I – Introduction and context

The “Territorial Cooperation and Macromedial Strategies in the Mediterranean” working group is of transversal nature. It deals with issues that, without being strictly sectorial, are of general interest for Mediterranean regions and raise issues related to future Mediterranean governance, underlining the role that territorial organisations, authorities and stakeholders should play in this governance.

Through this working group, the intention has been and still is to keep evaluating the feasibility of – and advocating for – an integrated strategy in the Mediterranean in a long-term perspective, as well as interactions with all forms of cooperation in the area.

In this regard, the IMC has worked over the past years on several policy documents on the matter (e.g. declarations, MarInA-MedPolicy paper) and on a specific roadmap for macro-regional and sea basin strategies in the Mediterranean. This roadmap has been conceived as a rolling document, presenting a possible path to follow with key concepts and principles. The roadmap has helped refocusing the reflections on governance and putting them again in the actuality of Euro-Mediterranean debates and agenda, proposing to apply a gradual and “variable geometry” approach. In this sense, the IMC has in the past also promoted several debates (e.g. seminars, sessions linked to its statutory events and projects, Mediterranean Cooperation days etc.) and built alliances with key Mediterranean stakeholders.

The roadmap is now being partially implemented through the strategies and initiatives in the Mediterranean (EUSAIR, WESTMED…). Nevertheless, the IMC needs to keep promoting its approach towards an integrated strategy – which is still not a reality – towards European Institutions and national organisations, highlighting the need for better synergies and greater coordination among the existing and emerging initiatives, programs etc. and promoting the added-value that it could bring. The macro-regional framework promoted by the IMC as a bottom-up process can facilitate a new emphasis on territories and governance, improving cooperation between different levels of government.

In this sense, the MedCoopAlliance, counting on the active participation of the IMC, is a multi-level, multilateral platform that groups together different sub-state public administration networks in the Mediterranean region. During this period, the MedCoopAlliance has been working with the goal to reinforce the mid-governance level of ETC programmes claiming for a multilevel governance approach, facilitating the interaction between national/EU levels and providing an active role to regional and local authorities in the elaboration of programs. This approach would allow support the sound implementation and landing of funds on territories, while improving their efficiency by taking advantage of the local, regional experiences and projects results. Likewise, the geographical scope of the Alliance would allow it to bridge across various ETC programmes geographies, enabling it to support macro-regional dynamics as well.
Two opportunities are relevant at this moment in terms of EuroMed cooperation and should be kept in mind for the activities of the WG.

First of all, the urgency of an immediate response to the COVID-19 crisis has required integrating the EU’s next long-term budget 2021-2027 with a short-term plan, the Next-Generation EU, the negotiations for both investment plans are still running and may continue during the first months of 2021.

Within the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), the headings 2 on “Cohesion and Values” and 6 on “Neighbourhood and the world” will be particularly relevant for ETC and macro-regional dynamics in the basin, and therefore for the MedCoopAlliance; while the REACT-EU component of the Recovery Plan (Next Generation EU) will specifically address the cohesion issues, namely territorial cooperation.

The post-2020 cohesion plan is currently under discussion and the different cooperation axes (“strands”) are still to be defined; but, according to the last European Commission proposal, it may include a fifth component on intra-regional cooperation, which would specifically concern the Mediterranean area. The amount percentage to be allocated to each strand is being discussed by the different EU decisional organs.

Moreover, the introduction of a new planning and funding instrument is foreseen – the Neighborhood Development and international Cooperation instrument (NDICI) – which will integrate the European Development Fund concerning regional Neighborhood policy as well as the larger international cooperation.

A second element has to do with the effective implementation of the recently launched Agenda for the Mediterranean via the New Partnership for the European Neighborhood (JOIN(2021) 2 final). This agenda should encourage providing institutional and financial resources for setting multilevel governance mechanisms at the regional level that can steer the definition and the implementation of more effective and legitimated transnational policies.

This context triggers the necessity of a sharing of points of view of Mediterranean regions and the identification of positions shared amongst them, which will in turn be brought to the knowledge of lobbying networks in the Brussels (European Committee of the Regions, European Parliament...).

There are other essential concepts that need to be developed and pushed within the Mediterranean governance framework such as the possible adaptation of Cohesion Policy methodologies and concepts to the Neighbourhood policy. This work was initiated some years ago with the ARLEM report led by the IMC on a “Cohesion Policy for the Mediterranean.” This also includes reflecting about the future of territorial cooperation in the whole Mediterranean basin in the frame of the reviewed EU Neighbourhood Policy and the prospects of the post-2020 programming period.

This is the reason for which a multilevel governance approach, and the reinforcement of the decentralised and territorial cooperation between our regions, south-south cooperation and the Mediterranean Southern countries’ decentralisation processes, should keep being among the priority work areas. The WG should keep giving an impetus to some specific actions connected to this new renovated context to assure the efficiency in the implementation of the EuroMed policies in this new period.

II – Background

In this framework, the two working group co-presidencies, Catalonia and Région Sud, will keep ensuring the management of the working group’s strategic activities, with the support of the IMC Secretariat, so that every action can be implemented in the most effective and participatory way as possible. Besides, the members’ active participation will represent a major asset for the achievement and success of meaningful results.

The present plan is conceived as a framework document that could be further adjusted during the mandate, based on new needs.
III – Main objective

Studying, analysing and putting into practice the suggestions and concrete actions that can contribute to improve governance and territorial cooperation in the Mediterranean while enhancing the roles of regions and territorial organisations.

IV – Work areas and actions

1. Promoting Mediterranean governance: a macroregional and sea basin strategic approach in the Mediterranean

Main expected results:

1. Greater interest of Euro-Med territorial stakeholders (public and private), Mediterranean member States’ impulse and commitment towards emerging strategies and governance improvement in the Mediterranean

2. Implementation and monitoring of structured supportive actions for Mediterranean governance within European projects/programmes framework (as per the experiences of PANORAMED and related governance projects, as well as the forthcoming ones, among others)

3. Implementation of a Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance work plan with a view to support macro-regional dynamics across the Mediterranean

Actions that could contribute to achieve these results in the current mandate:

- Contribution of the IMC to the New Mediterranean Agenda Communication published by the European Commission; draft of a position paper and ratification during the forthcoming General Assembly.

- Keep feeding the political declarations of the IMC and CPMR with the emerging strategies for the Mediterranean.

- Operational and strategic collaboration with DG MARE and the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat on the implementation and possible extension of the WEST MED Maritime Initiative to the whole basin (as a first step or pilot experience towards a macro-region in this space, complementary with the EUSAIR and future emerging strategies).

- Monitoring and capitalisation of governance aspects of the EUSAIR (examples of activities that could be developed together with the Adriatic Ionian Task force of the CPMR: joint monitoring of the 4 pillars and fora, coordination with participating regions and EC's DG REGIO/MARE, when necessary. Synergies on specific coordination initiatives with key players as Adriatic-Ionian Initiative Secretariat or Adriatic Ionian Euro Region, Al-NURECC, associations of universities, cities and chambers of commerce).

- Contribution to the reflections on governance of the platform Project – PANORAMED – linked to the axis 4 of Interreg MED, exploiting the potential of IMC political reflections as well as the results of the EU projects where it is involved, and feed the reflections about upcoming projects architecture.

- Support to the implementation of the Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance, and in particular about ETC programmes architecture and governance, in view of broadening the contribution of local and regional authorities to the programmes and bridge project activities across the shores of the Mediterranean to a further extent.

- Support to the Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance with the elaboration of a Governance project to be presented to the Interreg MED program, in complementarity to the PANORAMED experience.

- Synergies concerning the future of macro-regional and sea basin strategies in the Mediterranean with the Economic and Social Committee, the European Committee of the Regions (examples of activities: coordination and agreement on common messages to deliver).
• Contribution to the European Parliament’s and European Commission potential future reports concerning multilevel governance and macro-regions and sea basin strategies affecting the Mediterranean. This would include a participation to the to the reflexions of the “sea, islands, rivers and coastal areas” EP’s intergroup (SEARICA) – should it be reconducted – from the angle of MR and SB strategies in the Mediterranean (examples of activities: contribution to consultations, possible participation in or co-organization of events).

• Collaboration with the CPMR Macro-region Task Force (bringing Mediterranean expertise for the preparation of political and technical documents, recommendations for the MR and Sea Basin strategies’ implementation based on regions’ practices, participation to meetings/workshops organised in collaboration with the DG REGIO and/or Interact)

• Specific meetings with National authorities of Med Countries, in order to raise awareness on-and added-value of emerging strategies, towards an integrated one.

• Support to reflections for the IMC and the CPMR connected with the future of Territorial Cooperation in the post-2020 period and the relation with governance, macro-regional and sea basin strategies (exchange of ideas during meetings and seminars, exploiting the asset of counting on several IMC regions that are Managing Authorities for these kinds of programmes)

• Support to the development of works on Big Data

• Promote and convey the reflections of the Mediterranean region concerning the management of migratory flows to the CPMR Task Force on migration (with an accent on integration, reception and cooperation with origin countries) and, when appropriate, make them fit in the global debates about governance and strategies (e.g. promote the answer to questionnaires and projects launched by the CPMR, and capitalize the reflections on migration in relation with the emerging strategies, promote projects like MIPEX-R etc.).

2. Increase and improve coordination with Mediterranean organisations, assemblies and networks

This axis revolves more around the promotion of synergies between different strategic approaches on governance (including macro-regions and sea basin strategies or the cohesion policy for the Mediterranean), and to develop joint projects and reflections on the future of territorial cooperation.

Main expected results:

1. ARLEM – Constant participation to the works of the Plenary and the Commission for sustainable territorial development

2. UfM – Improvement of coordination with SG and the UfM Secretariat.

3. Support to the implementation of the Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance, notably through its dedicated new IMC Task Force

4. Enhanced coordination with WestMED and BLUEMED (capitalization of the initiative), exploiting to a further existing links with partner countries

5. Improved coordination with other Mediterranean stakeholders networks, including by means of joint cooperation projects: Med Cities, UNIMED, Euro-regions (e.g. Pyrenees-Mediterranean and Adriatic-Ionian Euro-region), AI-NURECC, COPPEM, ASCAME, IEmed, Institut de la Méditerranée, Centre for Mediterranean Integration – CMI, FAL, UNDP, UNEP MAP, Plan Bleu, MEDPAN, UCLG, etc.

Actions that could contribute to achieve these results in the current mandate:

• Reinforce cooperation between networks of the MCA and open the support to the Alliance to relevant stakeholders in the Region

• Regular contacts and coordination with the UfM General Secretariat and with sectoral vice-secretaries and divisions for the follow-up and potential renewal of the existing Memorandum of Understanding CPMR-IMC and UfMS.
Participation of IMC and UfMS in respective relevant meetings and fora, possible synergies concerning specific initiatives and projects etc. (in coordination with the rest of IMC WG)

Participate to relevant UCLG activities and contribution to political declarations and publications

Keep following up the synergies with MedCities in relation with the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2016

Keep following up the synergies with the Center for Mediterranean Integration in relation with the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2015

Coordination, exchange of views, experiences and meeting with other networks (Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euro-region, Adriatic-Ionian Euro-Region, AI-NURECC, ASCAME, UNIMED, MED PAN etc.) and possible action plans/projects/joint initiatives etc.

Coordination with WestMED and BLUEMED for follow-up of works and capitalisation of results.

3. Develop a monitoring and supportive activity to the Neighbourhood Policy and territorial cooperation tools available in the basin

This axis would also encompass all reflections and activities supporting the emergence of a “Mediterranean of projects”, decentralised and south-south cooperation, and Mediterranean Southern countries’ decentralisation.

Main expected results:

1. Monitoring and advocacy actions towards the European Neighbourhood Policy in favour of a better inclusion of and role for the regional and local authorities from both rims

2. Efficient coordination with Secretariats and management authorities of the main Mediterranean cooperation programmes concerning the preparation of the next programming period and projects presentation to next calls

3. Decentralised cooperation actions promotion, particularly capacity building initiatives and institutional twinning between Mediterranean local and regional authorities

4. Monitor the implementation of the NEXT MED program and support synergies with other ETC programs such as EuroMED.

Actions:

• Follow-up of the Communication and contribution to the New Mediterranean agenda proposed by the European Commission for a Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighborhood.

• Global monitoring of the Neighbourhood Policy Instrument and the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) implementation in the Southern borders of the EU and the opportunities for Regional and Local authorities.

• Lobbying to the DG REGIO to maintain the specificities of the ENI program in the next 2021-2027 period in order to enable the effective participation of Southern partners.

• Follow up of the future of Interreg and ENI programs in the Mediterranean, identification of common positions of IMC Regions and lobbying to carry these positions to the IMC Regions and lobby to support these positions

• Follow up and capitalization of the ARLEM’s report on a Cohesion Policy for the Mediterranean (implementation/adaptation of the EU Mediterranean Cohesion Policy’s methodology, concepts and tools, in the ENP and Euromed relations, aspects regarding the “decentralisation” approach in the ENP)

• Specific monitoring of the implementation, and capitalization of the ENI CBC MED and transnational programmes like MED, ADRION, but also other territorial cooperation programmes in the Med area (including cross-borders programmes, interregional cooperation programme and
IPA, ENI CBC), and programmes related to regional cooperation with the new ENI. Development of reflections towards the future of these programmes.

- Presentation of key projects for the CPMR-IMC to calls for proposals of main Mediterranean cooperation programmes and support to IMC members’ proposals, trying to boost the involvement of southern partners (in programmes and projects)
- Support to the MedCoopAlliance within ETC programmes as a potential consortium for governance projects
- Strengthening relationships with EC’s DGs DEVCO, NEAR, REGIO and MARE
- Contact development with Southern Neighbourhood Policy’s Member States and strengthening of the relations with EEAS and EC delegation in the Mediterranean Southern countries (Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria as priority countries)
- Continue the capitalisation effort (undertaken with some past inventories) of cooperation experiences with Southern local and regional authorities related to significant policies for maritime coastal regions of the Med, the integrated territorial development and public administration of excellence
- Follow-up of the capacity building pilot action for integrated territorial development of the Southern Med area, notably through the UfM Technical assistance in preparation for an application to the tourism sector. The resulting training would target in priority southern civil servants of local/regional administrations.
- Develop reflections towards the possible setting up of a ENP south “territorial hub” branch, increasing the support to the implementation of: the European Neighbourhood Policy and linked UfM objectives, EU and LRAs policies having an impact on the ground (in coherence with IMC recommendations on the “territorialisation” of the ENP
- Support other initiatives concerning capacity building and decentralisation and monitor the decentralisation processes in the Mediterranean (e.g. promote the intervention in debates on this matter by IMC southern regions in seminars, develop a report on the IMC Enlargement including information on the decentralisation processes and current relations with EU and IMC)
- Mediterranean regions’ contribution to CPMR Global Agendas and Cooperation actions and reflections, regarding decentralised and development cooperation and the debates linked to the development agenda, SDGs etc.

V – Organization

The group will organize itself in the following manner, through:

- Face-to-face meetings (trying to optimize IMC Agenda and back-to-back solutions), online exchanges when these meetings are organized ad hoc, coordination by e-mails
- Coordination with the CPMR and IMC Secretariats, including inter-geographical commissions works (especially for CPMR Task Force on Macro-Regions and Adriatic-Ionian strategy, CPMR Global Agendas and Cooperation activities, Balkans and Black Sea Commission, Neighborhood dimensions).
- Coordination with other sectoral IMC working groups on topics and initiatives regarding cooperation with Southern shore and relations with EuroMed networks (for example Vasco Da Gama in the Mediterranean, sustainable tourism…)
- Working languages (French and English preferably)
- Regional experts typology appreciated (heads for Territorial Cooperation or International Relations, Mediterranean or European affairs)
Each member of the group is in charge of its costs for participating to face meetings previously planned. However, as an exception, it is possible that in some specific cases these costs could be covered by European projects budgets (e.g. in case of back-to-back relevant meetings).

The group can assign to its members some tasks related to the actions to be implemented, in accordance with their expertise and their interest to contribute to the results achievement, and to focus in the most efficient manner.

Once specific actions are defined, members concerned can coordinate, particularly by the way of the Internet, videoconferences or telephone conference. Each member should try to develop useful contacts with external experts and significant institutions representations for the results achievements.

VI – Calendar

Calendar for the WG (the meetings will be included in the global calendar available on www.cpmr-intermed.org. Other possible meetings:

- Possible IMC mission in the Balkans /southern Med Countries,
- Possible missions in the Med EU capitals regarding the Macro regional strategies
- Possible seminar with SEARICA Intergroup
- 1st semester (April) – Meeting of the WG (discussing about ETC programs 2021-27, governance, ENP)
- 2nd semester – Governance and SDGs, perspective with the MedCoopAlliance

VII – Appendices

1. ARLEM Report on a Cohesion Policy for the Mediterranean
2. Roadmap for Macro-regional and Sea Basin strategies in the Mediterranean
3. Documents concerning West Med initiative and EUSAIR
4. Political and technical documents on migration of the IMC and CPMR
5. IMC and CPMR Declarations and positions including reflections on ENP review and macro regional and sea basin strategies
6. Draft proposals for a future ENP “Territorial Hub Branch”
7. Information on projects

All these documents are available on the IMC CPMR web site or upon request.