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43rd Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel

Teleconference, 28-29 September 2020

Report of the Meeting

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UNEP/MAP
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I. Agenda Item 1: Opening of the Meeting, Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work

1. The 43rd Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel (ECP) was held on 28-29 September 2020, through teleconference. The meeting was chaired by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) Coordinator and attended by the Heads of MAP Components, the MAP Programme Officer responsible for governance issues and the Policy and Programming Expert. The consultant that supports the MAP Secretariat with the preparation of the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027 (MTS) also participated during Agenda Items 1 and 2. The list of participants is presented in Annex I to this report.

2. Mr. Gaetano Leone, UNEP/MAP Coordinator opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. (Athens time) on 28 September 2020. He welcomed the participants and referred to the new Africa Centre for Climate and Sustainable Development (ACSD) of UNDP hosted by Italy. He noted the possibilities for cooperation with UNEP/MAP, since the Mediterranean is one of the focuses of the Centre's work. He then highlighted some recent advances in the work of MAP, including the launch of the GEF MedProgramme and the approval of two EC-funded projects that will support the implementation of the PoW. He also referred to the celebration of the Mediterranean Coast Day, the progress in the main processes mandated by COP 21, the meeting of the General Assembly of MedECC, the bilateral meeting with the European Environment Agency and the meeting of the Working Group on Blue Economy of UfM. He also referred to the unpredictability of the months to come due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. The meeting reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda prepared by the Secretariat, as in document UNEP/MED ECP.43/1.

II. Agenda Item 2: New Medium-Term Strategy:

a) Building Blocks, Major Regional Products and Elements of the Narrative

b) Main Elements for a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of the MTS

c) Main Elements of a MAP Systemic Analysis to Deliver the MTS

4. Ms. Tatjana Hema, MAP Deputy Coordinator thanked the members of the ECP for their inputs in relation to the preparation of the new MTS and the bilateral discussions held, and referred to the progress since the previous ECP meeting. She noted that an important step forward has been taken, noting the promising list of the main products developed, and stressed that some more aggregation is now needed in the proposed products, as well as some further finetuning of the text of the draft MTS. She also referred to the links with the new MTS of UNEP.

5. Ms. Virginie Hart, the consultant that supports the MAP Secretariat with the preparation of the new MTS, presented the draft of the new MTS, noting that it includes approximately 100 products structured around seven programmes. The Deputy Coordinator noted that the meeting should focus on the review of the substance of the document, while its final structure could be discussed at a later stage. Discussion on substance should include the vision, programmes, objectives, outcomes, main directions, and - to the extent possible - products. With regard to the latter, MAP Components were asked to update or add new products for new outcomes to be integrated as well as for existing outcomes that required to be further populated with meaningful products. She added that recent work focused on including main project deliverables as products of the new MTS, in an aggregated form. The consultant added that the list of products will need further revision, once the other parts of the document are agreed.

6. The Plan Bleu/RAC Director, Mr. François Guerquin, presented a proposal on the preparation of the new MTS, which was based on a slightly different concept. The meeting welcomed the proposal and agreed that some of its elements could be incorporated in the draft text of the MTS prepared by the Secretariat.

7. In the ensuing discussion it was noted that issues of capacity building can be embedded in the thematic programmes, and - if systemic - especially in the one on governance; the titles of programmes should be action-oriented, especially the thematic ones (e.g. by starting with “Towards/For”); monitoring and assessment issues should better be included in one programme, that on the shared vision; the list of products could be better presented as an annex or a separate information document at this stage, since they are still very indicative; the proposed vision was good and inclusive, while the alternative proposal should be also kept; objectives should be concrete, limited in number and results-based; overall objectives are not required under each programme, only strategic objectives; considerations on circular economy are to also be included in programme 1 on pollution (beyond programme 4); products should be aggregated, detailed and preferably not more than 10 per programme; products under each outcome could not appear under other outcomes; the targets and indicators will be discussed at a later stage, considering also the relevant work on the UNEP MTS/PoW.

8. The meeting agreed that ECP Members would work in groups that have mandate relevant to a specific programme, in order to finetune the objectives, outcomes and main directions of each programme, and only if necessary, the main products. It was agreed that they will liaise with the consultant for clarifications and they will send their consolidated inputs to the consultant, who would then work to prepare a revised version for final review by the Secretariat. In parallel, the consultant and the Secretariat will work on the narrative text of the report. Then, the report will be finalized by the Secretariat for submission to the MTS Steering Committee and the 90th Bureau meetings (10-11 and 12-13 November 2020, respectively).

9. The issue of a MAP Systemic Analysis to deliver the new MTS was also discussed. The Deputy Coordinator informed the ECP that the ToRs to engage a consultant to support the Secretariat with this task are being prepared, with the aim to examine the resources needed for the Secretariat and MAP Components to deliver the new MTS and its biannual PoWs. This exercise is to consider also what happens in other Multilateral Environmental Agreements and to assist the MAP-Barcelona Convention system to increase its impact. The main tasks of this work were presented to the meeting by the Secretariat.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
1.	Secretariat to send revised version of draft MTS to MAP Components	Coordinating Unit	Until Thursday 1 October
2.	MAP Components to work on the text and provide feedback	All MAP Components	Until Monday 5 October
3.	Finalization of document for submission to CPs	Coordinating Unit	Until Monday 12 October

III. Agenda Item 3: Impacts of COVID-19 and Proposed Responses by the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention System, including Possible Adjustment of the UNEP/MAP POW 2020-2021

10. The meeting discussed the impacts of COVID-19 and the possible responses of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system. It was noted that no activity seems to be in a major implementation risk due to COVID-19 and that savings are anticipated from the cancelling of travel and from holding meetings virtually. All MAP Components were asked to provide to the Secretariat before the 90th Bureau Meeting an assessment of anticipated savings from travel and meeting costs, together with a proposal on their potential use, under two scenarios: (a) Physical meetings are allowed as of January 2021, and (b) Physical meetings are allowed as of April/May 2021.

11. During the ensuing discussion, ECP Members presented possible impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and proposed responses. The main challenges faced are in relation to meetings with national authorities and stakeholders. Some specific repercussions are: delays in transboundary CAMPs; delays in progress of work between Morocco and SPA/RAC; difficulties in preparation of foresight studies, where face-to-face meetings are needed; difficulties in national consultation meetings for the Data Management Policy, which are better held face-to-face.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
4.	Assessment of anticipated savings from travel and meeting costs with a proposal on their potential use, under two scenarios	All MAP Components	End of October 2020

IV. Agenda item 4: Possible Collaboration with the Africa Centre for Climate and Sustainable Development (ACSD) of UNDP

12. The Director *ad interim* of ACSD and Senior Advisor at UNDP, Ms. Theresa Panuccio, briefly presented the work of the Centre. During the ensuing discussion, the relevance of the Centre with the work of UNEP/MAP was highlighted, while ways to increase links between ACSD and UNEP, and especially UNEP/MAP, were also discussed. It was noted that the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea (IMELS) also wants to increase these links, as well as to include the Mediterranean region as one of the focuses of the Centre's work. Possible links with the overall UNDP's work on climate change were also discussed.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
5.	Follow-up on possible collaboration with ACSD	Coordinating Unit	Continuous

V. Agenda item 5: Date and Venue of the 44th ECP Meeting

13. The meeting discussed the possible dates for the next ECP meeting. The period 19-20 January 2021 was identified as appropriate.

VI. Agenda item 6: Any Other Matters

a) Focal Points Meetings of MAP Components

14. The meeting briefly discussed the dates of the MAP Components Focal Points meeting to be reflected in the calendar of meetings and events to be submitted to the 90th Bureau meeting as an information document. Dates not identified during the meeting would be communicated to the Secretariat.

b) Update on the Status of Projects

15. The Deputy Coordinator presented an update on the status of recently approved projects. Regarding the GEF MedProgramme it was noted that all Child Projects were approved and that the legal instruments would be ready within the next two weeks for signature by the relevant MAP Components. In relation to the EcAp MED III Project it was noted that it has been approved by the European Commission and that necessary steps are being taken internally for the release of funds and then for the preparation of the legal agreements. Before the finalization of the legal agreements, bilateral meetings of the Deputy Coordinator will take place with relevant MAP Component Directors to discuss activities and budget. The launch of the EcAp Med III Project has been planned for the beginning of December. A similar process is being followed for the Marine Litter MED II Project.

c) Branding of RACs, including RAC Names

16. The Director of SCP/RAC, Mr. Enrique de Villamore Martin, noted that SCP/RAC is preparing a strategic communication plan to attract new donors. For this purpose and to secure funding for the RAC to continue its mandate and to be operative beyond 2023, the name to be used for branding towards potential donors is very important.

17. The Deputy Coordinator noted that the names of RACs are in some cases set in the Protocols of the Barcelona Convention, while in other cases they are set through COP Decisions. She also noted that it is different if the name is to be changed for all purposes, or if a shorter name is to be used only for branding/communication purposes. She also asked for clarifications whether the mandate of the Centre will remain the same.

18. In the ensuing discussion, the Director of SCP/RAC clarified that the mandate will remain the same and that a new, more “attractive” name is needed only for external/donor communication, while the official name will be used in all official documents and for communication within the MAP-Barcelona Convention system. It was agreed that SCP/RAC will provide further information and a concrete proposal and that no other steps will be taken before this issue, which is of interest to other RACs as well, is further discussed and agreed within the MAP-Barcelona Convention system.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
6.	Concrete proposal on changing the name of SCP/RAC for branding purposes	SCP/RAC	No deadline set

19. The meeting was closed by the Coordinator at 17:30 on 29 September 2020.

Annex I
List of participants

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COORDINATION PANEL

**THE MEDITERRANEAN
POLLUTION ASSESSMENT AND
CONTROL PROGRAMME
(MED POL)**

Mr. Mohamad Kayyal
MED POL Programme Officer
Tel: +30 210 727 3122
Email: mohamad.kayyal@un.org

**INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATION REGIONAL
ACTIVITY CENTRE (INFO/RAC)**

Ms. Lorenza Babbini
Director
Tel: +3906 5007 2277
Email: lorenza.babbini@info-rac.org

Mr. Arthur Pasquale
Deputy Director
Tel: +39 32 8941 0002
Email: arthur.pasquale@info-rac.org

**PLAN BLEU REGIONAL ACTIVITY
CENTRE (Plan Bleu/RAC)**

Mr. François Guerquin
Director
Tel: +33 7 86 38 17 20
Email: fguerquin@planbleu.org

**PRIORITY ACTIONS PROGRAMME
REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE
(PAP/RAC)**

Ms. Zeljka Skaricic
Director
Tel: +385 2134 0471
Email: zeljka.skaricic@paprac.org

**REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION
EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE
FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA
(REMPEC)**

Mr. Gabino Gonzalez
Head of Office
Tel: +356 2133 7296
Email: ggonzalez@rempec.org

**SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS
REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE
(SPA/RAC)**

Mr. Khalil Attia
Director
Tel: +216 7120 6649
Email: director@rac-spa.org

**SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION REGIONAL
ACTIVITY CENTRE (SCP/RAC)**

Mr. Enrique de Villamore Martin
Director
Tel: +349 3553 8792
Email: evillamore@scprac.org

Ms. Magali Outters
Team Leader Policy Area
Tel: +34 93 554 16 66
Email: moutters@scprac.org

**COORDINATING UNIT OF THE MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN - SECRETARIAT
TO THE BARCELONA CONVENTION**

Mr. Gaetano Leone

Coordinator

Tel: +30 210 727 3101

Email: gaetano.leone@un.org

Ms. Tatjana Hema

Deputy Coordinator

Tel: +30 210 727 3115

Email: tatjana.hema@un.org

Mr. Ilias Mavroeidis

Programme Management Officer

Tel: +30 210 727 3132

Email: ilias.mavroeidis@un.org

Mr. Stavros Antoniadis

Policy and Programming Expert

Tel: +30 210 727 3140

Email: stavros.antoniadis@un.org

Ms. Virginie Hart

Consultant

Email: virginie.hart@gmail.com

Annex II
Agenda

Agenda

- Agenda Item 1** Opening of the Meeting, Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work
- Agenda Item 2** New Medium-Term Strategy:
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- Agenda Item 6** Any Other Matters
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b) Update on the Status of Projects
c) Branding of RACs, including RAC Names