



United Nations Environment Programme



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15 August 1988

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

First Meeting of the
Socio-Economic Committee

Athens, 27-29 September 1988

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE BLUE PLAN DURING 1987/1988 AND
PROPOSED ACTIVITIES AND BUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS FOR 1989

UNEP

Athens, 1988

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A. REPORT ON THE STATE OF PROGRESS

1. During the 5th meeting of the Contracting Parties at Athens in September 1987, a preliminary report on the Blue Plan scenarios was put forward (Document UNEP/WG.171/3) along with a brief outline concerning the main findings of the Blue Plan and suggestions for action (Document UNEP/IG.74/INF.10).

In accordance with earlier decisions, the presentation of this preliminary report set a time limit to the second stage of the Blue Plan. During the third phase, starting from October 1987, the report was to be put into operation, while taking account of the comments and observations which had been made by different countries. At the request of the Athens meeting, the time limit for these observations and comments was extended to the end of November 1987. During this period of time, the Athens meeting was to adopt a plan of work for the Blue Plan for 1988.

2. From October 1987 to September 1988, BP/RAC tried to initiate these planned activities, in spite of the difficulties caused on the one hand by the fall in the dollar against the French franc, and on the other hand by the uncertainties weighing heavily on the financial capacity of the Action Plan during 1988.

These difficulties led certain members of the Secretariat of the Blue Plan not to apply for renewal of their contracts. In addition these difficulties caused a general slowing down on some of the work which had been envisaged.

3. The preliminary report was redrafted after reconsideration of the comments and observations made by countries, as well as some national and international bodies; this was mostly confined to abridgements in the format and in chapter organization, but also allowed for the inclusion of some improvements and modifications to some scenarios. Though the redrafting took a little longer than was envisaged, it nevertheless proved possible to produce a definitive version of the report on the Blue Plan scenarios in French and in English, entitled "Future of the Mediterranean Basin" (Environment and Development 2000 - 2025). This version has been provisionally reproduced, while waiting for publication on as large a scale as possible, preferably on a commercial basis. Preliminary negotiations have already begun with a large international publisher.

4. The redraft of the report on the scenarios has of course necessitated the revision of the executive summary, also reproduced in provisional form in French and in English, with the sub-title "Syntheses and suggestions for Action".

The translation of this document into Arabic is underway. Publication to as wide a public as possible is currently being considered.

5. The final production of the report on the scenarios led to the preparation of a large number of diagrams and maps of the Mediterranean region, to illustrate the different problems that had been studied. Likewise, the two main databases of the Blue Plan, one dealing with population and the economy, the other with the Mediterranean environment, have been up-dated and are available in brochure form (English and/or French).

6. The preparation of specialist thematic brochures to complete the report on the scenarios was actively pursued. The brochure on the future of the Mediterranean forests was reproduced as an example, in provisional form, in English and in French. For each brochure, a preliminary draft text is prepared by an expert from the region who has an international reputation; this draft text is progressively revised and finalised under the scrutiny of about ten well-known specialists from different Mediterranean countries. Each brochure treats the problems and their evolution, within the chosen area, and its prospects in the light of the Blue Plan scenarios. Of the 18 brochures envisaged, four are in the final stages of completion (fisheries, forests, conservation, water) and six others are in an advanced stage of preparation (agriculture, the hinterland, the islands, tourism, marine pollution, institutions).

7. The preparation of the brochure on the coast, which is the focal point for the whole of the region's problems) necessitates a special effort, in cooperation with the Priority Actions Programme. A meeting of Mediterranean experts on coastal management was organised at Sophia-Antipolis on 7 and 8 January 1988, in order to facilitate the production of the Brochure. Likewise, a consultation was held in Athens on 12 and 13 April 1988 to ensure the necessary coordination between the brochure on marine pollution (and the conclusions of the scenarios on this subject) and the work of MEDPOL.

8. It should be noted that the preparation of thematic brochures which has been undertaken by BP/RAC, can only be financed by a very small part of the funds at the disposal of the Mediterranean Trust Fund. The preparation of these brochures has been made possible only with the intervention of extra budgetary funding from French sources in BP/RAC, amounting to some 200,000 dollars, and from an EEC contribution of around 35,000 dollars for certain subjects (forests, water, conservation, the hinterland).

9. In accordance with the recommendation of the Contracting Parties, the transfer of the Blue Plan computerised databases to the Co-ordinating Unit in Athens was initiated and it will be completed fully by the end of 1988, to facilitate their eventual dissemination to those interested Contracting Parties. This transfer necessitated fairly rigorous consultations between the specialists in each centre, and this development and adaptation took up a good deal of time, particularly in the transfer of VAX mini-computer files to, an IBM/PC compatible system, giving a much wider possibility of dissemination and general use by member countries.

10. The necessary follow-up was made to requests for information and data received by BP/RAC. Some countries asked for details on the methodology of preparing national scenarios. These details were given by correspondence, or occasionally in person, when visits to Sophia-Antipolis took place, but neither the time schedule nor the budget allowed for consultation missions in different countries. These financial constraints, coupled with all the allied uncertainty, ensured that a projected workshop in Sophia-Antipolis on the exchange of information and experience, for specialists working on national scenarios, which had been considered as desirable if funds were available, could not take place at the time envisaged.

11. Two meetings of the Steering Committee have been held at Sophia-Antipolis since the 5th Meeting of Contracting Parties. The first (8 and 9 December 1987) was particularly concerned with the work of redrafting the preliminary report, and on the time-schedule for 1988 activities, assuming that the project would be fully financed. The second (21-22 June 1988) had to revise the 1988 workplan in the light of the financial difficulties, and focused attention on the activities for the year 1989.

12. The informal redaction group, consisting of Messrs I. Abdel Rahman, S. Antoine, M. Batisse, M. Grenon, J. Lesourne, and A. Manos, met three times in 1987 and 1988 to scrutinise the drawing-up of the different chapters of the final report and the summary.

13. The interest assured by the work of the Blue Plan brought requests for the participation of BP/RAC members in some Mediterranean conferences; such participation was funded by the organizers. At the beginning of July 1988, an "open-day" was held at Sophia-Antipolis within the framework of Mediterranean Environment Week.

B. PRESENT SITUATION AND FOLLOW UP OF THE BLUE PLAN

14. For the reasons already mentioned, it has not proved possible to carry out all the planned activities. To date, the budget approved in Athens for 1988, amounting to 420,000 dollars, is assured only to a maximum of 360,000 dollars; and when the transfers of funds took place, the dollar had depreciated by more than 15%. Consequently, some activities will have to be put back to 1989. These will mostly affect the Scientific Adviser or consultants whose help has been asked for, such as Algeria (energy scenarios), Egypt (methodology), Israel and Italy (national scenarios), Libya (preparation of national scenario), Tunisia (land management) and Turkey (national scenario and management of the region of Izmir), as well as the projected workshop and the publication and dissemination of the reports.

15. This situation was examined in detail by the Steering Committee at its meeting 21-22 June 1988. The Committee considers that 1989 should be a year of transition, between the realisation of the Blue Plan in its agreed form, and the carrying out of an instrument which would be necessary to Mediterranean countries in order to follow the evolution of relations between development and the environment, as well as to help in the preparation of prospective studies on integrated management of coastal regions with a view to maintaining the quality of the environment (including the Sea itself).

The Committee is of the opinion that, towards these aims, the first task after completion and translation of the 1988 report, and the publication of the brochures in the middle of 1989, should be to organise the workshop on the exchange of information on the compilation of national scenarios for the beginning of 1989, as well as the provision of consultation missions on national or coastal scenarios for those countries which have requested them or which will request them.

16. The Committee and the BP/RAC are of the opinion likewise, that it is necessary to keep a reduced operation going, in order to improve the information and the data concerning the environmental components, and the socio-economic factors of the Mediterranean basin, dwelling on those coastal regions which are particularly important in the carrying out of the Land Based Sources Protocol, and other parts of the Mediterranean Action Plan.

17. It seems after all that the work of the Blue Plan has shown up important areas of need, as well as given opportunities for technological exchanges, linked to the safeguarding of the Mediterranean environment, between Northern and Southern Mediterranean countries. The Blue Plan was not conceived of as taking part in this vast technical domain. Nevertheless, in order to prepare for a future more advanced technological cooperation in the Mediterranean, the Blue Plan is able to explore certain avenues of approach, setting up a progressive system of exchanges regarding research into specific technologies which are particularly relevant to Mediterranean conditions, especially in the fields of water, energy, industrial wastes or biotechnology. If such an approach was also to be stressed by the European Community, it could offer a useful perspective for the future and it would also provide a good example of the development of activities recommended by the very conclusion of the work of the Blue Plan.

C. BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 1989

18. The Steering Committee made the following budget proposals for the carrying out of the work plan recommendations for the 1989 Blue Plan, which has just been recalled:

	<u>In U.S. Dollars</u>
Scientific Adviser (part-time)	50,000
Technical expert	70,000
Support staff	
Statistician (part-time)	20,000
Secretary (documents) (full-time)	30,000
Consultants (for training and visits to countries)	35,000
Travel (missions) and meetings	30,000
Workshop on exchanges and methodology for producing national scenarios	60,000
Gathering of information and data	25,000
Translations, publications and reports	30,000
Total	350,000

19. BP/RAC gave approval to the Steering Committee's proposals. The direct contribution of the host country will be maintained at 1988 levels. The exploration of possible cooperation in the field of appropriate technologies may be the subject of research into supplementary contributions from other sources.