

## BRIEF ON THE SHAREMED FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT - MALTA 2022

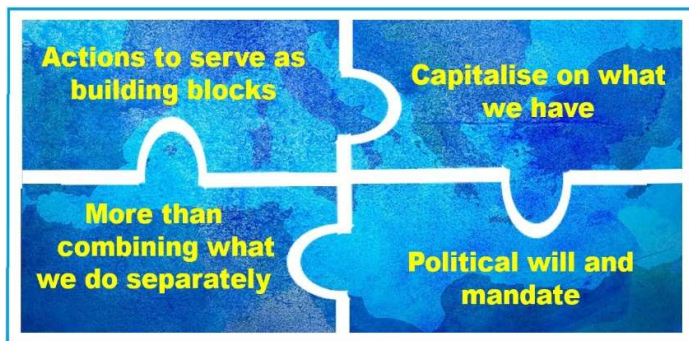
*Overarching guidelines and proposed actions to organize and synergize the cross-sectoral and cross-border articulation of a marine observation system of systems to assess and address environmental threats in the Mediterranean Sea, connecting marine research to society, and serving the wider interlinked contexts of security and control, monitoring and sustainability, and economic benefits.*



The **SHAREMED project** is actively engaged in assessing and addressing common and emerging challenges related to **transboundary marine environmental threats and pollution in the Mediterranean**, as well as the **shared, effective observing systems** needed to monitor them and support informed decisions and actions.

This effort comprises a chain of project deliverables that include new tools and methods as well as the **sharing and capitalising on expertise and products** for greater outreach and transnational impacts. These endeavours also target non-EU countries in the region, embracing direct collaboration, technology transfer and training, and the involvement of experts.

The **SHAREMED framework document** is presented and discussed at the Malta Workshop for further elaboration and wider adoption. It will be subsequently transformed into a declaration that can be endorsed by key actors, stakeholders and relevant organisations at different institutional, geographic and sectoral levels in the region. The scope of the document is to recommend **governance structures and institutional arrangements** for enhanced **coordination and cooperation in the Mediterranean context**, involving all littoral states under different institutional and regulatory systems. It provides some

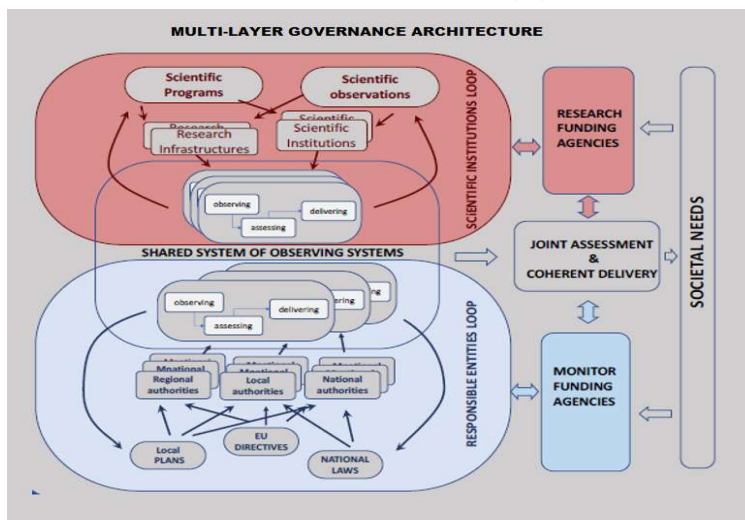


**overarching guidance and proposed actions** for linking marine observations and monitoring systems across sectors and borders. It aims at **connecting marine research and observation endeavours across countries**, to be shared by international players and national systems in riparian countries, to address the many challenges related to sustainable development and climate change, **servicing a knowledge-based society**, and addressing the multiple areas of monitoring, response, planning, control and

security in addition to research. Particular attention is given to transboundary pollution and marine hazards in the Mediterranean Sea with the elaboration of proposed actions promoting **science-based environmental monitoring and sustainable observation efforts** through **joint transnational programmes**, to respond to the new order of things in the future Mediterranean Sea. Finally, it serves the larger context of safety and security, monitoring and sustainability, and economic benefits.

The Framework Document starts from a set of **key guiding principles and common goals** that form the basis for a **harmonised and shared agenda for a regional ocean observing system of systems** that we need for the future of the Mediterranean that we want. This is achieved by complementing and synergising efforts for an affordable, co-designed and joint integrated sustainable endeavour in the region. These principles recognize that oceans know no political boundaries; the power of data is harnessed through sharing; we cannot manage what we do not measure and observe; multi-purpose and multi-functional observing systems reinforce the cost-benefit paradigm; the principles of co-design and co-development are more than combining what we do separately; effective capacity building requires self-empowerment of the recipients to enable self-reliance and independence from the source; the exchange of ideas, assets and commitments toward common goals within countries and across countries is the capital needed to build momentum and critical mass; the problem of marine threats, risks, hazards and pollution in the Mediterranean cannot be underestimated; and marine services to society gain importance as we strive to intensify multiple uses of the sea.

An ambitious set of guiding proposals are set in the Framework Document aiming to design, build and implement the multi-scale ocean observing system. These actions are not without bottlenecks and major hurdles to overcome. The envisioned **multilevel governance approach** provides the pillars to first and foremost connect and synergise the numerous and diverse stakeholders within and across countries, operating at different institutional, geographic and sectoral levels; it stimulates the greater involvement of the broader user community to meet societal needs, support the science-policy interface, and guide sustainable ocean development. **More than a creation from scratch, it relies on proven experiences** such as the Barcelona Convention and its engagement with Parties covering most of the riparian countries,



within which an improved approach can find its roots and evolve; as well as leveraging existing mechanisms such as the Joint Programming Initiative for Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans (JPI Oceans), and the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership (SBEP), that can be tailored specifically to the Mediterranean. The overarching architecture links the scientific institutions loop (institutions and infrastructures focused on observations for science and research) with the responsible entities loop (national and regional authorities and stakeholders with roles in monitoring, policy, management and security) to **use the same data for joint**

**elaborations**, assessments, and coherent delivery to support and meet societal needs.

**National marine observing systems in each country constitute the backbone and building blocks**, that fit seamlessly into a broader regional system, linking the local level with the transboundary dimension. At the national level, the observing systems are responsible to meet stakeholder needs; serve to fulfill the monitoring obligations in coastal seas; adopt a participatory bottom-up approach at the local user community scale; link data to local industry and specific society needs; support national objectives; promote capacity building; plan, fund and implement local marine data acquisition, management and dissemination efforts, including an **integrated national marine core data service**. The national systems operate through **permanent entrusted local agencies**, and are supported by appointed **national expert committees and working groups** embracing scientific and technical practitioners responsible for practical and operational execution and delivery.

While national systems operate autonomously they must adopt similar (not just compatible) structures, with interoperable functioning to **work and interact synchronously and seamlessly with equivalent systems** in other countries as a **federated system of systems**. They follow and align to an accepted co-designed and shared overarching regional marine observation implementation plan and framework that evolves over time, and guides synergy, complementarity and joint development as a coordinated regional system. Planning, coordination, and governance at the regional level will be provided by a **dedicated Mediterranean Agency**, with an implementing focal point in each country, building on existing coordination frameworks. Its main role is to bring countries together, manage regional structures and focus efforts across national systems, set the minimum national commitments to marine observations, leverage international initiatives such as the UN Ocean Decade, seek a common policy thrust through regional mechanisms, and exploiting existing agreements. A **permanent and joint regional multinational task force** will assist and support countries to **implement and maintain joint observing system infrastructures**, providing scientific and technical support to national systems where needed. The Agency will promote regional endeavours with large scale impacts and targets on a Mediterranean collaborative scale, with joint implementation efforts by all countries, to jointly address and solve common problems and challenges, especially of trans-boundary nature. This will entail a new way of joint action, adopting **regional cooperation programmes**, rather than groups of complementary projects, jointly designed and implemented by the countries to achieve and dovetail country-based systems in their combined performance at regional level, and achieve common targets with long-term and sustainable solutions.