

Background

The Governance Paper approved by the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (15-18 January, 2008 – Almeria – Spain) provides for *“the preparation of a work programme and long term planning based on a five year indicative programme that outlines the goals and identifies actions within the MAP system over the following five-year period thus ensuring predictability in the work of MAP.*

In order to provide continuity, ensure effectiveness, relevance and allow for appropriate amendments in the face of new developments, this five-year indicative programme will be reviewed and revised on a “rolling” basis at each Meeting of the Contracting Parties. Each meeting of the Contracting Parties, also considering the interim results and the status of implementation submitted by the MAP Secretariat, will also adopt a more detailed two year Work Programme specifying the actions that will be undertaken in the following biennium.

The purpose of the activities included in the MAP Work Programmes shall be to facilitate and promote the full implementation of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols, and strategies as well as the Decisions and Recommendations of the Meeting of the Contracting Parties”.

The scope of this paper is to launch the discussion among MAP components on the identification of a number of over-arching thematic priority issues for the entire MAP system, over and above the specific priorities of the different components as outlined in their respective policy documents and detailed in their programmes of work, that should be taken into consideration during the process for the preparation of the five-year indicative work programme 2010-2014 and the two-year results-based biennium Programme of Work (PoW) 2010-2011 well in time before the meeting of the RACs' and MAP's Focal Points in 2009.

As a consequence, the choice of the thematic priority issues should be coordinated by and be the collective responsibility of all MAP components. As such, the objectives and outputs related to these issues should feature in the five-year indicative programme and rely on the inputs of all MAP components. This will also require close consultation among the RACs and the Coordinating Unit. This approach will enable an improved coherence in policy development, enhanced coordination among the RACs and more efficient use of resources both human and financial.

The indicative work programme should reflect the objectives of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols, the MSSD and the Decisions of the Contracting Parties. It should provide the programme's overall orientation and a definition of each priority thematic issue together with objectives and expected outputs.

In identifying priority thematic issues, consideration should also be given to recent developments on the international environmental scene in particular to UNEP's strategic objectives as they relate to the Mediterranean. Account should also be taken of the MAP components' core competences and priorities. It should be a key document leading to the preparation of the biennium PoW.

This process for the preparation of the biennium PoW should be a complete departure from the present practice. For one thing, the future PoW should not only be a list of programmes and activities prepared independently by the Secretariat, MEDPOL and each individual RAC according to the respective areas of competence. MAP's biennium PoW should be built around activities that reflect MAP's priorities identified in the five-year indicative programme. The former should evolve from the latter to ensure linkages.

The biennium PoW should be results based. It should identify outputs to be delivered during the biennium and the resources (budget) required for achieving these outputs. Expected results (indicators and targets) should be established to realistically reflect what could be achieved during the first biennium. A start in this direction has already been made in the preparation of the PoW and Budget for the biennium 2008-2009.

Future Challenges

The Mediterranean, like the rest of the globe, faces unprecedented environmental challenges especially in the face of climate change. Human activities and consumption trends are negatively affecting the ecosystem of the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment. Unsustainable and uncontrolled urban development is damaging the Mediterranean coastline. Land-based activities constitute a major source of pollution of the marine environment. Current unsustainable consumption patterns are rapidly undermining natural resources as well as being increasingly responsible for pollution generation. Biodiversity is also under continuous threat from unsustainable activities. Climate change is expected to exacerbate these problems as a result of sea level rise, water scarcity, droughts and desertification, flooding and unusual high temperatures in addition to effecting negatively economic activities such as tourism, one of the main sources of income for the region.

Previous efforts to address the pollution problems of the Mediterranean marine environment have had a positive effect. Data is available to justify this optimism. For one thing there is greater awareness about the problems and the need to take remedial action is being taken. Legal instruments are in place to enable national authorities to safeguard the environment. Sources of pollution originating from land-based activities have been identified and remedial action taken. In many areas certain species, which are on the verge of extinction, are now protected including their natural habitats. However, there is still a long way to go for the achievement of sustainable development in the region. New challenges are emerging which, due their complexities and cross-cutting nature cannot be addressed using the old methods but call for a different and concerted approach. MAP should identify these new challenges and determine their relevance and importance to the Mediterranean region if it wants to remain a relevant mechanism and receive the support from its partners.

The environmental challenges described in the Blue Plan Report on Environment and Development, the recently published 4th Assessment report of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the report on sources of pollution in the Mediterranean released by the European Environment Agency are some of the relevant documents for the Mediterranean highlight the environmental issues that most urgently require attention. Evidence in these reports and other relevant scientific work should underpin the identification of the cross-cutting thematic priorities for MAP for the period 2010-2014.

These priorities should constitute the framework of the Five Year Work Programme against which the overall performance of MAP should be judged. Consequently the programme should provide the strategic direction for all MAP activities for 2010-2014 on a number of cross-cutting thematic priorities. MAP should then seek to realize its vision through the implementation of specific activities in its PoW for 2010-2011, utilizing the capacity and expertise of its components while at the same time reaching out to Governments, other UN entities, international institutions, MEA secretariats, civil society, the private sector and other relevant partners.

Cross-cutting thematic priorities and objectives

In developing the Five Year Programme of Work 2010-2014, apart from the priorities already identified in the policy documents of MAP developed over the years, including the SAP-MED and SAP-BIO and the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Maritime Pollution from Ships, MAP should address the following cross-cutting thematic priorities:-

1. the ratification and implementation of the Convention and its Protocols;
2. the implementation of the MSSD;
3. the challenges of climate change and its relationship to sustainable development;
4. the application of the ecosystem approach;
5. the Governance of MAP;
6. the strengthening of relations with other regional initiatives.

The above priorities should be addressed in the context of :

- a. being responsive to country needs;
- b. strengthening the capacities of governments of Mediterranean developing countries;
- c. mainstreaming environment into development policies;
- d. providing leadership in scientific assessment and monitoring of the state of the Mediterranean marine environment;
- e. enhancing cooperation and coordination of environmental issues with other UN partners, the private sector and civil society;
- f. ensuring effective outreach and communications.

1. Meeting obligations under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

The objective is to:

- achieve a widespread ratification and entry into force of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

The existing considerable delay in the ratification of some protocols results in a complicated legal situation that directly affects any progress on the whole implementation process of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols. However, the recent entry into force of the Hazardous Waste Protocol and the imminent entry into force of the amendments to the LBS Protocol provide very encouraging developments. The adoption by the Contracting Parties of the ICZM Protocol presents a new and exciting challenge.

In order to facilitate the process of ratification by all Contracting parties a plan of action should be developed so that, within specific time limit, an attempt will be made to identify, clarify, discuss and deal effectively and in a agreed manner with the issues involved and the various problems affecting the process.

The plan should be prepared through analyzing the difficulties encountered by the countries in the ratification and implementation processes on the basis of the information provided in the national reports on the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols as well as through workshops to be organized by MAP components with regard to their respective protocols. At the same time there is a need to further promote the Convention and its Protocols and their achievements in order to encourage the Parties to ratify and implement them.

On the basis of this analysis, recommendations will be proposed to the meeting of the Contracting Parties in 2009 for their consideration and further action.

The expected outputs are:

- a greater awareness in the countries about the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols;
- the dissemination of information about success stories achieved within the frameworks of the MAP legal instruments;
- workshops by MAP components promoting the MAP legal instruments;
- development of a communication plan including information tools highlighting the added value of the legal instruments for the protection of the Mediterranean sea and its coastal zone;
- presentations in international fora about the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols to increase their visibility and promote their importance for sustainable development in the Mediterranean.
- a larger number of Protocol ratified and entered into force;
- technical assistance to Contracting Parties, increased capacity building, improvement in legal frameworks at national level;
- greater financial resources, internal and external, for the implementation of MAP legal instruments;
- involvement of public and civil society participation in the process of implementation of the MAP legal instruments.

2. Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development

The objective is to:

- facilitate and accelerate the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development

Since 2003, the work of the MCSD has essentially focused on the preparation of the MSSD. Following the adoption of the MSSD by the Contracting Parties in Portoroz in 2005, the challenge now lies in its implementation.

Working groups supported by the relevant RACs are meant to play an important role in the MSSD implementation as well as the continuous functioning of the MCSD. They are expected to explore and debate on specific sustainable development issues of relevance to the region, thereby implementing the biannual MCSD programme of work that is based on the MSSD priority fields of action.

The MAP Coordination Unit provides the MCSD Secretariat. The MAP Regional Activity Centres and specialised programmes (e.g. MEDPOL) are expected to steer the working groups, provide technical and organisational support to different working groups according to their respective domains of responsibility.

With the exception of the Working Groups set up by Blue Plan, the process has not taken off as planned and no other working groups have been set up. The process has therefore to be revisited in order to clarify the roles of the MAP components in the implementation of the MSSD.

The implementation of MSSD has to translate into concrete impact in the countries through:

- the integration of social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in policy making at the regional and national levels;

- the adoption of an integrated, cross-sectoral and broadly participatory approach to sustainable development;
- the provision of technical assistance, expert advice and capacity building to support developing countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable development;
- the cooperation, exchange of information and the organization of joint activities and partnerships with UN Agencies, the European Commission and other international and regional organizations, governments and civil society groups in support of sustainable development;
- the monitoring and evaluation of and reporting on the implementation of sustainable development at the national and regional levels;
- the effective involvement of civil society, major groups and other related stakeholders in the implementation process;
- the use of information and communication tools, educational activities and public participation in order to increase the visibility of the MSSD, and to ensure a broad understanding of the need to engage in its full implementation.

The expected outputs are:

- development and updating of National Strategies for Sustainable Development in Mediterranean countries with broad participation of civil society and other stakeholders while giving due consideration to the MSSD vision, orientations and objectives;
- greater awareness and acceptance of the outputs of MCSD, and increased understanding of the need to implement the MSSD on the regional and national levels through the use of information and communication tools and the mass media.
- MSSD implementation is carried out in synergy and cooperation with the work of other international and regional institutions through enhanced relations with other sustainable development frameworks.
- Implementation of pilot activities related to the objectives and targets of the MSSD;
- Well functioning Working Groups with the participation of all MAP components.

Climate change

The objective is :

- To strengthen the ability of Mediterranean countries to integrate climate change responses into national development processes taking into account also the outcomes of the Almeria Declaration adopted by the Contracting Parties during their 15th Meeting as well as the 4th Assessment Report by the IPCC.

Consistent with the United Nations Convention on Climate Change and within the wider international approach for dealing with climate change, taking into account the outcome of the Bali conference and the post 2012 targets that will emerge in 2009, the objectives and expected accomplishments of MAP activities should focus on providing assistance in the four areas prominent in the international responses to climate change: adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer and finance.

The work of MAP will complement the work of other institutions and will emphasize the importance of integrating climate change into national sustainable development strategies. This will include efforts to create enabling environments at national level through the promotion of national legislative, economic and institutional frameworks that are adequate to address the challenges of climate change.

MAP will assist developing Mediterranean countries to adapt to a changing climate by building resilience in sectors of national priority with a special focus on national and regional level assessments, ecosystems management, economic incentives, disaster preparedness and supporting the achievement of the MDG.

In the area of mitigation MAP will support countries to make a transition towards societies based on unsustainable consumption and production particularly low in GHG, more efficient use of energy, energy conservation and utilization of cleaner energy sources, with a focus on renewable energy and on improved land-management. The MCSD recommendations on the subject endorsed by the Contracting Parties in Almeria could be considered as a first step in this direction.

The expected outputs are:

- Adaptation planning, financing and cost effective preventive actions are increasingly incorporated into national development processes that are supported by scientific information, integrated climate impact assessments and local climate data;
- countries make sound policy, technology and investment choices that lead to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and potential co-benefits, with a focus on clean and renewable energy sources, energy efficiency and energy conservation and sustainable consumption and production;
- improved technologies are deployed and obsolescent technologies phased out, financed through private and public sources including the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM);
- citizens increasingly aware about sustainable consumption and more sustainable lifestyles;
- increased carbon sequestration occurs through improved land use, reduced deforestation and reduced land degradation.

Ecosystem approach

The objective is:

- The gradual application of the ecosystem approach in order to:
 - protect, allow recovery and, where appropriate, restore the structure and function of marine and coastal ecosystem thus also protecting biodiversity, in order to achieve and maintain good ecological status and allow for their sustainable use;
 - reduce pollution in the marine and coastal environment so as to minimize impacts on and risks to human activities and natural events.

In line with Decision IG/ 17/5 approved by the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties, the whole MAP system will progressively apply the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment for the promotion of sustainable development. Facilitating management and restoration of ecosystems in a sustainable manner for socio-economic development should be a key area of work for MAP in the future. The definition of an ecological vision and common strategic goals for the Mediterranean have already been approved by the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

The expected outputs are:

- identification of important ecosystem properties and assessment of ecological status and pressures;
- development of a set of ecological objectives corresponding to the vision and strategic goals;
- derivation of operational objectives with indicators and target levels;
- revision of existing monitoring programmes for ongoing assessment and regular updating targets;
- development and review of relevant action plans and programmes.

The Governance of MAP

The objective is:

- To implement a good governance scheme for the MAP system that further promotes the most effective and efficient use of the human and financial resources, and whereby the various components of MAP work in synergy as further described in the Governance paper approved by the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

The Governance Paper prepared by the MAP Focal Points following the extraordinary meeting in Catania in 2006 as well as the decision adopted by the Contracting Parties in Almeria, are a very strong indication of the direction that the Contracting Parties want to see MAP moving. They want to see the Secretariat and the RACs strengthening their teamwork, communicating more effectively and regularly and working in synergy towards achieving common objectives.

According to the Governance Paper, the MAP governance system should ensure two crucial aspects:

1. strong and cooperative relationship among MAP components and key actors, and
2. a MAP organizational system that is organized:
 - consistent with the intent and obligations of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols and Strategies;
 - responsive to contemporary needs and priorities;
 - integrating scientific developments;
 - efficient and effective (in terms of good governance principles and measures) to meet future goals;
 - structured to optimize the use of resources.

The expected outputs are:

- a streamlined and effective MAP system focused on the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols;
- an operational structure with the RACs and MEDPOL working as an integral part of MAP;
- a results based management structure with a system of indicators to monitor the effectiveness of the measures taken towards accomplishing the objectives set;
- Contracting Parties/MAP Focal Points playing a full and active role in the Barcelona Convention/MAP system;

- A properly targeted information and communication strategy to enhance implementation and effectiveness of the Convention and its Protocols and the political and public visibility of MAP.

The strengthening of relations with other regional initiatives

The objective is:

- To follow the process for the setting up of the Mediterranean Union and identify MAP's role in such an initiative.

France is proposing the creation of a Mediterranean Union to address common regional issues such as immigration, terrorism, economic development and environmental degradation. The plan appears to be gathering momentum among the 21 Mediterranean countries who are also Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

Details about what form this initiative will take are still emerging. For the time being, the idea is creating more questions than answers. Would it be a supranational organization like the EU with the power to set national laws or merely an institutionalized forum for discussion? How would it interact with existing regional organizations such as the EU, African Union, the Union of the Arab Maghreb and other regional mechanism like MAP, to which its potential members already belong?

According to international media reports, for a number of European Mediterranean countries the idea of a new regional grouping for the Mediterranean is attractive precisely because it may offer a forum for tackling the diverse region's many problems.

The French President himself has already discussed this initiative with his counterparts in a number of Arab countries as well as with the Foreign Ministers of the EU Member States. Moreover, French diplomats are working to formulate a more concrete proposal that is likely to be made public very soon.

The Mediterranean Union may be a centrepiece of France's Presidency of the EU in the second half of 2008. Moreover, a meeting of Heads of States is scheduled to be hosted by France in July of 2008 where this initiative will be launched formally.

MAP is a unique regional mechanism that has been addressing environmental degradation of the marine environment for many years. MAP already has a network and outreach in the region where it enjoys credibility and thrust, in particular among the southern Mediterranean countries. It should take advantage of its good standing in the region and ensure that the initiative builds upon the Barcelona Convention and the Mediterranean Action Plan as stated in the Almeria Declaration adopted by the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

In doing so, MAP should build upon the close relationships it has and the cooperation it enjoys with UN agencies, international institutions, Multilateral Environmental Agreements as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations who share MAP's objectives for a sustainable Mediterranean.

The expected outputs are:

- Assessment of the proposal for a Mediterranean Union and determine the response by MAP to this initiative taking into account the position of the Contracting Parties;

- Assess the position of the Contracting Parties to the proposed Mediterranean Union;
- Formulation of proposals on MAP's future role in the Mediterranean Union for the Consideration of the Contracting Parties in 2009.