

Introduction

Following the approval of the Governance Paper by the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (January, 2008 - Almeria, Spain) which provides for the setting up of the Executive Coordination Panel (ECP) of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), the first meeting of the ECP was held on 26-27 February 2008 on the premises of the Coordinating Unit for MAP in Athens, Greece. The meeting was chaired by the MAP Coordinator and attended by all Regional Activity Centre (RAC) directors, the MED POL Coordinator and the Coordinator of the 100 Historic Sites programme. A full list of participants is attached as Annex I to this report.

Opening of the Meeting

Opening the meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel, the MAP Coordinator outlined his views about the role and objectives of the ECP in fulfilling its mandate and meeting the expectations of the Contracting Parties, taking into account the Governance Paper. He also briefed the meeting on the main outcomes of the UNEP Governing Council meeting held in Monaco the previous week before drawing attention in particular to the approval by the Governing Council of UNEP's medium-term strategic directions as a basis for the UNEP programme of work.

Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting adopted the provisional agenda and its timetable as presented in Annex II to this report.

Terms of Reference (ToRs) of the ECP

Following a discussion and an exchange of views on the mandate of the ECP, the meeting approved the ECP's ToRs as set out in Annex III to this report and agreed to submit them to the Bureau of the Contracting Parties for endorsement.

Cross-cutting thematic priorities for consideration in the five-year Indicative programme and biennial programme of work

Following a discussion on the importance of identifying cross-cutting thematic priorities for consideration in the five-year indicative programme and biennial programme of work, the ECP meeting concluded that:

- the best way to prepare documents of this kind is to adopt a bottom-up approach;
- a clear distinction should be made between cross-cutting or transversal issues and thematic priorities of MAP;
- the proposed cross-cutting issues should be related to the field of competence of MAP and its mandate and be of a strategic nature;

- the Convention and its Protocols, the MSSD, the regional sectoral policies adopted by the Contracting Parties and, in particular, the decisions adopted in Almeria should be the basis for the definition of thematic priorities for each MAP component. All MAP components should identify such thematic priorities for discussion at the second ECP meeting.

The ECP meeting decided that the following topics would be considered for possible inclusion in the list of cross-cutting priority issues for MAP”:

- Climate change (BP/RAC)
- Mediterranean information system on environment and sustainable development (INFO/RAC and BP/RAC)
- Sustainable consumption and production (CP/RAC)
- Sustainable management of natural resources (SPA/RAC)
- Sustainable tourism (BP/RAC)
- Waste management (REMPEC)
- Energy (BP/RAC)
- Water (BP/RAC)
- Mitigation of coastal risks (PAP/RAC)

With respect to the first two cross-cutting issues (climate change and Mediterranean information system on environment and sustainable development), BP/RAC and INFO/RAC will prepare outline project proposals for circulation among ECP members and consideration by the second meeting of the ECP.

For all the other proposed cross-cutting issues, the respective RACs should prepare and circulate to the ECP background notes for discussion at the second meeting of the ECP.

Implementation of the decisions of the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties

The meeting was briefed by all ECP members on the steps being taken to implement actions referred to in the Almeria Declaration. Attention was drawn to possible difficulties related to the preparation of cooperative studies to estimate the economic value of the products from and the services rendered by marine and coastal ecosystems. PAP/RAC, BP/RAC and SPA/RAC will carry out this assignment.

The Coordinating Unit will propose a draft paper listing the necessary steps and actions for the compilation of effectiveness indicators and submit it for discussion at the next meeting of the ECP.

It was agreed to discuss at the next meeting of the ECP activities related to the application of the ecosystem approach in the Mediterranean. The Consultant who prepared the road map approved in Almeria will be invited to participate.

The ECP meeting agreed to launch the process for the preparation of a report on the state of the Mediterranean environment and development, with the involvement of all MAP components. BP/RAC will coordinate this task, considering inter alia the promising negotiations it is engaged in to secure funding. In this regard, BP/RAC will prepare a synopsis for consideration and approval at the second meeting of the ECP.

Financial management audit

Pursuant to the Governance Paper, which calls for a financial management review and audit of MAP, the relevant terms of reference were approved by the ECP, as set out in Annex IV to this report. The ECP meeting decided to add to the objectives an assessment of the costs and advantages and/or disadvantages of according international status to the RACs. The Secretariat will submit the attached ToRs to the Bureau for consideration.

Criteria for the selection of new MCSD members

The criteria for the selection of new MCSD members from the academic sector, intergovernmental organizations and eminent experts prepared by the Secretariat were agreed upon as they appear in Annex V to this report.

15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties – lessons learned

Following a discussion on the lessons learned from the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (January 2008, Almeria, Spain), it was agreed that there was room for improvement in order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the meeting and to secure the participation of a greater number of ministers. In particular, it is the view of the ECP that:

- the ministerial segment should be complemented by the organization of round tables to encourage and allow for more discussion among ministers;
- it is possible and desirable to shorten the duration of the meeting by one day;
- those decisions which have already been agreed upon by the Meeting of MAP Focal Points should be adopted en bloc;
- the organization of an exhibition for the first time was a positive experience that should be further enriched with new elements in the future;
- necessary efforts should be made in order to ensure broader coverage and participation by the Mediterranean media.

At the conclusion of the discussion the meeting agreed that the Coordinating Unit should prepare a short paper summarizing the above suggestions and submit proposals for consideration by the forthcoming Bureau meeting.

Other matters

The meeting addressed the following other matters:

1. The inputs for the progress report on activities carried out by MAP should be prepared in a different form from that used in the past, and should take into account the activity fiches of the programme of work adopted in Almeria, with suggestions of a policy nature for consideration by the Bureau where appropriate.
2. The need for smooth implementation of CAMP Morocco and CAMP Spain was emphasized. In this regard the full participation of all concerned partners is essential.
3. In the implementation of the SMAP project, PAP/RAC and BP/RAC should work jointly in order to ensure its successful completion by the end of 2008. As soon as possible, the

need for a possible extension of the project by a maximum of three months should be established and an appropriate request forwarded to the European Union (EU).

4. At the end of May a high-level regional ICZM policy workshop will be held in Sardinia with the participation of "Ambassadors of the Coast".
5. The Coordinating Unit and INFO/RAC will seek information from the Contracting Parties on the nomination of INFO/RAC Focal Points.
6. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) project is expected to be launched soon, following endorsement by the GEF CEO.
7. The second meeting of the ECP will be held in Malta on 29-30 May 2008 and will be hosted by REMPEC.

**ANNEX I
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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ANNEX II

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Meeting - Introduction by the MAP Coordinator
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Terms of reference of the Executive Coordination Panel
4. Proposed five-year programme of work
5. Implementation of the Almeria decisions
6. Financial management audit
7. Criteria for the selection of the new MCSD members
8. 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties in Almeria – lessons learned
9. Other matters
10. Adoption of the report
11. Closure of the meeting

ANNEX III

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE EXECUTIVE COORDINATION PANEL

Background

The 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (Almeria, Spain 15-18 January 2008) approved the Governance Paper which provides inter alia for the setting up of an Executive Coordination Panel (ECP) to enhance accountability, collaboration and coordination across the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) system.

Mandate

Taking into account the goals and principles outlined in the Action Plan for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Sustainable Development of the Coastal Areas of the Mediterranean adopted in 1995, and in the Governance Paper approved by the Contracting Parties at their 15th Meeting in Almeria, Spain, and considering also the terms of reference of the Regional Activity Centres as outlined in the respective Protocols or Host Country Agreements, the Executive Coordination Panel is mandated to:

1. Identify and propose to the Contracting Parties a five-year working programme highlighting the priorities and goals based on the Convention, its Protocols, the MSSD, regional thematic policies and the decisions of the meetings of the Contracting Parties;
2. Prepare and propose to the Contracting Parties a two-year programme of work for MAP. This programme of work shall reflect thematic priorities of MAP and identify cross-cutting issues, bearing in mind the need to ensure synergy and complementarity among MAP components. The programme of work shall also reflect the activities carried out by the various MAP components, together with the proposed budget allocations;
3. Review the status of implementation of the programme of work and budget and decisions of the meetings of the Contracting Parties and propose necessary measures and actions for their successful and timely implementation;
4. Ensure the effective functioning of the MAP information system;
5. Act as a forum for exchanges of views on policy issues of MAP relevance and on methods and means to tackle operational issues;
6. Propose to the Bureau and to the meetings of the Contracting Parties a coherent platform for joint action and cooperation with other concerned actors and initiatives at the regional and international level.

Membership

The members of the ECP shall be the Coordinator, the Deputy Coordinator, the MED POL Coordinator and the Directors of REMPEC, BP/RAC, SPA/RAC, PAP/RAC, CP/RAC, INFO/RAC and the 100 Historic Sites programme. In the event that they are unable to attend the meetings,

their deputies shall represent the members of the ECP. Other officials from the Coordinating Unit and the RACs may be invited to attend the ECP meetings.

The meetings of the ECP shall be chaired by the Coordinator and, in his absence, by the Deputy Coordinator. The Coordinating Unit shall provide the secretariat for the meetings of the ECP.

Modus operandi

The members of the ECP shall meet in principle four times a year, on dates to be agreed upon in advance. Each meeting shall last for one or two days depending on the agenda and shall be conducted in a results-driven, flexible and cost-effective manner. In the interim periods, the ECP members shall maintain constant communication among themselves, using modern telecommunication technologies.

The ECP shall meet on the premises of the Coordinating Unit in Athens and of the different Centres on a rotation basis or back to back with other MAP meetings. The secretariat of the Centre hosting the meeting of the ECP shall provide the conference facilities, including interpretation into English and French and other secretarial support. Travel and accommodation costs shall be borne by the ECP members themselves.

The ECP may establish *ad hoc* working groups on specific issues with precise terms of reference. If need be, external experts may be involved.

Reporting

The ECP shall draw up a report of its deliberations and decisions, to be written in telegraphic style, point by point. It shall be approved at the end of each meeting. The report shall then be submitted to the Bureau for information. The reports of the meetings of the ECP shall be published on the MAP website and circulated among MAP Focal Points.

ANNEX IV

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AUDIT OF MAP AND ITS COMPONENTS

Background

The biennial programme of work and budget of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), including the administrative and operating costs of the Coordinating Unit and MED POL, the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (MCSD) and the Regional Activity Centres (RACs), with the exception of CP/RAC and INFO/RAC, is financed mainly from the Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF).

Ordinary contributions by the Contracting Parties to the MTF constitute the main sources of funding and are the most important factor in the process of ensuring adequate, stable and predictable financial resources for the implementation of the biennial programme of work. Ordinary contributions to the MTF have been stable for the last 30 years and today constitute 75.5% of the total financial resources of MAP. The balance is made up of voluntary contributions from the European Commission (EC), the Government of Greece, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and bank interest.

Additional external funding in the form of earmarked contributions made by governments, the EC, UNEP, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other cooperating agencies or supporting organizations is received by both the Coordinating Unit and the RACs to support specific activities, services and facilities, as set out in individual project documents. These additional resources enable MAP and its components to carry out additional activities which otherwise would not have been possible.

MAP and its components also receive contributions in kind from various sources, consisting principally of the support received by the RACs from the governments hosting them. This support is essential for the operation of the RACs. The hosting of MAP meetings at no cost to the Secretariat also constitutes considerable additional in-kind support. In the absence of in-kind contributions, the required funding would constitute an additional burden on MAP finances.

At their 13th Ordinary Meeting in Catania, in 2003, the Contracting Parties agreed not to increase the rate of their ordinary contributions for the two bienniums 2004-2005 and 2006-2007 following their decision to adopt the euro as the operating currency for MAP instead of the dollar. At the time, a favourable euro-dollar exchange rate resulted in an increase in the amount of financial contributions to the MTF.

No increase was requested for the biennium 2008-2009 either, and the Coordinating Unit and the MAP components had to prepare their budgets for the next biennium on a zero increase basis. The result has been the shifting of funds from activities to personnel emoluments, primarily in order to effect salary increases to compensate for the rise in the cost of living.

In real terms, the contributions of the Contracting Parties to the MTF are falling while the demands placed on its funds are increasing. As the programme of work becomes more ambitious the core costs of implementing its activities are increasing accordingly, in particular the expenditure on staffing, meetings, operational facilities, support for MAP activities in the developing countries, expert assistance and consultancies.

The functions carried out by the Coordinating Unit and MAP components are mainly coordination, technical assistance and capacity-building. It is not the role of MAP to fund major physical projects but to catalyse support in order to enhance the capacities of the Contracting Parties to help them improve their institutional capabilities and the management of their marine environment and their coastal zones, and to safeguard biodiversity.

Furthermore, the Secretariat does not generate any revenue from its activities. As explained earlier, the only sources of funding are the ordinary contributions to the MTF and other voluntary and earmarked contributions. It is therefore important to secure stable and sustainable funding for MAP activities.

In order to meet the ever-increasing cost of implementing the programme of work and activities, the Secretariat intends to submit a request to the Meeting of the Contracting Parties in 2009 for an increase in the ordinary contributions for the biennium 2010-2011, provided this is justified. To this end the intention is to carry out an assessment of the budgetary performance of MAP and its components to determine what adjustments should be introduced in terms of both how funding is derived and how the funds are being utilized before a final decision is taken on whether to request an increase in contributions from the Contracting Parties.

Mandate and Description of the Assignment

In their decision on the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2008-2009 the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention requested the Secretariat to have a financial management audit of MAP and its components carried out during 2008 by UNEP specialized bodies with a view to proposing efficient and cost-effective use of available human and financial resources and strengthening the effectiveness of the overall programme.

Overall Objective

The overall objective of this exercise is to propose efficient and cost-effective use of the human and financial resources and strengthen the effectiveness of the overall programme as well as to determine whether it would be justified for the Secretariat to request an increase in the ordinary contributions to the MTF.

Specific Objectives:

The specific objectives of the financial management audit are to determine and/or propose:

- whether the allocation of funds to the different MAP components is commensurate with their programme of work;
- whether the level of contributions made from the MTF to other United Nations organizations to carry out activities on behalf of MAP is justified;

- whether the financial contributions from national authorities and United Nations organizations in support of the Regional Activity Centres are realistic in relation to their commitments and possibilities;
- how the synergy between MAP components could be strengthened through the allocation of financial resources;
- whether there is a need for the reallocation of existing financial resources to finance priority activities within the overall MAP programme of work;
- programmes and activities the problems and obstacles that may be hindering the effective implementation of;
- whether the available resources are employed economically and efficiently;
- how MAP and its components could mobilize additional non-conventional funding;
- whether a request for an increase in the ordinary contributions to the MTF would be justified taking into account also important new activities being undertaken by MAP on the basis of decisions taken by the Meeting of the Contracting Parties;
- advantages and disadvantages of according international status to the RACs as requested in the Governance Paper.

Output and Responsibility

During this exercise interviews will be held with the Coordinator, MED POL Coordinator, Programme Officers, the Fund/Administrative Officer and the Directors of the Regional Activity Centres. Visits to the Coordinating Unit in Athens and to the different RACs may also be necessary. In all instances, full cooperation will be extended to the concerned UNEP officials to facilitate their assignment. A timetable of such meetings and visits will be prepared in advance and agreed to by all MAP officials involved in the financial management audit.

Consultations with United Nations agencies that have a close working relationship with MAP and its components and with some of the MAP partners, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are also recommended. Such consultations will help to identify the priorities on which MAP should focus its attention and to which it should allocate its financial resources.

The expected output of this assignment is an assessment of the budget management performance of the Coordinating Unit, including MED POL and the RACs, and of the efficient and cost-effective use being made of the resources in the MTF. The report will also determine whether the current level of activities can be sustained with the present level of funding or whether additional financial resources are needed.

This assignment will be carried out under the overall direction and supervision of the Executive Coordination Panel of MAP.

Duration and timetable

The assignment should commence in early 2008 and should be completed by the end of 2008. A draft of the final report will be submitted for the consideration and review of the Executive Coordination Panel of MAP at least three months before it is finalized. The final report, including comments by the Executive Coordination Panel, will be submitted to the Bureau for consideration during its first meeting in early 2009 before it is circulated to the Contracting Parties so that they may take into consideration the recommendations made which may have implications for the preparation of their national budgets for the financial years 2010-2011.

ANNEX V

DRAFT

SELECTION CRITERIA AND METHOD OF NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES REPRESENTING NEW CATEGORIES OF MCSD MEMBERS

Background

This document is guided by the decisions made by the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (Almeria, Spain, 15-18 January 2008), particularly those contained in the Governance Paper that concern the MCSD composition (Decision IG 17/4).

The MCSD is a forum for debate and exchange of experience on sustainable development issues that concern all interested parties in the Mediterranean region. It would therefore be appropriate to involve the greatest possible variety of national actors in the work of the Commission, so as to ensure the widest possible dissemination of the concepts promoted by the MCSD.

In addition to representatives of the Contracting Parties, local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and socio-economic stakeholders, three new categories have been agreed upon, representing:

- the scientific community;
- intergovernmental organizations working in the field of sustainable development;
- eminent experts specializing in the topics on the MCSD meeting agenda.

In order to implement the decision, the Contracting Parties requested the Secretariat to propose to the Bureau of the Contracting Parties for approval, following prior consultation with the MAP Focal Points and MCSD members, the criteria and procedures for the selection of the MCSD members from the academic and scientific community, the intergovernmental organizations and eminent experts as provided for in the Governance Paper.

As indicated in the Almeria report, in determining the proposed criteria and procedures for the selection of representatives of the new categories, efforts should be made to ensure participation of representatives from both the environmental and the development sectors related to the topics on the agenda of each meeting of the MCSD, and also to ensure appropriate geographical representation, and media participation, as requested by the Contracting Parties.

1. Criteria

General criteria

- *Have a broad vision and a Mediterranean focus;*
- *Represent or be an active member of a national or Mediterranean network or knowledge community;*
- *Have relevant expertise in issues of importance to the MCSD, including priority areas and cross-cutting issues;*
- *Be active in the field of sustainable development;*
- *Be willing to share and exchange with other members their expertise and experience, on the occasion of MCSD meetings and during intersessional periods (e.g. through contribution to specific working groups);*
- *Be willing to engage in MSSD implementation in their domain of influence;*
- *Have an explicit interest and effective involvement in Mediterranean activities.*

Specific criteria for the scientific community

- *Be the author of a significant list of publications in domains that are relevant to the MCSD work programme and MSSD priority areas of action: energy and climate change; information and communication; integrated coastal management; management of water demand, marine pollution; sustainable development indicators; sustainable tourism; sustainable agriculture; urban development;*
- *Be familiar with the MAP programme of work and activities;*
- *Be familiar with the Barcelona system;*
- *Have contributed or contribute consistently to increased understanding of environmental, social or economic issues at stake in the region through collaborative action-oriented research or teaching.*

Specific criteria for intergovernmental organizations working in the field of sustainable development

- *Be engaged in significant regional or country-level programmes of relevance to the MCSD work programme and MSSD priority areas of action;*
- *Be involved in regional or subregional cooperation frameworks, facilities, policies or financial mechanisms.*

Specific criteria for eminent experts

- *be distinguished Mediterranean personalities recognized in the environmental, social or economic domains;*
- *have recognized policy influence at the regional or country level;*
- *entertain connections with decision makers and policy leaders.*

2. Methods of nomination

In the selection process for the categories "scientific community" and "eminent expert", the principle of balanced geographical representation between the North, South, East and West will be carefully respected.

Scientific community

The representatives of the scientific community will be selected on the basis of proposals made by the MAP components and partners that transmit the candidatures to the Secretariat of MAP. Spontaneous candidatures may also be solicited and considered by the Secretariat.

Intergovernmental organizations

The representatives of the intergovernmental organizations will be selected through proposals made by the Secretariat of MAP that will solicit candidatures directly.

Eminent experts

Cooptation will be encouraged among the Contracting Parties. Expressions of interest will be solicited directly by the MAP Secretariat.