficient way as well as identifying relevant trends and emerging issues to be addressed by ENP.

The ENP framework could also further reflect the heterogeneity of the neighbouring regions and move beyond considering the EU-neighbourhood relationship as one based on geographic proximity, but try to acknowledge the historical and cultural diversity and the historical interconnectedness through trade and migration of these countries and recognize and build on their strong linkages with other regions and regional processes, foras and organizations. A common framework for East and South could be maintained, but only if the value added of a single framework is proven, and if the partner

¹ JOIN(2015) 6 final, 4.3.2015 Brussels <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/consultation/consultation.pdf>



countries/region see the value of it. In such case, more opportunities for exchanges of experiences should be created and supported. However, separate frameworks could possibly allow for more interlinkages with existing organizations/foras/processes in the regions and sub-regions.

Question 2. Should the current geographical scope be maintained? Should the ENP allow for more flexible ways of working with the neighbours of the neighbours? How can the EU, through the ENP framework, support its neighbours in their interactions with their own neighbours? What could be done better to ensure greater coherence between the ENP and the EU's relations with Russia, with partners in Central Asia, or in Africa, especially in the Sahel and in the Horn of Africa, and with the Gulf countries?

There are already existing strategic partnerships which have not been fully explored that would support and contribute to the ENP objectives.

Strengthened cooperation with existing regional and sub-regional organization and/or foras would allow a broader understanding of the current EN, thereby also addressing challenges in a more integrated and strategic way at country, regional and global levels.

From the Eastern perspective, **more integration with Central Asia** and **closer cooperation with Russia** on environment and climate would allow for a more comprehensive approach.

In the Southern Neighbourhood, the **UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention** is the major region-wide, legally binding agreement covering all Mediterranean riparian countries and the EU, which has been providing a frame for the past 40 years for environmental policy development and implementation. Furthermore, the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention has provided a continuous forum for dialogue and cooperation among all the countries of the Mediterranean region, regardless of their political, economic, and religious or any other differences. In that regard, the common goal of managing the natural resources of the Mediterranean Sea in a sustainable manner under the auspices of UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention can be considered as an element unifying the region and contributing to its stability.

In addition, in the "South", the role of the **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** is also critical, especially in the current political/security climate, and in terms of the potential application of political pressure, the role of the GCC as a neighbour is stronger than that of the EU, and so cooperation does need to exist with the neighbours of the neighbours. In terms of the role of the ENP in supporting its neighbours in interactions, alongside all other aspects of the framework, the understanding of the prevailing political and development situation is critical.

In conclusion, the ENP should become both **more comprehensive and more flexible in its scope, allowing for the current relations to be broadened incl. to the neighbours of neighbours, therefore fostering more cross-country and sub-regional cooperation.**

In this context, we believe that the EU could benefit from the diversification of their approaches, and on relying more on the expertise and geographic presence of major international and regional organisations and partners such as the UN. Promoting and facilitating environmental mainstreaming at global and regional levels is one of the core objectives of the EC UNEP MoU. The UN institutions could play a critical role in facilitating political strengthening between European and neighbourhood countries, thereby creating prospects for policy, knowledge, experience and values sharing; political cooperation can thus help promote democracy, the rule of law, sustainable economy etc. and support cross-country and subregional cooperation structures for crisis management, political and security challenges. This includes engaging with other regional powers that lay beyond the closer European neighbourhood to establish a common/shared neighbourhood through inclusive cooperation, incl. building bridges with existing regional organizations, foras and processes.

From an environment perspective, a revision of the ENP framework should thus consider strengthening, reaching-out and/or building on existing **regional organizations, processes and foras addressing environment and climate change** issues, such as:

- **UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention,**



- The African Union and the **African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN)**,
- The **Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE)** under the League of Arab States (LAS)
- The **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) environment initiative**
- **The Environment for Europe (EfE)**,
- The International Fund for Aral Sea (IFAS) and its subsidiary bodies, such as the **Ministerial Interstate Committee for Sustainable Development**
- **The European Environment and Health Ministerial Process (EHP)**
- **The Pan-European Biodiversity Platform (PEBP)**,
- **Regional Conventions** (such as Black Sea Convention, Teheran Convention, Carpathian Convention, etc.)

Question 3. How could a more comprehensive approach with more active involvement by Member States give the policy greater weight? Would stronger co-ownership of the policy be preferred by partners?

While the ENP is conducted through the EU institutions, greater and more coordinated approach with Member State involvement could lead to greater results.

Co-ownership by partner countries is critical to the success of the ENP. There needs to be a consultative approach not a prescriptive one to ensure “buy in” and enhance success. The mechanisms formed under the ENP are critical to this and perhaps their roles and responsibilities could be enhanced and could define a comprehensive engagement between the EU delegations, the government counterparts and key Major Groups and civil society actors, as well as other major players such as the UN.

Co-ownership from partner countries could also be enhanced, building on their own planning processes and seeking further cooperation under the **UN Development Assistance Frameworks² (UNDAF)**, as well as better partner/donor coordination (incl. both EU institutions and EU MS).

Other formal processes such as the ones facilitated by the UN could also be taken into account, as underpinning development in the countries and the regions. For instance, in this context, UNEP has taken part in a majority of recent Environmental Performance Reviews (EPR) in the Pan-European region under the leadership of UNECE and provided, for some environmental chapters, an assessment of the progress the Pan-European countries have made both in reconciling their environmental and economic targets and in meeting their international environmental commitments. The EPR Programme assists countries to improve their environmental management and performance; promotes information exchange among countries on policies and experiences; helps integrating environmental policies into economic sectors; promotes greater accountability to the public and strengthens cooperation with the international community. In Eastern Europe, UNEP has worked with UNECE on EPR's in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Belarus, and Romania among others.

Question 4. Are the Association Agreements and DCFTAs the right objective for all or should more tailor-made alternatives be developed, to reflect differing interests and ambitions of some partners?

The ENP should retain flexibility in its approaches; **one size does not fit all**. The DCFTAs and the association agreements should be considered more intensely in terms of those neighbouring countries who have a genuine interest in developing deep relations with the EU but all countries should be aware

² In the East, UNEP is participating in UNDAF processes in Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Bosnia, Montenegro, Albania. In addition, UNEP is working with the UNCTs in Jordan (current focus on Green Economy and minimizing the potential negative impacts of the Syrian refugee influx) and Palestine (focus on supporting Palestine to join MEAs and be up to date in terms of capacity for implementation and green economy/SwitchMed, trying to connect this with poverty-environment mainstreaming opportunities). UNCT Lebanon has deferred its new UNDAF roll out and is instead focusing on the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan in light of the Syrian crisis. UNEP is working with the secretariat in looking at ways to mainstream environment across humanitarian respons. UNCT Syria are just rolling out a new Strategic Framework (2016-2017) and UNEP will be engaging in this process.



that they have an equal opportunity to create closer ties with the EU. While, where there have been successes these can be used to encourage and provide technology transfer opportunities. A step-wise approach would allow countries with different levels of ambition to implement the tools and activities that fit with national development priorities at a rate of change that is suitable to the national situation.

We consider that AAs and DCFTAs have **not been fully utilised to promote sustainability objectives** through trade (i.e. common standards, certification, and labelling) in particular. It would be worth, in the next generation of agreements, making the link with sustainability at large and the SDG 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. Therefore, more focus could be provided to poverty alleviation and sustainability (see also point on EPRs under question 3).

Question 5. Are the ENP Action Plans the right tool to deepen our partnerships? Are they too broad for some partners? Would the EU, would partners, benefit from a narrower focus and greater prioritisation?

According to our experience, ENP action plans have been well suited to anchor the collaboration with EU and the partners. The ENP Action Plans are a broad approach, but do provide a sound framework for cooperation and partnership.

However, there may be some value in reducing the scope of the ENP Action Plans (which read somewhat like a shopping list, such that they just identify the key broad areas of intervention) and then have more detailed sectoral action plans, which would enhance implementation, transparency and clarify the assignment of roles and responsibilities and the reporting aspects.

In addition, ENP country Action Plans should ensure greater coherence with the regional EaP regional approach (e.g. discoordinated approach on green economy at regional and country levels).

Finally, the ENP action plans could however benefit from a better interaction with UN led processes incl. the UN Development Assistance Framework and better coordination with regional processes, by **earlier involvement with the UN agencies in the programming process**. The rollout of the SDGs' implementation 2016-2030 offers a unique entry point to promote shared values and principles in the quest for poverty eradication and achieving sustainable development priorities and objectives. The EU being a key player in the implementation, follow up and review of the SDGs – such a process becomes an opportunity for prioritization and alignment of policies and actions.

Question 6. Is this approach appropriate for all partners? Has it added value to the EU's relations with each of its partners? Can EU and/or partner interests be served by a lighter reporting mechanism? Should the reporting be modulated according to the level of engagement of the ENP partner concerned? How can we better communicate key elements?

Progress reports and monitoring are a critical part of the process and can add value where they are used to take corrective measures where timings and implementation is not according to the original plan. It should be simplified as far as possible but should also be able to demonstrate that the Action Plan is on track and where there are shortfalls. However, the ENP progress reports approach may be more useful for countries with genuine interest in building closer ties with the EU through association agreements and DCFTAs. Country-specific situations should be represented in ENP action plans and progress reports, and be reflective of specific country aspirations and well as the hopes of the EU and MS.

ENP Monitoring could also benefit from closer cooperation with the UN, in particular through engagement in the UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) and the UN Country Teams (UNCT). Also the SDGs implementation, follow up and review which is national, regional and global.



Question 7. Can partnerships be focussed more explicitly on joint interests, in order to increase ownership on both sides? How should the ENP accommodate the differentiation that this would entail? Are new elements needed to support deeper cooperation in these or other fields?

Cooperation should be based on joint interests and ownership is key. However, awareness-raising and capacity building is often needed to be able to recognize the value of working in a sector, in particular when related to long-term sustainability. A narrow approach may run the risk to reduce the level of ambition on environment and climate change. And to support mainstreaming of environmental sustainability a joint approach on environmental assessment and sharing of information is a key component. In the East, the current on-going initiative between the European Environment Agency (EEA), UNEP and the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) on a Single Environmental Information System could be usefully looked into.

In terms of sectorial cooperation needs, both in the East and South, the ENP should build on, strengthen and not to duplicate existing common objectives between EU and neighborhood countries. For example, in the South, the cooperation should thus be built closer with the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention Secretariat. In relation to marine and coastal environment (and adaptation to climate change), the legal commitments, implementation needs under the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention provide a good basis for strengthening partnership in between EU and its Mediterranean riparian neighboring countries.

In addition, we recommend **strengthening the mainstreaming of environment and climate change in all the existing sectorial cooperation:**

- Transport sectorial work should include low carbon mobility plans, non-motorised transport and transport infrastructure, clean fuels, clean vehicles, etc. (incl. developing cooperation with existing global initiatives such as The Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV), Global Fuel Economy Initiative (GFEI) and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC))
- Energy work should focus on renewable energy and energy efficiency (incl. linking up with existing initiatives on Energy efficient equipment and appliance (SE4All accelerator), energy efficiency in buildings and cities, efficient district heating system, and the Climate Technology Center and Network, etc.);
- Cooperation on customs could include strengthen cooperation around illegal trade of chemicals and waste (incl. Ozone depleting substance) as well as of wildlife and species (incl. building on existing initiatives such as the “Green Customs Initiative”); and the Wildlife Enforcement Network being developed by the Government of Kuwait, supported by Jordan and the UAE and covering the West Asia region;
- Cooperation on taxation should also look at fiscal policies that would facilitate the enabling environment for green economy by pricing environmental externalities, redressing social impact and shifting of investments towards clean and efficient technologies, natural capital and social infrastructure (e.g. phasing out of fossil fuels subsidies, environmental taxes, incentives, etc.)
- Agriculture and rural development should include climate change adaptation (incl. based on UNEP on-going climate change assessment in the Caucasus), water management, sustainable natural resources management, valuation of natural capital and ecosystem services (incl. linking up with TEEB for Agriculture) as well as sustainable value chains, eco-labelling, etc. Particular focus shall be given to climate change adaptation and natural resources managements in vulnerable ecosystems (such as Mountain ecosystems, incl. building on the “Mountain Partnership”).
- Cooperation on justice should include access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters (Rio Principle 10) and Environment & Human Rights; including work under the Access4All Special Initiative of the Eye on Earth (under the Abu Dhabi Global Environment Data Initiative, and including ENPI south countries); Disaster management: Natural disaster approach shall include eco-system based disaster risk reduction and climate change



adaptation, in line with the Sendai framework. In ENPI south countries, the Regional Initiative for the Assessment of Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region provides some key entry points for the development of relevant, ecosystem-based interventions. Man-made disasters management should look into prevention through adequate industrial safety, chemicals and waste management, etc. (incl. building on existing cooperation between UNEP and the JRC (e.g. APELL) and experiences (e.g. UNEP contribution to chemical weapons phase-out in Syria). In both cases, post-disaster environmental assessments and environmental recovery programmes shall be considered, with a focus on “Build Back Better”, taking environment and green building codes into consideration. In addition, it should consider new emerging issues such as Sand and Dust Storms in West Asia and the Mediterranean region.

- Waste management: Improper waste management pose a significant health and environmental risks, at the same time it contributes to Loss of valuable resources and the further depletion of virgin materials. UNEP assists countries to develop Integrated solid waste management (ISWM) refers to the strategic approach to the sustainable management of solid wastes and is based on the 3R (reduce, reuse, recycle) principles. UNEP also able to assist the development of policies and practices for recycling and business development (as waste management and recovery has a big green job development potentials).
- Research & Innovation should particularly focus clean technologies; and include South-South and Triangular Cooperation and the indigenisation of green technologies; eco-innovation can be also included to promote innovative business models;
- Health cooperation should include cooperation on health & environment, linking up with the European Environment and Health process (EEHP), and contributing to regional efforts on Air Quality (building on WHO/UNECE/UNEP initiative) and the implementation of Chemicals & Waste MEAs (Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata) as the regional SAICM (Strategic approach to integrated chemicals management), incl. based on BRS regional centers (e.g. Russia). Under the League of Arab States, a joint Ministerial Conference will take place in 2016 between Ministers of Environment and Ministers of Health to address the interconnectedness between these two issues, with a focus in its first instance on air quality.

In addition, the common objective of sustainable development needs to be pursued through a **cross-sectorial approach**. For example, in Georgia, a TEEB scoping study identified core sectors (energy, tourism, agriculture, mining and forestry) and recommended the further development of a TEEB for Agriculture study that would use ecosystem services valuation to inform policy-makers with the aim of ensuring food security, improving agricultural biodiversity, reducing land degradation and maintaining agriculture as a strong sector for the country and its workforce. This and similar initiatives will help to identify common interests and increase ownership by the countries and work from a cross-sectorial perspective. More attention should also be paid to waste management (e.g. solid waste, recycling, hazardous waste, marine plastic debris, etc.), from an integrated perspective (terrestrial/coastal/marine/air quality). Renewable energy should also become a priority. For example, the Caucasus region is investing heavily in hydropower but environmental sustainability is not sufficiently taken into consideration. The harmonization of existing laws and policies with EU standards (e.g. Water Framework Directive) can also provide as an important focus of work in light of the recently concluded Association Agreements (e.g. Georgia).

As regards **new fields of action**, we would suggest “**environment and climate change**” as a **dedicated priority area** (as under other partnerships between the EU and other regions). This focus area shall include ecosystem management, climate change adaptation, sustainable energy, resource efficiency, chemicals and waste, natural resources and conflict prevention, etc. It should also focus on strengthening countries capacities to take part to international negotiations and to implement international commitments, incl. the **synergetic implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements** (CBD, CTIES, CMS, BRS, Minamata, etc.). The importance of data and statistics and access thereof is being emphasised through the SDG and Post-2015 Development Agenda consultations across



ENPI South (as demonstrated through the focus of this both in the Consultation on Accountability Framework in the Arab Region and at the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development, Bahrain, May 2015). There is potential for capacity development initiatives for national statistical offices in support of the monitoring at the national level of the new global agenda.

Question 8. What further work is necessary in this area, which is regarded as key by all ENP partners? How can the ENP further support the management of migration and help to draw the benefits of mobility?

Migration management is a critical issue at the current time. Economic migration is valuable to all ENP countries based on remittances, yet it is only one way. Migration can **deplete technical capacity from the ENP countries** as critical human resources move to the EU – the key is how to ensure that the skills gap is filled and the benefits of the migration (and not just financial) are returned to the countries of origin. In view of reducing the depletion of capacities in the ENP countries, development of green economy and jobs to keep youths active is necessary.

The ENP could also look into migration with potential long term impacts such as **environmentally induced migration**, e.g. through strengthened cooperation with the UN integrated strategy for the Sahel and impacts of drought on rural-urban migration in the Mashreq (considered a potential factor in the current crisis).

Question 9. How can the EU do more to support sustainable economic and social development in the ENP partner countries? How can we empower economically, politically and socially the younger generation? How to better promote sustainable employment? And how can these objectives be better linked to indispensable reforms in the fields of anti-corruption, judicial reform, governance and security, which are prerequisites for foreign direct investment?

The EU can promote a **Green Economy** approach, based on the recognition that the current resource intensive economic model (especially in ENPI East countries) is not a sustainable option, thereby also contributing to pro-poor policies. Under ENP framework, EU can strengthen its approach to foster the development of greener sectors and green the brown sectors – as such an approach is increasingly proven to be able to bring greater economic prosperity, social equality,, creation of decent jobs and better health. The facilitation to create enabling conditions for greener technology transfer, in particular to allocate/induce domestic and foreign direct investment, is essential. UNEP has supported the countries to develop the strategic framework followed by sector/theme specific policies. UNEP is currently working on green fiscal policy reforms to finance green investment and innovative green financing mechanisms which could contribute to improve investment environment to sustainability.

In the EN South, the revised Mediterranean Sustainable Development Strategy (**MSSD**) **will provide an overall framework for the sustainable development of the Mediterranean Sea and Coastal regions**. This Strategy will also serve as the Mediterranean, regional implementation of the SDGs and as such can also provide an overall framework, to structure support in the ENP partner countries. In addition, it is important to note that the SWITCH-MED project has been successfully creating green jobs and contributing to sustainable employment in the region and as such can be seen as good practice for this, with specific projects underway in Egypt, Lebanon and Palestine, among others]

Many of these questions are at the heart of the Post-2015 Agenda and **SDGs**, and strengthened cooperation with existing regional foras and processes which are addressing these issues would benefit the ENP, such as the MAP/MSSD, the Arab Regional High Level Forum on Sustainable Development (held recently in Bahrain and its outcome, the Bahrain Document) and the Environment for Europe process.\

Question 10. How should the ENP address conflicts and crises in the neighbourhood? Should CFSP and CSDP activities be better integrated in the ENP framework? Should it have a greater role in developing



confidence-building measures and post-conflict actions as well as related state- and institution-building activities? Should the ENP be given a strengthened focus on working with partners on the prevention of radicalisation, the fight against terrorism and organised crime? Should security sector reform be given greater importance in the ENP?

The CSDP and CFSP shall rather be kept separate, as national security is always a specific issue and its inclusion may present challenges to the more development focussed activities under the ENP.

However, the ENP could certainly, at the current time, take a **stronger role in conflict prevention and post-conflict actions/support, incl. the linkages between natural resources and conflicts** (e.g. transboundary water, land, resources) as well as the humanitarian response in refugee receiving countries from the Syrian conflict and mainstreaming environment across related interventions to minimise the negative impacts on the environment. In addition, a closer attention to the frozen conflicts in the ENP neighbourhood region is needed. Policy work should be directed to pre-empting potential escalation of such conflicts by promoting collaboration in a variety of fields, e.g. economic, social, environment and cultural activities. Of particular importance would be to **create enabling conditions for the cooperation over shared natural resources and ecosystems, e.g. Caspian Sea, Dniester River Basin, Black Sea**, etc. and cooperation of transboundary challenges, e.g. sand and dust storms. It is essential to pay increasing attention to regional commitment to illegal trade of species, hazardous waste, dangerous substances.

In terms of radicalisation, it is a very specific issue that may need to be kept separate. The ENP is well-positioned for support to development and good governance interventions, and these might lose their focus if the very pressing issues of radicalisation, terrorism and organised crime are included.

Working with established international organisations such as the United Nations could also facilitate response and resolution to conflict and security situations, as well as engaging in cooperation with other regional bodies using the UN's position as a neutral broker and convenor.

Question 11. Is the multilateral dimension able to deliver further added value? Are these formats fit for purpose? How can their effectiveness be strengthened? Can we more effectively use other, more flexible frameworks? Can we better cooperate with other regional actors (Council of Europe, OSCE, League of Arab States, Organisation of the Islamic Conference, African Union)?

The ENP offers an interesting multilateral format but it is very important for the ENP to **build on the commitments, partnerships, already established in international, regional organizations and to support, not duplicate their efforts.**

One of the key issues in the development of a number of regional mechanisms is that they rarely cover exactly the same countries and a greater cooperation therefore needs to be established between regional fora to deal with this issue (of both gaps and duplication). The ENP should thus look into its added-value, decreasing overlaps and contradictions, addressing gaps and increasing its efficiency and impact through **out-reach to the countries and the existing regional processes and organizations.** The multilateral format – existing regional organisations, conventions, conferences, and ministerial processes – can bring an added value in promoting EU policy work. Adoption of desired policies at bilateral level can be complemented by promoting relevant norms and standards at the multilateral level through the instruments existing within those regional structures, e.g. ministerial declarations, protocols to conventions, regional action plans.

It would thus be very beneficial to increase the EU's cooperation with other existing regional mechanisms, UN organisations and regional political processes and organizations, such as:

- **UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention,**
- **The Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE)**
- **The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) environment initiative**



- **The Arab Regional High Level Forum on Sustainable Development (AFSD)** (the regional consultative process for the High Level Political Forum)
- **The Environment for Europe (EfE),**
- **The Ministerial Interstate Committee for Sustainable Development (ICSD) in Central Asia**
- **The European Environment and Health process (EEHP)/ the European Environment and Health Ministerial Board (EHMB),**
- **The Pan-European Biodiversity Platform (PEBP);**
- **Regional Conventions**

One good example is the cooperation between UfM and UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention, where the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention provides the legal, obligatory, regional regime in the area of marine and coastal environmental protection, while the UfM, can give political support to this regime (as it has been done through the recent UfM Ministerial Declaration in 2014, which had strong high level messages on environmental protection for the region in general, next to specifically noting the important role of UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention in this regard). Furthermore, the cooperation as part of the Horizon 2020 Initiative, which aims to de-pollute the Mediterranean by the year 2020 by tackling the sources of pollution that account for around 80% of the overall pollution of the Mediterranean Sea, is also a specific best practice. The Initiative builds on the legal framework of UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention and supports its Protocols implementation through targeted actions.

In addition, UNEP works closely, with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, in providing secretariat support to CAMRE's programming arm, the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR) through which UNEP has been closely engaged with the follow up and implementation of outcomes of Rio, WSSD and Rio+20. This has included the development and implementation of the Sustainable Development Initiative for the Arab Region (SDIAR), a Type II initiative at WSSD, and its current updates; the organization of the Arab High Level Forum on Sustainable Development (in Jordan in 2014 and in Bahrain in 2015,) as the regional preparation for the HLPF; and ongoing technical and policy support to a number of Task Team under LAS focusing on the MEAs (biodiversity and land; chemicals and waste; and climate change). Work is currently underway on the development of the Arab Sustainable Development Report, providing an overview of the current state of play in the region vis-à-vis the MDGs and SDGs themes. UNEP has also signed an MOU (Nov. 2014) with the League of Arab States³ and UNEP works closely with the Environment Initiative of the GCC and has supported its institutional assessment as well as technical task teams. An MOU is being prepared.⁴ with a focus on the following areas:

In addition, the ENP should look more carefully into **complementarities and coherence between its regional approach and its country bi-lateral cooperation** in order to achieve better impact (e.g. EaP GREEN and Green Economy programme at country level i.e. Belarus).

In conclusion, we would like to underline the **importance for the ENP to build on the commitments, partnerships, already established in international, regional organizations and to support, not duplicate their efforts.**

³ The MoU with LAS covers Implementation of the outcomes of Rio+20 and Sustainable Development Summits; Environmental assessment and early warning of emerging environmental issues; Environmental data, information, indicators, and networks; Environmental Governance and Stakeholders' Engagement; Implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs); Management of Water resources; Land, Coastal and Marine Ecosystems; Ecosystems services; Green Economy; Resource Efficiency and Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) including the implementation of the 10 Year Framework Program (10YFP); Climate Change; Environmental Finance; Chemical and Waste Management; Education and Awareness for Sustainable Development ; Environment and Health; Post conflict assessments and recovery; Any other areas of mutual interest to be agreed upon based on relevant programs and activates of respective Arab Ministerial Councils such as the Council of Arab Water Ministers and Council of Arab Housing & Construction Ministers. .

⁴ The MoU with GCC may cover the following areas: Chemicals and waste management (especially transboundary management and the training of customs officers in terms of illegal trade); Ecosystem management; Coastal zone management (with a focus on the environmental impacts of land reclamation); The development of a GEO for the GCC.



Question 12. How should the ENP further develop engagement with civil society in its widest sense? Can more be done to network different parts of the partner populations? What more can be done to promote links between business communities? With and between Social Partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) and to promote social dialogue? What can be done to promote links between scientific communities, universities, local authorities, women, youth, the media?

The ENP further engagement with civil society, scientific communities, universities, local authorities, women, youth and media is key for its success.

The role of civil society in the monitoring of the SDGs and their reporting progress could be a critical entry point, as well as the opportunity that the ENP provides for capacity development of civil society organisations, especially in those countries where perhaps civil society is not so active.

In the field of environment, **UNEP is working closely and having regular consultation with CSO** in ENP region and EN policy could also benefit from these consultations. The potential of working with organizations like UNEP could be further explored (incl. based on the MOU between the EC and UNEP). UNEP's approach on Major Groups and Stakeholders brings together environmental and development NGOs, workers and trade unions, women, youth, business, local authority, farmers, indigenous communities, academia/educational institutions/researchers/think-tanks, with the objective to enhance environmental sustainability policies and programmes. UNEP has strong working relations with trade unions in advancing the inclusive green economy agenda, climate change and sound management of chemicals. This partnership can further promote social dialogue. UNEP partners with a growing number of educational institutions, particularly universities, to harness the latest environmental science and knowledge and bring it to bear on the work of partners. We support universities in developing and delivering transformative education and curriculum, and low carbon campuses; help develop applied competence of middle managers and policy makers on environment and sustainability through training; and work to strengthen regional and sub-regional higher education networks for environment and sustainability -the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES) initiative is a good example. Also promoting education for sustainable development and lifestyles. The same is applicable for empowerment of youth through the long-term strategy for engaging young people in environmental activities, and the Gender Action Plan that promotes integration of gender perspectives with strategic objectives to promote equity/equality and rights, opportunities and efficiency to deliver on sustainable development commitments. Partnering and working together on our regional consultations with civil society and others could strengthen the new ENP.

In the South, we would like to highlight the importance of strengthening the role of civil society in the region, noting that through sustainable development and environment related regional discussions in the UNEP/MAP context as well as through specific partnerships, initiatives, work, projects, such as the the EcAp-MED, SwitchMed Project, Horizon 2020 Initiative and MedPartnership, coordination between civil society has been strengthened all over the region.

It is important not only to promote scientific networks and relationships but also strengthen the science-policy interface in support to environmental sustainability. In the context of the current geopolitical setting (e.g. Caucasus) soft bottom-up approaches such as the strengthening of scientific networks can prove as a successful tool to promote regional approaches and cooperative action. UNEP through its "TIM" project is e.g. supporting the further development and expansion of a "Scientific Network for the Caucasus Mountain Region" (SNC-mt) seeking also inter-regional exchange with European regions such as the Alps and Carpathians.



Question 13. How can the ENP do more to foster religious dialogue and respect for cultural diversity, and counter prejudice? Should increasing understanding of each other's cultures be a more specific goal of the ENP and how should this be pursued? How can the ENP help tackle discrimination against vulnerable groups?

Promoting cooperation among groups with different cultural and religious groups would be an additional avenue to including ownership from partners and citizens. Much work has been done by the UN and others to showcase human cultural, spiritual dimensions and the interdependence of humankind and its rich diversity. The work done by the UN in the area of Dialogue Among Civilizations. UNEP on its part. At the Millennium Summit, Heads of States agreed on the fundamental values essential to international relations, including: "Differences within and between societies should be neither feared nor repressed, but cherished as a precious asset of humanity. A culture of peace and dialogue amongst all civilizations should be actively promoted." Good example of such cooperation is environment and religious forum. The recently released Encyclical of His Holiness Pope Francis speaks about moral values, environmental issues, our relationship with the natural environment and with one another. UNEP can facilitate this kind of work.

PART 2. TOWARDS A PARTNERSHIP WITH A CLEARER FOCUS AND MORE TAILORED COOPERATION

Question 14. The Challenges of Differentiation: (a) Should the EU gradually explore new relationship formats to satisfy the aspirations and choices of those who do not consider the Association Agreements as the final stage of political association and economic integration? (b) How should the EU take forward the tasking of the 2013 Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius of the long-term goal of a wider common area of economic prosperity based on WTO rules and sovereign choices throughout Europe and beyond? (c) Is there scope within the ENP for some kind of variable geometry, with different kinds of relationships for those partners that choose different levels of engagement?

The partnership approaches used do need to adapt to the current situation, and a differentiated approach may be needed. For example at present, for many countries of the South, there are specific priorities that need to be addressed before political association and economic integration can be fully considered. The step-wise approach highlighted earlier might fit here.

Question 15. Focus: (a) Do you agree with the proposed areas of focus? If not, what alternative or additional priorities would you propose? (b) Which priorities do partners see in terms of their relations with the EU? Which sector or policy areas would they like to develop further? Which areas are less interesting for partners? (c) Does the ENP currently have the right tools to address the priorities on which you consider it should focus? How could sectoral dialogues contribute? (d) If not, what new tools could be helpful to deepen cooperation in these sectors? (e) How can the EU better support a focus on a limited number of key sectors, for partners that prefer this?

The focus of the reviewed ENP should reflect the **Sustainable Development Goals**. In the South, the revised ENP should reflect more specifically the priorities set by the MSSD and the Arab High Level Forum on Sustainable Development and its related Bahrain Document, as well as the revisions to the Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region.

In addition, **environment should be mainstreamed in each of the suggested focus areas**. Each focus area should thereby ensure to fully **integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development**. For example, trade and economic development should be based on the principles of green economy and sustainable consumption and production, incl. the necessary enabling frameworks in terms of investment, trade, fiscal policies; Connectivity in transport and energy should focus on low carbon strategies, energy efficiency, renewable energies, etc. ; Governance also includes environmental



governance, illegal trade of waste/chemicals and wildlife, MEA implementation, etc.; See also replies to question 7.

In addition, environment and climate change, as the third pillars of the sustainable development, should be specifically part of the common interest areas as **a separate and dedicated focus area**. This has already been indicated in question 7. The focus of this dedicated area of cooperation shall include climate change should look both into mitigation, through low carbon development, energy efficiency and renewable energies, based on existing efforts on the development of NAMAs, and adaptation, as it is becoming a hot topic both in the South and the East, building on National Adaptation Strategies/Plans. In addition, it should address ecosystem and biodiversity (incl. land, fresh water and marine), resource efficiency, chemicals and waste, environment and security, as well as MEA implementation.

Indeed, **stability and economic development in the ENP countries are interlinked with climate change and environment**. Therefore management of environment and natural resources as well as climate change adaptation should be included as main priorities for the ENP. The ENP can be effective only if it recognizes the interdependence of different dimensions of sustainable development and stability/security. These interdependences need to be taken into consideration when designing programmes and tools. Social stability and economic security will be affected by the negative impacts of climate change on water, food security, land degradation and energy security as well as human health. In the coming decades, the likelihood of conflict in fragile countries and regions will increase as a result of the destabilizing impacts of climate change, as well on the inter-regional level due to climate change induced migration from the affected and impoverished areas to the areas regarded as more prosperous. Tensions in Central Asia and South Caucasus, situated at geopolitical fulcrums connecting Europe, Asia and the Middle East, may impact neighbouring regions, and also draw the involvement of major global powers. Competition is increasing for natural resources due to population growth, economic development, and technological change; this in turn could threaten stability and security across many societies. While disputes over natural resources are seldom the sole cause of conflicts, environmental factors play a role, particularly when they intersect with historic grievances, pre-existing conflicts, marginalisation or polarisation. In these circumstances, single events such as price hikes or other shocks, such as natural disasters, can drive countries towards political instability or even become a catalyst for crisis. In this context, ecosystem assessments are needed to identify pathways towards sustainable development. Some countries have already developed national ecosystem assessments to assess the economic value of ecosystem services. This is also a priority for the EaP region, as expressed in the declaration of the 6th Biodiversity in Europe Conference, held in Batumi, Georgia, in April 2013 and reflected in the Pan-European Biodiversity Platform work plan 2014-2017. In addition, specific countries, such as Georgia and Ukraine, have expressed their interest in undertaking TEEB country studies. Tools to deepen the cooperation on these priorities should build on existing work on TEEB and MAES (Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services).

In the Southern Neighborhood, almost all countries are highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and they are also sharing the common resources of the Mediterranean Sea, with a common objective, to ensure its sustainability also for future generations, in line with SDG 14. In this regard it is important to note that, the Climate Change Adaptation Framework of UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention will aim to address vulnerability and adaptation needs of the Mediterranean marine and coastal region and, once approved, will be a very important instrument for all Mediterranean countries in their adaptation efforts to climate change. Furthermore, it is key to highlight the close connectivity of climate change and environment, especially for the Mediterranean marine and coastal ecosystems. On the one hand, climate change is a key pressure, which negatively impacts these ecosystems and makes their vulnerability and adaptation needs higher, on the other hand, progress towards healthy marine and coastal environment also contributes to climate change mitigation. Based on the Blue Carbon Report of UNEP/FAO/IOC/UNESCO/IUCN/CSIC, the role of healthy oceans in binding carbon is crucial, as they can contribute to offsetting up to 7% of current fossil fuel concentrations.



In summary, we would like to highlight the key importance of ensuring that sustainable development, with all three of its pillars will be at the core of the revised ENP, which shall have a strategic, long-term perspective. Strengthening the environmental pillar will provide long-term benefits towards enhancing governance, economic development, youth engagement and empowerment of women. On the other hand, disregarding environment as a priority, can trigger even further political and strategic differences on natural resource use. This is particularly true for the scarce resources such as water or arable land in the South. Processes and phenomena such as environmental degradation or climate change are also another cause of migration - the growing phenomenon of environmental migration. **Addressing “environment and climate change” should be therefore an additional priority area** (i.e. one specific common challenge, not only listed under “other common challenges”). As a common priority it will strengthen the systematic approach of the ENP, in line with the over-arching and long-term goal of the EU, ongoing work on the SDGs. We strongly believe that the already identified priorities will be enhanced and strengthened through this addition.

Question 16. Flexibility – Towards a More Flexible Toolbox: (a) How to streamline Action Plans to adapt them better to individual country needs and priorities? (b) Is annual reporting needed for countries which do not choose to pursue closer political and economic integration? (c) How should the EU structure relations with countries that do not currently have Action Plans? (d) How can the EU adapt the ‘more for more’ principle to a context in which certain partners do not choose closer integration, in order to create incentives for the respect of fundamental values and further key reforms? (e) How to assess progress against jointly agreed reform targets when a partner country experiences significant external pressure, for instance armed conflict or refugee flows? (f) How can the EU engage more effectively and respond more flexibly to developments in partner countries affected by conflict situations? (g) What tools would the EU need to respond more effectively to fast-changing developments in its neighbourhood? (h) Are the choice of sectors and mechanisms for delivery of EU financial support appropriate? How could its impact and visibility be enhanced?

The development of Action Plans would benefit from a more participative approach, with focus on country priorities and needs, and should ensure coordination with existing processes such as the **UN Development Assistance Framework (which have strong ownership from the countries)**. A better use of existing strategic partnerships such as with UN would also contribute to a more effective use of the EU's resources. The thematic/sectoral approach would allow a better streamlining to individual countries and needs. Annual reporting should remain a requirement to allow monitoring, and where there are shortfalls, to identify corrective actions. This would also allow for programme re-orientation if external forces are affecting the implementation of activities.

In addition, the EU can **build on common interests with these countries, under existing international and regional regimes** and set basis of priorities based on these. In the field of the environment, in the South, this basis can be the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention and legal obligations, commitments of the Contracting Parties (including both Southern Neighborhood, Candidate, EU Member States and the EU).

In the Southern Neighborhood, UNEP/MAP has been supporting for the past 40 years Contracting Parties to qualify and quantify the marine pollution levels, sources and impacts on their marine and coastal environment, and to undertake coordinated measures and implement national and regional plans for the control, phase out and eliminate pollution from land based sources and activities, based on the Ecosystem Approach. The Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme will enable a quantitative based analysis of the state of the marine and coastal environment in an integrated manner, covering pollution and marine litter, biodiversity, non-indigenous species, coast and hydrography, based on common regional indicators, targets and Good Environmental Status descriptions.

The Mediterranean Sustainable Development Strategy (MSSD), which will be submitted for adoption by COP19 in February 2016, follows the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and will be the first regional strategy of that kind, aiming to implement the SDGs at a regional level. As such, it will be an important



legal framework, to whose implementation all UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Contracting Parties will sign up, but which will need specific, targeted investment and support.

The Mediterranean Action Plan on SCP identifies goals and actions as well as a common roadmap for all Mediterranean countries to shift to SCP patterns. This Action Plan, which is also foreseen for adoption in February 2016, will be a milestone placing the Mediterranean region at the forefront of the global and regional efforts in the development of the 10YFP.

The Climate Change Adaptation Framework will aim to address vulnerability and adaptation needs of the Mediterranean marine and coastal region and, once approved, will be a very important instrument for all Mediterranean countries in their adaptation efforts to climate change.

The Marine Litter Regional Plan and the Offshore Action Plan implementation are also areas where the Mediterranean is pioneer and while strong ownership exists from the Contracting Parties, capacities differ and would need to be strengthened in a coordinated manner. Finally, there is a longstanding history of cooperation on land- and sea-based pollution prevention (including through the Horizon 2020 Initiative), and reduction and response in the Mediterranean between all riparian countries, which are also Members of IMO and parties to its Conventions. We believe that this work has enhanced partnership among the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and beyond and is an area where the partnership could be further deepened also with the future support of the ENP. We thus suggest that the future ENP should build on these achievements and should continue to put strong emphasis on pollution prevention and reduction, policy reforms, capacity building reporting and data sharing based on SEIS principles.

In this regard, we would also like to highlight the need for the revised ENP and other EU policies to ensure equal attention to the needs of countries around the whole Mediterranean basin, especially in relation to marine and coastal environment.

The revised ENP should have closer bonds and synergy with UNEP/MAP activities especially when it comes to the implementation of the ecosystem approach, integrated planning of coastal areas, protection of marine and coastal habitats and threatened species, in addition to reduction and prevention of pollution.

In summary, we would like to highlight the **key importance of ensuring that sustainable development, with all three of its pillars will be at the core of the revised ENP**, which shall have a strategic, long-term perspective. The protection of the marine and coastal environment within the context of sustainable development is of fundamental importance in the Mediterranean region, even more so during this time where many countries are facing political and economic challenges, and increasing impacts from climate change. The unifying role of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention can contribute in a very important way to the common objectives of prosperity and cooperation.

In the East, the EU could build on existing frameworks such as Environment for Europe process as well as regional conventions (e.g. Teheran Convention, Caspian Convention, Black Sea, Forest for Europe, etc.) or other multi-country frameworks (e.g. Chernobyl).

The more for more approach and the principle of conditionality has not always been implemented consistently. This tends to undermine the credibility of the ENP. The EU needs to maintain engagement with neighbour countries even when the more for more principle is not adhered to. The principle of 'more' engagement when countries achieve concrete steps to reinforce democracy and the rule of law, although very important aspects, should not make other countries feel like they are subject to what may be considered a rather Eurocentric perspective on foreign policy-making. The impact and visibility can also be enhanced by investing more in civil society organization engagement.



Question 17. Ownership & Visibility: (a) What do partners seek in the ENP? How can it best accommodate their interests and aspirations? (b) Can ways of working be developed that are seen as more respectful by partners and demonstrate a partnership of equals? How should this impact on annual reporting? (c) Can the structures of the ENP be made more cooperative, to underline the partners' own choices and to enable all civil society actors across partner countries to take part? (d) Can the ENP deliver benefits within a shorter timeframe, in order that the value of the policy can be more easily grasped by the public? What would this require from the EU? And from the partner country? (e) How can the EU financial support be recast in an investment rather than donor dynamic, in which the partner country's active role is clearer? (f) How can EU Member States be involved more effectively in the design and implementation of the policy, including as concerns foreign policy and security related activities? How can the activities in EU Member States be better coordinated with the ENP?

There is a clear need of reform for the ENP (incl. its name), in order to enable strengthened **ownership** and partnership of equals. The ENP should remain a 2-way process, and not be seen as prescriptive, and should engage both government and non-government actors.

The partnership approach should translate in all stages of the **programming, implementation and reporting**, with a participatory approach. **Institutional strengthening and capacity-building** is thus essential, in order to ensure that partner countries can fully take part in the development, implementation and reporting on the EN partnership.

When selecting interventions and prioritising, low-hanging fruit provide an opportunity for quick impacts, and can be part of a step-wise approach. Civil society can guarantee a whole of society ownership. If the Association Agreements envisages (democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law) that is about people and the public at large, there is a need to invest more in the people. They can also guarantee the cooperation and dialogue that is needed for the long-term reforms.