

Mediterranean Futures: sustainability towards 2030 and beyond

We are delighted to welcome you to this *Med Futures* survey, conducted by Monaco Oceanographic Institute, as part of its Mediterranean Programme. Your voice matters.

This questionnaire aims to gather your insights, experiences, and examples of innovation that are helping to build a more sustainable and resilient future for the Mediterranean region. Whether you represent a community project, a research institution, a public body, or a private sector actor, your input will contribute to identifying the “seeds” of change—real actions already making a difference on the ground.

By taking a few minutes to share your perspective, you are helping us shape a collective vision for the Mediterranean, grounded not in abstract ideals but in concrete, proven solutions. Your contribution supports a broader effort to highlight, connect, and scale up these innovations across the region.

Together with the Oceanographic Institute and our partners, we can transform today's challenges into the foundation of a hopeful and inclusive future..

Context and objective of this survey

The Mediterranean Sea, though exceptionally rich in biodiversity and culture, is under mounting ecological, economic, and political pressure. It is warming 20% faster than the global average, with 58% of fish stocks overfished, severe plastic pollution, and only 0.23% of its waters strictly protected. Despite decades of conservation efforts, governance remains fragmented, and regional sustainability goals—such as the 30x30 target under the Global Biodiversity Framework—are still far from being achieved.

The Med Futures initiative responds to this reality with a concrete objective: identify, connect, and scale up real-world innovations already making a difference on the ground. By mobilizing scientists, communities, NGOs, businesses, and the private sector across the Mediterranean, Med Futures will collect examples of impactful actions—whether community projects, nature-positive business models, or policy advances—that demonstrate practical pathways toward regeneration and resilience. The aim is to build a shared vision not based on abstract ideals, but on scalable, proven seeds of change that can collectively reshape the region's future.

Aligned with the momentum of UNOC3 and existing frameworks such as the Barcelona Convention and the Blue Plan's Med2050, Med Futures offers a complementary, bottom-up approach to strengthen regional action. Rather than setting new targets, it focuses on delivering actionable pathways based on existing successes—helping governments, institutions, and civil society accelerate impact beyond 2030 and into 2050. By grounding ambition in tangible innovation, the Mediterranean can become a global reference for inclusive, resilient marine governance.

Areas of intervention/key themes

The four themes chosen for the exercise would be aligned with the global visioning effort i) blue foods; ii) ocean and climate; iii) pollution; and iv) high seas. These four themes are connected to the ten Ocean Action Panels (OAP) of UNOC3 (i.e. the approved themes of the plenary sessions), as well as to the targets of SDG 14.

Blue foods : Blue foods are essential to food security, livelihoods, and culture in the Mediterranean. However, overfishing, habitat degradation, and climate change threaten their sustainability. A desirable future means transitioning to sustainable blue food systems: rebuilding fish stocks, fostering responsible aquaculture, reducing post-harvest losses, and promoting local, small-scale, and community-based fisheries. Policies must ensure that blue food systems are ecologically sound, economically viable, socially equitable, and resilient to climate change, preserving their role as a vital source of nutrition and well-being across the region.

Ocean and climate : The Mediterranean is a frontline for ocean-climate interactions, from sea-level rise to marine heatwaves and biodiversity shifts. Building resilience requires integrated ocean-climate action: protecting and restoring blue carbon ecosystems like Posidonia meadows and salt marshes, decarbonizing maritime sectors (transport, tourism, fisheries), advancing renewable marine energies responsibly, and strengthening climate adaptation for coastal communities. Ocean-based solutions must become central to national climate strategies (NDCs), positioning the Mediterranean as a leader in linking climate mitigation, adaptation, and ocean health.

Pollution : Pollution is suffocating the Mediterranean. Plastic debris, chemical run-off, untreated wastewater, and shipping emissions severely impact marine biodiversity, human health, and economies. Tackling pollution means moving from fragmented responses to systemic solutions: accelerating zero-waste and circular economy models, strengthening monitoring and enforcement, reducing land-based sources, regulating maritime activities, and restoring degraded ecosystems. Eliminating pollution at its source is critical to regenerate ecosystems, ensure safe food systems, and rebuild public trust in the Mediterranean's health.

High seas : The Mediterranean's high seas areas are poorly regulated despite their critical role in biodiversity connectivity, fisheries, and climate regulation. Implementing the BBNJ Agreement (adopted in 2023) offers a transformative opportunity: protecting vulnerable ecosystems, regulating extractive activities, and fostering scientific cooperation. Future governance must ensure that Mediterranean high seas are managed as a **common good**, balancing conservation, sustainable use, and equitable access, while reinforcing synergies between the BBNJ framework, the Barcelona Convention, and regional fisheries agreements.

Planting seeds for the future

People choose their actions based on their view of society and their expectation of the future. If our only views are negative, we're likely to steer towards a negative future.

We need stories about the future that paint a realistic and optimistic vision of what the world can be.

A good Anthropocene is likely to be radically different from the world of today, involving fundamental change in human-environment relationships, changes in values, cultures,

worldviews, and even the power and gender relations influencing social norms and behaviour. But envisioning a future so different from the world of today, while obviously appealing, is also incredibly difficult.

This project aims at helping the global community develop inspirational visions and stories, with the potential to be key components of transformations to sustainability, and shape the very reality that they forecast. This can be done by looking at the **emergence of new thinking, innovative ways of living, and different means to connect people and nature** that already exist.

As threats to society and nature are highlighted, many people are increasingly engaging in strategies to create a more just, prosperous, and ecologically diverse world – what we call a “good Anthropocene”. **Together we can develop better scenarios by starting with those emerging innovative ideas, ways of living, and transformational projects.** Such concepts are called *Seeds of Good Anthropocenes*.

Seeds are existing initiatives that are not widespread or well-known. **They can be social initiatives, new technologies, economic tools, or social-ecological projects, or organisations, movements or new ways of acting that appear to be making a substantial contribution towards creating a future that is just, prosperous, and sustainable.**

Such information can be used to (1) understand the key characteristics and underlying values that people want from a good Anthropocene; (2) appreciate the processes and conditions that make some initiatives, rather than others, emerge, grow, spread, and have large-scale transformative impacts beyond localities and sectors; and (3) explore how seeds can inspire novel scenarios that are radical alternative visions of a positive future world.