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**Mediterranean
Action Plan**
Barcelona
Convention

11 August 2021
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Meeting of the MAP Focal Points

Teleconference, 10-17 September 2021

Agenda Items 3 and 4: Progress Report on Activities Carried Out during the 2020-2021 Biennium and Financial Report for 2018-2019 and 2020-2021

Agenda Item 5: Specific Matters for Consideration and Action by the Meeting, including Draft Decisions

Reports of the 39th, 40th, 41st, 42nd, 43rd, 44th and 45th Meetings of the Executive Coordination Panel

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UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

17 December 2019
Original: English

39th Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel

Naples, Italy, 1 December 2019

Report of the Meeting

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2019

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I. Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting and Adoption of the Agenda

1. The 39th Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel (ECP) was held on 1 December 2019, in Naples, Italy. The meeting was chaired by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) / Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) Coordinator and attended by the Deputy Coordinator, the Heads of MAP Components and the Programme Officer responsible for governance issues. The list of participants is attached as Annex I to this report.
2. Mr. Gaetano Leone, UNEP/MAP Coordinator opened the meeting at 17:30 on 1 December 2019.
3. The meeting reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda prepared by the Secretariat, as in document UNEP/MED ECP.39/1. The Agenda is presented in Annex II of the present document.

II. Agenda item 2: Preparation of COP 21:

a) Organizational Matters

4. The Coordinator referred to the organization of COP 21, noting that the Meeting will be held in daily sessions from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., subject to adjustments as necessary, and that no session is envisaged to be held in the morning of the last day (5 December 2019) to allow for the preparation of the Meeting Report.
5. The Coordinator noted that, in accordance with Rule 24, the meeting may consider establishing working groups as required for the transaction of its business. To this end, it is expected that a Budget Contact Group will be set up (as per Decision IG.21/13) which will report to the Plenary on Tuesday, 3 December at 16:30. He added that, on the basis of the well-established practice, the meeting may also wish to establish an Informal Working Group on the Naples Ministerial Declaration, chaired by the Host Country and facilitated by the Secretariat. The Coordinator also referred to the side events to take place in the margins of the COP, which are relevant to the main themes of COP 21.

b) Main draft Decisions

6. The meeting discussed the main draft Decisions submitted to COP 21 for consideration and possible adoption. It was noted that two draft Decisions that are expected to require more extended discussions during the COP are those on (a) *Assessment Studies*, especially in relation to the 2019 State of the Environment and Development (SoED) Report, and (b) on the *Road Map for the Possible Designation of the Mediterranean Sea Area as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides Pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI, within the Framework of the Barcelona Convention*. He also added that under the draft Decision on *Governance*, (a) there are still pending issues in brackets in relation to the Joint Cooperation Strategy, where more discussions are expected, and that (b) several inputs have been received in relation to the Host Country Agreements of Regional Activity Centres (RACs) by host country governments of RACs, adding that further work on this issue will take place in the next biennium.
7. The Coordinator stressed that it is necessary for MAP Component Directors to be present at the plenary sessions of the COP to support the discussions of draft Decisions relevant to their mandate. He also reminded the meeting of the fact that many issues remained open after the MAP Focal Points Meeting (Athens, Greece, 10-13 September 2019) and that these issues would need to be decided by the Contracting Parties at the COP. On the *UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget 2020-2021*, it was noted that this draft Decision was not discussed during the MAP Focal Points Meeting, and that it would be very important for the strengthening of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system that Contracting Parties supported Option 2, which includes a 4% budget increase in relation to the previous biennium.
8. On the Naples Ministerial Declaration, it was noted that this should be a forward-looking document providing political guidance and that it should not serve the purpose of re-iterating or re-negotiating the draft Decisions.

c) Information and Communication

9. The Coordinator referred to the progress related to Information and Communication activities and to the work done in preparation of COP 21, thanking INFO/RAC for the cooperation with the Coordinating Unit and the visibility provided to the COP, also through the dedicated website. He added that registrations at COP 21 are more than double in relation to those of previous COPs. He stressed the importance of interacting with the journalists present at COP 21 and highlighted the coverage of the COP by IISD for the first time.

III. Agenda item 3: Date and Venue of the 40th ECP meeting

10. Following a brief discussion, the meeting suggested the next ECP meeting to be held in Rome, Italy, possibly in the last week of January 2020.

IV. Agenda item 4: Any Other Matters

11. No other matters were raised during the meeting.

12. The Coordinator thanked the Directors of the MAP Components, stressing the importance of their support.

13. The meeting was closed by the Coordinator at 19:00 on 1 December 2019.

Annex I
List of participants

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UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

UNEP

3 March 2020
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40th Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel

Rome, Italy, 30-31 January 2020

Report of the Meeting

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2020

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I. Agenda Item 1: Opening of the Meeting

1. The 40th Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel (ECP) was held on 30-31 January 2020, hosted by INFO/RAC, in Rome, Italy. The meeting was chaired by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) Coordinator and attended by the Deputy Coordinator, the Heads of MAP Components, the MAP Programme Officer responsible for governance issues and the Policy and Programming Expert. The list of participants is presented in Annex I to this report.
2. Mr. Gaetano Leone, UNEP/MAP Coordinator opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m. on 30 January 2020.

II. Agenda Item 2: Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work

3. The Coordinator welcomed the ECP members and made a brief overview of COP 21, highlighting its key outcomes and expressing his overall satisfaction for the meeting. He noted that the 40th ECP meeting will focus on the main tasks for the biennium 2020-2021 and in particular for its first year. He thanked the ECP members for the inputs already received in view of the meeting and noted that the main scope of the exercise on the strategic priorities was to collect the ideas of all participants in order to develop a shared vision for the biennium 2020-2021.
4. The meeting reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda prepared by the Secretariat, as in document UNEP/MED ECP.40/1.

III. Agenda Item 3: Implementation of the PoW 2020-2021:

(a) Strategic Priorities for 2020

5. The Coordinator introduced the issue, stressing that the main scope of the tables on strategic issues, that were completed by all ECP Members and Coordinating Unit staff, was to simulate a strategic discussion and not to provide a formal and prescriptive list of issues. He noted that a retreat will take place in mid-February involving all Coordinating Unit staff and added that during the ECP meeting he expected a short, informal discussion, focusing on the strategic priorities, on why they are important, why/how they will be implemented and how they will benefit the MAP-Barcelona Convention system. He started by highlighting his priorities for the biennium, which included stabilizing the important role of MAP, developing the new UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), implementing successfully the Programme of Work (PoW), providing a clear mapping of success stories to increase visibility and effective outreach and, finally, increasing well-being through the pride gained from everyday work.

6. The directors of the MAP components presented the priorities that they consider important within the mandates of their respective components. The main points are summarized as follows:

(a) INFO/RAC: Strategic priorities highlighted were: Data Integration, Digitalization of Contracting Parties, Increasing MAP system's visibility, Strengthening communication in MAP, Creating a dynamic interchange system with Contracting Parties. Challenges/enablers mentioned were resource mobilization, increase of internal awareness and enlargement of networks, including with stakeholders. In the discussion that followed, the Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator stressed the importance of increasing visibility and of the MAP system being "projected as one", while the Deputy Coordinator noted the importance of the IMAP infosystem being operational by the end of the biennium and the priority of preparing the data management policy.

(b) Plan Bleu/RAC: Strategic priorities highlighted were: Communicating on the assessment reports, Implementing the MED 2050 foresight roadmap, Strengthening/sustaining the role of Plan Bleu as observatory, Supporting the MTS preparation, Supporting long-term science-policy interface (SPI) including through the MCSD, Supporting other MAP components (e.g. on SPI, socio-economic evaluation, observation, indicators), Supporting capitalization and mainstreaming of policy and private

innovations (e.g. on blue economy, sustainable tourism, nature-based adaptation to climate change). Challenges/enablers mentioned were securing adequate resources, being strategic and concrete/operational at the same time, the fact that national observatories are weakened in some countries, limited data availability (especially coastal), and the means to provide adequate continued support to MedECC. In the ensuing discussion the Coordinator stressed the importance of a strong and collective MAP contribution to the 2020 UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, Portugal, as well as of enhancing visibility of the knowledge gained through the work of the MAP system. The possibility of having a future ECP meeting in Nairobi to allow interaction with UNEP headquarters, on issues such as SPI and beyond, was also mentioned.

(c) MED POL: Strategic priorities highlighted were: Preparation of new Regional Plans, Monitoring and Assessment (IMAP), Reporting (standardizing, quality assurance of data, harmonization), Capacity building, Enhance scientific work/SPI, Enhance partnerships (including with private sector and International Financial Institutions). Challenges/enablers mentioned were securing adequate resources to meet the expectations of Contracting Parties, synchronising administrative procedures with operational scope/needs, lack of data and data handling, decreasing dependency on consultancies (which have a narrow scope) and increasing interactions with scientific and academic institutions. In the ensuing discussion, the Coordinator stressed that the MAP system has a long experience and achievements on pollution issues and should be the leader on marine pollution matters in the Mediterranean (regarding more traditional pollutants as well as emerging ones). The head of MED POL noted the issue of wastewater treatment in relation to pollution; he also highlighted the need of investments, especially for Contracting Parties facing political/social challenges leading to a shift of their focus on environmental issues.

(d) REMPEC: Strategic priorities highlighted were: Enforcing legal instruments (on illegal discharges, etc.), Enhancing synergies with partners (e.g. IMO, EMSA, CETMO), Moving towards a Mediterranean SO_x Emission Control Area (SECA), Implementing the Offshore Action Plan, Creating networks of sub-regional agreements, Modernising a cooperative platform between the Coordinating Unit and MAP components (on planning, monitoring, reporting). Challenges/enablers mentioned were ensuring links with external processes, overcoming instability and possible lack of political interest in some Contracting Parties, and ensuring adequate resources. In the ensuing discussion the importance of strengthening partnerships was highlighted (including with financial institutions) as well as the added value of increasing internal communication in MAP and of doing things together as a system. The Coordinator stressed the opportunity of including the above considerations when preparing the new MTS.

(e) PAP/RAC: Strategic priorities highlighted were: Upscaling Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) in MAP and in the Contracting Parties, Ensuring a strategic shift towards Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), Streamlining Climate Change, Creating an enabling environment for IMAP coastal indicators monitoring, Enhancing capacity building and raising awareness, Placing climate change as a constitutive element of the MAP system. Challenges/enablers mentioned were ensuring adequate resources, the fact that MSP is a new issue for many CPs, which is both a challenge and an opportunity for MAP playing a leading role, the low level of importance placed on coastal indicators and the need to strengthen capacities to run the MedOpen educational programme. In the ensuing discussion the Coordinator stressed the importance of increasing the number of ratifications of the ICZM Protocol and the need to liaise with relevant/interested CPs (possibly organizing country conferences).

(f) SPA/RAC: Strategic priorities highlighted were: Enhancing the visibility and recognition of the role of SPA/RAC (through MAP's mandate) and the involvement/contribution to global processes, Sustaining SPA/RAC's activity level and budget. Challenges/enablers mentioned were data management, ensuring adequate resources, the links of MAP and SPA/RAC with main partners (e.g.

MedPAN) and the ownership/responsiveness of Contracting Parties. In the ensuing discussion the Coordinator stressed the importance of 2020 for biodiversity issues (Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, EU strategy on biodiversity, IUCN global conference) and the need for a clear role of MAP in contributing to these processes and to their follow-up. The SPA/RAC Director stressed the importance of the MAP system being continuously present in the countries with activities, so that interaction is ensured.

(g) SCP/RAC: Strategic priorities highlighted were: Mapping the state of implementation of SCP in the Mediterranean, Supporting and enhancing green and circular businesses, Supporting implementation of the marine litter regional plan (prevention/ focus on single-use plastics), Consolidating the SCP network, Improving online tools on SCP, Streamlining circular economy/SCP with blue economy, and climate change. Challenges/enablers mentioned were the wide range of issues under SCP as a term/notion, the need to enhance active involvement of Contracting Parties and partners, the fact that SCP issues go beyond environment (while the Ministries of Environment are the main MAP counterparts in CPs), the political situation of some CPs and outdated communication tools (in particular the SCP/RAC website and logo).

7. In his closing remarks, the Coordinator remarked that for this exercise to be meaningful there is a need to follow-up and to adjust the way to deliver. He encouraged the members of the ECP to share the vision of strategic priorities with their colleagues in the respective MAP components and to use them for the implementation of the COP 21 outcome, including the Programme of Work, and also as an input to the preparation of the next MTS. He suggested to revisit the strategic priorities at the end of 2020 to see progress, noting that there is always the “trap” of the dichotomy between strategic and bureaucratic considerations, which should be avoided.

(b) Implementation of the Decisions adopted by COP 21

8. The Coordinator stressed the importance of starting immediately the implementation of the outcome of COP 21 and of effectively engaging partners in the work of MAP. The meeting then discussed specific actions as contained in the relevant action tables for the implementation of COP 21 decisions prepared by the Coordinating Unit.

9. On the sustainable development dashboard, it was noted that already much work has been dedicated in the process and that momentum should not be lost. On data gaps, it was suggested to engage with Contracting Parties asking them to provide relevant data. It was noted that the integration of the SCP indicators within the MSSD ones should not be just a mechanic exercise and should take into consideration the needs of populating the indicators. On the issue of the MSSD and SCP Action Plan mid-term evaluations it was noted that this should be included in the planning and priority tool with a clear timeline. On the issue of the working groups to be established (for example for the implementation of the decisions on biodiversity and SECA) it was noted that (a) these should be gender-balanced and (b) for existing groups it should be decided if these would be re-confirmed (with the same membership) or re-established. On the Offshore Action Plan implementation, the possibility was considered of reaching to the industry to provide support through the possible secondment of an expert.

10. The Deputy Coordinator stressed that, when implementing the Programme of Work, the elements coming from the COP decisions should be considered even if they are not reflected as such in the PoW text. This holistic approach should also be reflected when filling the planning and priorities tool.

(c) Priority Planning for 2020-2021, including the Updated Form

11. The Policy and Project Expert described the updated form of the planning and priority tool, developed in MS Excel. He noted that emphasis was placed on reflecting the themes of the MTS and that the forms are based on the deliverables included in the PoW. He also informed that the tool will be filled every 6 months to coincide with the reporting periods and that reporting is to be done on deliverables (and not activities).

12. INFO/RAC informed the meeting that a new tool was being prepared by the RAC to allow online collaboration, and that the planning and priority forms would be uploaded on this tool so that they are filled online and in parallel by everybody. The Deputy Coordinator noted that the Coordinating Unit made every effort so that the Project Document is finalized very early in the biennium which would allow expenditure to start immediately.

13. All participants agreed that the new format of the planning and priority tool is better than the previous one and that the forms will be completed every six months (mid-February, end-July, end-January, mid-July).

(d) Status of Preparation of the Project Documents 2020-2021

14. The Deputy Coordinator informed that for the current biennium one consolidated Project Document is being prepared and will be signed by the Coordinating Unit and UNEP Headquarters, while Project Cooperation Agreements were prepared and cleared by the Directors of the Regional Activity Centres. She added that the first instalment for the implementation of the PoW will be on an annual basis. In the ensuing discussion, RAC directors agreed that the process was much faster this time.

15. Regarding procurement rules, the Director of SPA/RAC noted that host country regulations are used and reminded of the analysis and ceilings provided following a relevant exercise by UNEP Headquarters two years ago. The Coordinator informed the meeting that the Head of Administration of Corporate Services Division will visit the Coordinating Unit in early 2020, and that this will provide the opportunity for a teleconference with all RAC Directors on procurement issues.

16. INFO/RAC brought to the attention of the meeting the issue of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of the European Union and the implications it may have to the MAP components based in Members States of the EU, since they all manage data. The Coordinator noted that there has been already some background work in the Coordinating Unit on this issue and an exchange with UNEP Headquarters and added that relevant feedback will be provided to the MAP components.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
1.	Revisit Strategic Issues prepared by MAP components to assess/discuss progress	All MAP components	End of 2020
2.	Explore the possibility for country conferences to increase ratifications of the ICZM Protocol	Coordinating Unit and PAP/RAC	Continuously in 2020
3.	Explore the possibility to hold an ECP meeting in Nairobi	Coordinating Unit and MAP components	Timely in the biennium
4.	Revise the action tables for the implementation of COP 21 decisions	Coordinating Unit	February 2020
5.	Develop online tool for collaborative/parallel work on documents	INFO/RAC	Mid-February 2020
6.	Fill the Planning and Priorities Tables (PPT)	All MAP components	Mid-February 2020
7.	Examine the possibility to use the new PPT tool for other reporting purposes (e.g. Bureau)	Coordinating Unit and MAP components	First semester of 2020
8.	Arrange a teleconference/face-to-face meeting with Head of Administration of	Coordinating Unit and MAP components	March 2020

	Corporate Services Division (while he is in Athens)		
9.	Examination of the applicability of GDPR EU regulation to MAP	Coordinating Unit	By March 2020

IV. Agenda item 4: Strategic Brainstorming on the Development of the New Medium-Term Strategy and Related Timeline

17. The Coordinator introduced the agenda item and the document “Short Note to ECP on the Preparation of the New MTS” prepared for this purpose by the Secretariat. This document included a short background note and a number of questions addressed to the ECP members in order to simulate a focused strategic discussion and preliminary definition of priorities during the meeting. The questions were listed under three main categories: (a) overall questions, (b) MTS format and structure, and (c) MTS preparation process. Further to the brainstorming during the ECP meeting, it was agreed that written inputs would be also sent to the Coordinating Unit by mid-February 2020. These inputs could be also very useful for the consultant that will work on the MTS. The main points raised during the discussion are:

MTS PREPARATION PROCESS

18. The Coordinator informed the meeting that one integrated process will take place which will involve the Secretariat and MAP components, consultants, the Contracting Parties and stakeholders, including the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable development (MCSD). The process will be transparent, inclusive, and under the guidance of the Bureau. He added that he considers that the involvement of stakeholders in this process is very important and should start early in the process of the preparation of the new MTS (online consultation).

19. The meeting then discussed the involvement of MAP components in the preparation of the new MTS. It was decided that the Coordinating Unit will recommend to the Bureau the participation of the members of the ECP in the Steering Committee/Open-Ended Working Group for the preparation of the new MTS. The possibility was also discussed to hold a workshop with all professional staff of MAP Components, but the challenges to organize such a meeting (resources, etc.) were noted. To this end, the Coordinator proposed that discussions are held at technical level within each MAP component and that then the ECP will consolidate these discussions into concrete inputs to the process. It was agreed that the next ECP meeting would take place in May/June 2020 so that it can provide a timely input. It was also noted that it would be desirable that a first draft of the new MTS is disseminated at the RAC/thematic Focal Points meetings of 2021 with the understanding, however, that the MAP Focal Points are the main interlocutors on this issue, and they should conduct the internal consultations within Contracting Parties.

OVERALL QUESTIONS

20. On the level of ambition, several views were presented. It was noted global goals exist/are developed (e.g. SDGs, Aichi Targets, Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework) and that the ones set in the MTS should at least match them. It was also noted that emphasis should be put in achieving the existing goals and not setting new ones; since adequate global targets exist; and that the Contracting Parties should set ambition levels based on what they need and on what can be delivered. Furthermore, the need to further strengthen links with the SDGs was mentioned. Enforcement was also highlighted as a priority, and especially collaboration with other MEAs and global programmes/initiatives to promote enforcement and implementation. It was also stressed that implementation of activities should be further linked to real impact on the state of the environment: the evaluation of the current MTS should look at the impact it had and the preparation of the new MTS should be prepared in a way that it will have an impact on the ground and that will ensure the commitment of the Contracting Parties. The Coordinator noted that the strength of MAP being a legal and enforcement framework should be

used at its best, while on implementation and results on the ground more work is needed, and collaborations should be sought to this extent.

21. Emerging forces in the region that can shape the future of the environment in the Mediterranean were also discussed in relation to partnerships that would promote the implementation of the MTS. The private sector, cruise sector, shipping industry, fishermen associations, local authorities, and their networks were mentioned. Overall it was agreed that a wider audience of actors should be involved for an effective implementation of the new MTS and to achieve tangible results on the ground. It was also highlighted that a branding and marketing of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system is needed to mobilize other partners, donors, sectors, etc., and that new ways of work should be explored, based on a clear vision.

22. It was also highlighted that links and work with the south Mediterranean countries provide a significant added value that should be further enhanced. Complementarities with the work of the EU in the north of the Mediterranean are also important in this respect. Another point raised was the importance to include in the new MTS guiding principles related to the work at the sub-regional level, since implementation at sub-regional level is valuable when it contributes to the regional targets.

23. The meeting then discussed the structure and resources required for the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system to effectively implement the new MTS. One question raised was if RACs should become centres of expertise or should focus on delivery of projects. It was noted that RACs were established as thematic centres to provide expertise in line with their mandates and that, over the time, there was a trend to shift more towards project management. The participants noted that a balance should be kept between expertise at sectorial level and capacity to integrate and have an overall systemic approach.

24. The importance was also noted of creating networks as well as closer links with centers of excellence in academia, science, research, innovation, and any other sources of knowledge. The need was also mentioned to build trust with researchers and to bring young researchers into policy/decision making. It was highlighted that new models of cooperation should be explored in this respect, such as long-term partnerships/agreements with universities. The fact that universities are creating spin-off companies to better interact with society and its needs was also mentioned as relevant.

25. On financial resources, it was noted that (a) there is a need to increase assessed contribution so that more MTF resources are used for implementation, and (b) that it is important to enlarge the donor basis, since MAP depends mainly on two external donors, namely EU and GEF. The recent involvement of donors, such as Italy/IMELS was showcased as a positive development in this respect.

26. In summarizing the discussion on the overall questions, the Coordinator noted that there is a need to identify elements that make MAP unique and integrate them in the MTS, stressing that while global MEAs have expertise in one issue, MAP integrates several issues related to the sea and coastal areas. The enforcement of SDGs and the capacity to integrate is a strength of MAP. Enforcement, visibility, integration and links with science and research are therefore key points for the new MTS. He added that all three levels are important, namely regional, sub-regional and national. It was also mentioned that there is a general feeling that pilot projects at national level are not sustainable if there are no resources available to follow-up on them. During the discussion it was highlighted that pilot projects are for test purposes in order to enable scaling-up at regional level. They are important to raise awareness at different levels of governance/administration and contribute in building capacities at local level. Their long-term usefulness is however dependent on a clear capitalization process all along the pilot, on the capitalization results' aggregation with complementary pilots, and on update of policy or funding instruments to scale-up positive innovations.

MTS FORMAT AND STRUCTURE

27. On the format and structure of the new MTS, it was noted that a different approach is needed with emphasis on the overall vision, on objectives/targets (or priority areas/directions), and on the way to reach these objectives/targets. Also, on the means (capacity and instruments) to achieve them. The way the UNEP MTS is structured was mentioned as an example. Some participants considered a structure of the MTS without themes but only with objectives. The need to move towards headings that are integrative/aggregated was highlighted. There was agreement with the proposal of the Coordinating Unit to develop an MTS which addresses strategic outcome level (and not specific output level) and to revisit every biennium the strategic outcomes and their delivery. This would allow enough flexibility to work at output and activity level at a biennial basis which would be more efficient.

28. A more aggregated approach with a reduced number of themes was also discussed as an option. Several participants noted the importance of climate change as a theme. Finally, it was stressed that the MTS is also a communication and visibility tool. It was agreed that the discussion on the MTS would continue and that MAP components would provide written inputs to respond to as many questions included in the “Short Note to ECP on the Preparation of the New MTS” as possible.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
10.	Recommend to the Bureau that the ECP is part of the Steering Committee/Open-Ended Working Group on the new MTS	Coordinating Unit	89 th Bureau Meeting (April 2020)
11.	Written inputs to the questions on the preparation of the new MTS	All MAP Components	Mid-February 2020

V. Agenda Item 5: Calendar of Meetings and Main Events for 2020-2021

29. The MAP Programme Officer introduced the calendar of meetings and main events for 2020-2021, as submitted to COP 21. The MAP Components updated briefly the ECP on their upcoming events, while it was agreed that written inputs on both governance and technical meetings would be also sent through email. On international events, the importance of the active participation of UNEP/MAP at the 2020 UN Ocean Conference (Lisbon, Portugal, 2-6 June 2020) was highlighted, as well as the importance of presenting MAP as a system with one voice.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
12.	Updates on the tentative calendar of UNEP/MAP (governance and technical) meetings and major international events	All MAP Components	19 February 2020

VI. Agenda Item 6: Date and Venue of the 41st ECP meeting

30. The meeting discussed the timing of the next ECP meetings. It was decided that the next 41st ECP meeting would take place in Marseille, France, in May/June 2020, while the 42nd ECP meeting could possibly take place back-to-back with the 90th Bureau meeting and the meeting of the SC/OEWG on the new MTS, planned to take place in Athens, Greece, on November 2020.

VII. Agenda Item 7: Any Other Matters

31. The meeting considered other issues raised by its members. In this respect, the following issues were discussed:

32. The Coordinator updated the members of the ECP on his missions during January 2020 to Venice, for the Mediterranean Regional workshop - UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030, and to Brussels, for (a) participating at the meeting of the UNEP-EC Steering Committee as well as for (b) meeting with European Commission officials from DG ENVIRONMENT, DG NEAR, DG MARE, DG RESEARCH and the cabinet of the new Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries. On the UNEP-EC Steering Committee meeting, he noted that both project proposals where MAP is involved – EcAp MED III and Marine Litter MED II - were “cleared” by the Committee and received very positive comments. On the bilateral meetings with EC officials, he noted that the EU places great emphasis on the “European Green Deal”, that the new Commission is expected to prioritize the regional level in its work, and that there are potentials for further collaboration with DG RESEARCH, DG NEAR and DG MARE, especially on the issue of the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides. He also noted that he had the opportunity for an exchange with representatives from the CITES Secretariat who are interested in a formal collaboration with UNEP/MAP. The meeting also stressed the possibility for further collaboration regarding the Copernicus system and its use in the Mediterranean for climate change adaptation related issues.

33. The Coordinator reminded to the ECP members the need of sharing mission reports from important regional or global events of relevance to the MAP-Barcelona Convention system to which they participate (with emphasis on the substance).

34. The Director of REMPEC suggested that when a shared online tool is developed, this tool could also include the lists of all focal points.

35. The meeting was closed by the Coordinator at 14:00 on 31 January 2020.

Annex I
List of participants

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Annex II
Agenda

Agenda

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| Agenda Item 1 | Opening of the Meeting |
| Agenda Item 2 | Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work |
| Agenda Item 3 | Implementation of the PoW 2020-2021: <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) Strategic Priorities for 2020(b) Implementation of the Decisions adopted by COP 21(c) Priority Planning for 2020-2021, including the Updated Form(d) Status of Preparation of the Project Documents 2020-2021 |
| Agenda Item 4 | Strategic Brainstorming on the Development of the New Medium-Term Strategy and Related Timeline |
| Agenda Item 5 | Calendar of Meetings and Main Events for 2020-2021 |
| Agenda Item 6 | Date and Venue of the 41 st ECP Meeting |
| Agenda Item 7 | Any Other Matters |



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UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

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8 July 2020
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41st Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel

Teleconference, 19-20 May 2020

Report of the Meeting

For environmental and cost-saving reasons, this document is printed in a limited number. Delegates are kindly requested to bring their copies to meetings and not to request additional copies.

UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2020

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I. Agenda Item 1: Opening of the Meeting

1. The 41st Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel (ECP) was held on 19-20 May 2020, through teleconference. The meeting was chaired by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) Coordinator and attended by the Deputy Coordinator, 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 participated during Agenda Item 5. 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 19 May 2020.

II. Agenda Item 2: Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work

3. The Coordinator welcomed the ECP members and announced the changes in the management teams of INFO/RAC and Plan Bleu/RAC. He noted that, following the retirement of Ms. Monacelli, the new INFO/RAC Director will be soon appointed, while Mr. Guerquin will assume duties in July 2020 as Plan Bleu/RAC Director, due to the end of duties of Ms. Lemaitre-Curri.
4. The meeting reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda prepared by the Secretariat, as in document UNEP/MED ECP.40/1.

III. Agenda Item 3: COVID-19 and the UNEP/MAP response

(a) Concrete implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on the PoW implementation

(b) Possible impacts of COVID-19 and proposed responses by the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system

5. The Coordinator introduced the issue and asked the ECP members to share concrete implications that the COVID-19 pandemic had on their respective work. He also referred to the document prepared by UNEP Headquarters and the relevant concept note prepared by the Coordinating Unit and shared with MAP components. He stressed that the main scope of this agenda item was to (a) to discuss this concept note and turn it into a MAP-Barcelona Convention system document, and (b) acknowledge possible delays in the delivery of activities, including the organization of meetings, so to better address them. He added that the Policy and Programming Expert was responsible to collect the inputs of MAP components on the note, based on four questions prepared by the Secretariat.

6. The directors of the MAP components provided inputs and presented the main implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mandates of their respective components. The main points are summarized as follows:

(a) Plan Bleu/RAC: A workshop in the context of MED 2050 preparation will take place on the issue of COVID-19 and its implications, looking at critical topics, such as circular, blue and green economy; ECP members were welcomed to attend. Plan Bleu had already held a number of online meetings, in some cases with interpretation. There may be a need to add new indicators on the dashboard following the COVID-19 crisis, in terms of inequalities and environmental budget. It is very important for the MAP system to be ready to make concrete proposals on the post-crisis investments plans, when recovering from the crisis.

(b) SPA/RAC: The COVID-19 crisis has had a tremendous impact on the Mediterranean countries, which are some of the most impacted countries in the world. The MAP system to make an analysis of how best to respond. This crisis is linked to all aspects: social, cultural, environmental and economic. This is an opportunity to make concrete proposals to see, for example, how wastewater could transfer traces of COVID-19 into the sea. It would be very interesting to share these analyses also among the partner organizations. In terms of responses, it is an opportunity to introduce new ways to analyse and

investigate through assessment studies, for example examining the relationship between health and biodiversity in a holistic manner. More attention should now be given to these topics in the MAP strategic documents under preparation, so that the MAP system will produce very relevant documents that include these aspects and look at impacts and relationships. Thus, this is a good timing for MAP to take the lead. Many international and regional meetings have been postponed for 2021 and there are still uncertainties about their holding/timing.

(c) MED POL: The issue of wastewater and wastewater treatment is crucial. COVID-19 virus has been detected by a number of cities in raw wastewater through human excreta. Infectious medical waste generated from healthcare facilities is also an issue for solid waste management. Waste polluted by the COVID-19 virus may end-up in river water and sea, affecting quality of marine environment. It is important to note that many countries in the south reuse treated/untreated wastewater for irrigation of agricultural food products. MAP addresses these issues through its protocols on land-based sources and hazardous waste. The new Regional Plans can address these issues, whether through wastewater treatment, sewage sludge management or marine litter management. Issue can be also addressed when updating the annexes to the LBS Protocol, and through closer collaboration with WHO and the ongoing MoU with the Basel Convention.

(d) SCP/RAC: We will shortly send comments on the concept note. Given the mandate of the centre, the work mainly focuses on block 3 of the concept note. High relevance of responses to this crisis as it has a huge impact on the lifestyle such as single-use products, increase on water demand, food provisions in supply changes, food delivery at home with an important increase in packaging waste. Urban transport and social practices, shopping practices with increase in e-commerce and also the touristic trend are topics with great interest in the frame of the COVID-19 pandemic. Tourism is a very important sector in the Mediterranean and has been severely affected. This makes it interesting to see if the above will be long-term trends or not. Our work on green economy/green and circular businesses is very relevant. Use of single-use plastics and chemicals has increased and this is something we should address. The mid-term evaluation of the SCP Action Plan will also look at these aspects. We can support Contracting Parties in understanding the importance of the environmental aspects of the COVID-19 crisis and in putting into place the conditions for long term solutions. SCP/RAC is continuing with online meetings and trainings, rather than postponing them. Rely also on local partners in the countries for the national activities. There will be some activities postponed to next year, especially activities related to tourism. Fully agrees with SPA/RAC that this biennium is very strategic for MAP so as to adapt and make advantage of all strategic processes that we have, and to bring responses to the system.

(e) PAP/RAC: The main impact will be on economics; a very negative one. Also, on the environment, such as waste. Some implications will have a positive environmental impact, at least in the short term, such as the reduction of tourism. Responses on planning for adaptation to COVID-19 include different schemes for urban development, tourism planning, nature-based solutions; these responses can have a long-term benefit for the Mediterranean. It is important how long will this crisis last. Some activities were postponed: awareness-raising activities, but also projects/activities with national and local character, and through participatory approaches. The budgetary implications are also important; impacts on national economies may also affect the RACs' finances. There is a need to also consider these questions for the future.

(f) REMPEC: the SO_x Emissions Control Area (SECA) process is clearly one of the issues on which COVID-19 has a direct impact. The resilience of human health can be affected by emissions, especially near ports. Those concerns have been raised in relation to the work on the possible SECA. A number of Contracting Parties want MAP to look at a possible NO_x ECA during the next biennium, which is also relevant. From an operational point of view, the impact of the COVID-19 crisis resulted in holding the events online, to avoid overloading the next year with activities. This trend has resulted in savings on travel expenses. We can discuss if these savings can be used to prepare a study on the impacts of emissions on human health/resilience, in collaboration with WHO and IMO.

Communication is crucial for an emergency center such as REMPEC. For this, REMPEC established a virtual system of communication, to be reachable when out of office. This has been an opportunity to improve the whole communication system. Also, assess with Contracting Parties the capacity for online meetings. Possibility to look at the use of savings from the meetings to develop e-learning tools. This new situation and its effects on mobility, waste treatment, and tourism could also be addressed through the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award (ways of cities to cope with COVID-19 and the environment). In terms of waste, synergies can be enhanced with IMO in the framework of global projects and of the Marine Litter MED project. One of the main issues related to COVID-19, is for maritime transport to secure that medical and food supply continues. IMO has released a paper addressing the issue mostly from a safety point of view rather than an environmental one. Work on MED 2050 and MED QSR 2023 could also look into the impact of COVID-19.

(g) INFO/RAC: There will be a slight delay on scheduled activities, particularly regarding bilateral activities on management data policy, environmental monitoring and impact of collection and transmission of data. This is a great opportunity to work together as a system to boost the e-learning and training platforms. A paper to be developed on the necessity of raising awareness on the linkages between environment and human health in the Mediterranean, considering also the issue of gender. The target audience to whom the paper will be addressed is crucial. INFO/RAC uses the “GotoMeetings platform” for online meetings. Comment on communication: there is a risk that COVID-19 pandemic decreases attention to the environment; however, this is the most favorable moment for communicating the importance of the link between human health and environmental protection (e.g. links between zoonotic diseases-invasion to natural habitat).

7. Following the interventions, the Coordinator welcomed all inputs from MAP components and thanked them for their reflections. He noted that it is important to provide a concrete response to this crisis, to work with partners, such as UfMS and GFCM, and to take the lead as a system in responding to the current crisis. In relation to strategic documents and the assessment reports of MAP, he stressed the need of providing a substantive narrative on how they are relevant and part of the solution to the implications of the current crisis. He also noted the possible financial implications of the crisis during the next biennium, stressing that the Net Cash Balance and Working Capital reserve are important tools that the MAP-Barcelona Convention system has put into place. However, he highlighted that it is vital to develop MAP’s own contingency plans for the shorter and medium terms. He added that online meetings have worked very well, and that UNEP uses the platforms Webex and Teams Meetings. The main pending issue is the provision of online interpretation; UNEP headquarters are working on this issue and a solution will soon be provided. On the issue of savings due to the reduced number of face-to-face meetings, he stressed that such savings will exist, and their use will be addressed when the picture will be clearer. He added that the concept note prepared by the Secretariat will be revised and shared with MAP components for comments, before being disseminated further.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
1.	Document on UNEP/MAP Strategic response to the COVID-19 crisis finalized	CU to prepare revised version and send it to MAP Components for final agreement	June 2020

IV. Agenda item 4: Follow-up to the 40th ECP meeting

a) Overview of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Work, including on the work of UNEP/MAP Task Forces

8. The MAP Programme Officer presented an overview in relation to the Action Items of the previous ECP meeting. He noted that the Secretariat is using MS Teams and Webex for

communication and teleconferences, following the indications from Headquarters. Several MAP components noted that they also use the MS Teams platform.

9. The Deputy Coordinator referred to the update of the Planning and Priorities Table to be done in July 2020 and asked the MAP components to provide any feedback that they may have. She also asked meeting participants how they see the progress in the implementation of the POW. She noted that the timing is good to state in a concrete manner what are the activities that are affected by the COVID-19 crisis and what is the proposed way to respond. She added that there is currently a discussion in the Secretariat on procurement issues in relation to RACs and especially on the “no-objection” approach.

10. The PAP/RAC Director referred to progress and difficulties faced. She noted that there is a need to request to the EC to prolong the GEF Adriatic Project until June 2021. She added that INFO/RAC provided a very good contribution to the project. The Coast Day celebration, planned to take place in Malta, will be affected by the COVID-19 crisis and will most probably not take place as a live event, but through promotional material including a video; the support of INFO/RAC on the video would be very welcomed. CAMPS are local projects, with national counterparts, and so there is concern on them being affected by the crisis. The CAMP Bosnia and Herzegovina is still not progressing, while regarding the CAMP between Cyprus and Israel things continue to develop but with several difficulties. Several activities proceed regarding IMAP implementation, while the MEDOPEN online programme has proved very beneficial. She added that regarding the MedProgramme child project, there are some difficulties in contacting Egypt due to the current crisis, but otherwise progress is good. The small GEF project on Climate Change is progressing well; due to the crisis there is consideration to ask for a 6 months prolongation.

11. The SPA/RAC Director noted that they are doing their best to accommodate the new conditions due to the COVID-19 crisis. SAP/BIO preparation, which is the most important process, is progressing; national process has started, and two-thirds of the countries have provided feedback. Continuous contacts are pursued with countries who have not yet responded. Other activities related to the implementation of COP Decisions have started and proceed well, such as the periodic revision of the SPAMIs with all relevant countries and the preparation of a new strategic document on MPAs in the Mediterranean. The preparations of the MedMPA Forum, scheduled for the end of November in Monaco, are being well supported by Monaco. On the GEF Adriatic Project, it was noted that there is need to be extended until June 2021. The SPA/RAC Director also mentioned that regarding the ICZM Protocol ratification in Tunisia, this is still in the hands of the Parliament.

12. The Head of Office of REMPEC informed the meeting that the preparation of the regional strategy on pollution from ships is proceeding; a link to the survey was distributed and the CU is coordinating collection of inputs. Cooperation is going on with the oil and gas industry. In relation to the Offshore Protocol, the secondment of an expert has not taken place, due to the oil industry crisis and drop of oil price. Work on marine litter is progressing well in relation to the Marine Litter MED project and global projects. Thanks to collaboration among the RACs and the CU, several activities are ongoing to support the preparation of the 2030 MED QSR and the implementation of the MED2050 roadmap. Discussions are ongoing regarding the trilateral agreement between Cyprus, Egypt and Greece. On the Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention (MENELAS), it appears difficult to have a face to face meeting in September 2020 as planned. There are some difficulties regarding the implementation of the roadmap on the SECA, due to the COVID-19 crisis; however, preparation of the call for proposals has proceeded with the contribution of Plan Bleu/RAC and the Coordinating Unit.

13. The representative of INFO/RAC, noted that there is a smooth implementation of all activities, with only some slight delays on the development of the data management policy due to the fact that the bilateral meetings with Contracting Parties were planned to be held face to face; most probably, at the end they will be held virtually. The agreement on data aggregation is planned for the CORMON meeting scheduled to take place in November 2020. The implementation of the Operational

Communication Strategy is proceeding through the work of the Communication Task Force. INFO/RAC is also ready to support in the best way the upcoming launch of the 2019 SoED and the Ocean Day digital campaign.

14. The Director of Plan Bleu/RAC stressed that the centre is very actively preparing the launch of the 2019 SoED, while this exercise is experiencing short delays due to some further steps to go through. Relevant material is finalized with the contribution of the CU and MAP components, together with the Communication Task Force. The COVID-19 crisis led to postponing/cancelling some meetings/events, for example in relation to Blue Economy. The MEDECC report consultation was launched; the report provides very interesting information on mid-term trends. The introductory meeting on foresight in relation to MED 2050 study took place; three publications have been prepared and Plan Bleu/RAC asked for the support of the whole MAP system in disseminating them.

15. The Head of MED POL, noted that PoW focus is on the mandate provided by COP 21. This is mainly related to marine pollution monitoring and assessment (IMAP); updating the Annexes of the Pollution Protocols (LBS and Dumping Protocols); the three new/updated Regional Plans (wastewater treatment, sewage sludge management and marine litter); the mid-term evaluation of the updated National Action Plans; and aspects related to addressing shortcomings in the implementation of the 4th Cycle National Baseline Budget in last biennium, including updated guidelines, etc. Work on IMAP common indicators is in progress. On the GEF-funded MedProgramme, MED POL is preparing the implementation plan with regards to Child Project 1.1, including disposal of mercury and PCBs and the TDA. It is anticipated that as many as 18 consultants may need to be recruited, while 9 technical meetings are foreseen at this stage.

16. The representative of SCP/RAC noted that activities related to plastics are proceeding well. She added that a regional training has been postponed for the second half of the year, so that it can eventually take place face to face, depending on the evolution of the situation regarding COVID-19 after the summer. The Marlice Forum is planned for 2021 but dates will be confirmed after the summer. Demo Marine Litter activities on MedMPAs had to be postponed to the next summer because most of these demos are linked to tourism activities in Spain and Italy, two Mediterranean countries heavily affected by COVID-19. Regarding chemicals, work is starting under Child Project 1.1 of the MedProgramme. Work is proceeding well on the regional measures for green and circular businesses. Regarding the Green Business Award, it is planned to be launched during an online event in November 2020; main characteristics of the award were successfully presented to the MCSDD members. Two award categories are foreseen for the first edition, focused on businesses and on public authorities supporting the development of green and circular businesses. Furthermore, the work on SCP indicators is about to be launched in linkage with the Mediterranean dashboard and the work of Plan Bleu/RAC. The mid-term evaluation of the SCP Action Plan also started in full coordination with the MSSD mid-term evaluation.

17. The Deputy Coordinator informed the meeting participants on the update of the Planning and Priorities Tables. She also updated participants on the progress regarding EC-funded projects and project proposals and noted that an email will be circulated soon regarding EcAp Med III EC-funded project. She thanked the Communication Task Force for its contribution, and referred to the launch of the MEdProgramme and its kick-off meeting, to take place in July 2020.

18. The MAP Programme Officer updated the ECP on the progress regarding the task forces composed of members of the MAP components and led by the Coordinating Unit. He focused on the work of the three main Task Forces, namely the Administration and Finance Task Force, the Communication Task Force and the Ecosystem Coordination Group Task Force. He also mentioned that other task forces exist on ad hoc matters, such as the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award Task Force, as well as more informal groups, such as the group on Reporting and Overall Assessment. In the ensuing discussion, the Coordinator stressed that this is a very efficient way to manage work and ensure the involvement of all MAP components, while he also expressed his gratitude to the RAC directors and to the RAC staff participating in the Task Forces. Regarding a question on the

responsibilities within the CU, it was noted that the QSR Programme Management Officer, Ms. Daria Mokhnacheva, is responsible for the EcAp Task Force and the EcAp MED project, under the supervision of the Deputy Coordinator and the overall responsibility of the Coordinator.

19. The Coordinator updated the meeting on the work under the bilateral agreement with Italy/IMELS, noting that the first period has ended and that now discussions are held on a possible follow-up agreement. He informed participants that interest has been expressed from Italy, however, there are currently some changes in the Italian Ministry and the relevant discussions have not been yet finalized. The initial interest that has been expressed is for a wider framework to be agreed, for a period coinciding with that of the new MTS (i.e. until 2027). Some areas of possible cooperation include Assessments/ ICZM/MSP, Biodiversity, Pollution and Marine Litter, and Blue Economy, while cross-cutting activities, including capacity building, technology transfer, climate change and circular economy/SCP, are also of interest. There is strong interest and the preparation process is to start soon, but the Agreement is not foreseen to start before 2021 due to procedural aspects.

b) Update on the applicability of the GDPR EU regulation to MAP

20. The MAP Programme Officer presented a brief overview of the relevant information received from UNEP Headquarters, noting that the General Data Protection Regulation of the EU does not apply to United Nations System Organizations. In the ensuing discussion it was noted that RACs, especially those located in EU Member States will have repercussions from the application of the regulation; even the RAC located outside the EU (SPA/RAC) needs to handle EU data. To this end, this issue needs to be discussed, including through the Communication Task Force. It was agreed that INFO/RAC will present in mid-June 2020 a note analyzing the steps needed for the application of the GDPR regulation to the MAP system.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
2.	Develop online tool for collaborative work on documents (possibly MS Teams / Sharepoint)	Coordinating Unit	June 2020
3.	Update the Planning and Priorities Tables (PPT)	All MAP components	Early July 2020
4.	Follow-up on COP 21 decision on CAMP Bosnia and Herzegovina	PAP/RAC, in coordination with CU	June 2020
5.	Proposed steps to apply GDPR EU Regulation to MAP Components, as appropriate	INFO/RAC	Mid-June 2020

V. Agenda Item 5: Preparation of the new Medium-Term Strategy

a) Update on the process and the involvement of the ECP

21. The MAP Programme Officer presented the revised calendar for the preparation of the Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027 and the evaluation of the current strategy, containing also information of the relevant bodies involved including the ECP, as updated after the 89th Meeting of the Bureau (22-23 April 2020).

22. It was suggested by SCP/RAC that it would be beneficial to keep in mind the timeline and calendar of the SCP Action Plan and MSSD evaluations, which will run in parallel to the MTS evaluation and the development of the new MTS 2022-2027, to maximize synergies. This will assist in the planning so as to ensure that the key findings of these evaluations are fully considered during the

development of the new MTS. In response, it was agreed that further alignment of timelines would take place and that the processes will be in close contact.

b) Possible elements for the structure of the new MTS

23. Following an introduction by the Coordinator, a brief presentation on the initial mapping of relevant global and regional strategies and possible elements for the new MTS was given by Ms. Virginie Hart; the consultant supporting the Secretariat in the preparation of the new MTS. A number of key points to consider were presented based on background documents of the 21st Meeting of the Contracting Parties, the 40th ECP meeting and the 89th Meeting of the Bureau, as well as initial discussions with the MAP Secretariat. The main highlighted points follow. The MTS should be sharp and clear and should undertake a different approach with emphasis on the overall vision, objectives and targets, and on the way to reach these objectives/targets. This includes a need to move towards headings that are aggregated and to address strategic outcomes so as to allow enough flexibility to work at the output and activity level at a biannual basis. The MTS should also be used as a communication and visibility tool and prioritize partnerships and closer links with centres of excellence (such as in academia, science, research and innovation). New ways of work should be explored to strengthen financial mobilization and emphasize the unique role of MAP, in particular its role in enforcement, and to ensure collaboration with other MEAs and global programmes/initiatives to promote regional and national level enforcement and implementation. The MTS will integrate the results of the 2016-2021 MTS evaluation, plus the MSSD and SCP Action Plan evaluations, integrate relevant global goals and targets (SDGs, CBD post 2020, also considering the MTS of UNEP and of Regional Seas, etc.) and be inspired by good examples of other global and regional strategies and assessments. The presentation referred to the four themes of COP 21 of (1) Pollution and Marine Litter, (2) Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Biodiversity, (3) Climate Change, (4) Blue Economy, with a focus on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and Sustainable Tourism. The presentation also included questions to trigger the discussion.

24. In the discussion that followed, it was observed that the new MTS need not necessarily follow these four themes of COP 21 but work should start from mapping key blocks of priorities. The Coordinator noted the importance of having a structured MTS that can facilitate the development of the biennium work programmes, as was the case with the current MTS; he also noted the need to give greater emphasis to climate change. He added that the MTS vision is probably still valid. The Deputy Coordinator agreed on the importance of the structure of the MTS and noted that the aim of initial discussions within the ECP are to clarify the best approach to be taken in developing the MTS, including possibly a bottom-up approach. She added that it is important to gather experiences from other organizations globally and in the region, such as IUCN, WWF, IMO, etc.

25. SPA/RAC also agreed that the new MTS is an opportunity to develop a new more innovative and efficient way of working, with greater emphasis on results and impacts in the field. This should include mainstreaming with regional and national priorities and plans, closer links with regional organizations, and particular emphasis on how to engage partners in the national level implementation of actions (such as fisheries and tourism sector, when addressing bycatch in MPAs). It was stressed that ultimately the protection of the environment has to be led by the socio-economic sectors responsible for the main pressures to the marine and coastal environment, whilst UNEP/MAP will support in terms of policy development and implementation, monitoring, assessments, capacity building, etc. Therefore, the new MTS should strengthen and define cooperation with key sectors and partners. The MTS will incorporate the post-2020 SAP BIO to be developed in 2020-2021, based on national priorities and needs. This will also consider closely the development of the CBD post-2020 process in which SPA/RAC participates; many relevant meetings are ongoing in this respect, including the next meeting of the Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) to be held in August 2020.

26. Plan Bleu/RAC also expressed willingness to work in an integrated manner together with partners at the regional and national level, beyond just Environment Ministries, which will need an innovative approach. Regarding the themes it was noted that the Naples declaration was the conclusion of the current MTS and should be reviewed for the purposes of the new MTS. It was suggested to have a specific ad-hoc ECP meeting to discuss this further. She stressed that it is important to define the critical objectives that the system wants to be achieved. The Coordinator noted also the need to define strategic objectives and to focus on the practical engagement of key sectors (such as tourism, fisheries, and other economic activities), taking steps beyond blue economy in general. He added that the new MTS needs to be a bit more focused than the current one, at least for some themes. PAP/RAC stressed the need to be more integrated and focused, and to base the MTS initially on major “blocks” rather than themes. The Common Regional Framework for Integrated Coastal Zone Management also took this approach and includes an analysis of how all the UNEP/MAP system interlinks and contributes to the ICZM Protocol. She added that all issues are cross-cutting. The Deputy Coordinator suggested to initially focus on the elaboration of key blocks where MAP can achieve concrete impacts, to then be further developed in terms of integration and financing.

27. REMPEC expressed support to all the suggestions raised and noted that one key element is on how the MTS will strengthen cooperation and ensure synergies and efficiency. The post 2021 Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships and the revision of the Ballast Water Management Strategy are under development and the approach used for the post 2021 strategy was highlighted: it includes the establishment of a brainstorming group consisting of representative of main key players in the field (IMO, UNEP/MAP, EC, oil and gas industry), an on line survey for Focal Points and for member of the brain storming group, involving all from an early stage. He also noted the importance of themes such as climate change - where he stressed that the issue will be also addressed by IMO - marine litter, biodiversity and MPAs, pollutant emissions, and of enforcement.

28. INFO/RAC suggested that, regarding global processes, the G7 and G20 process should be also considered in addition to the others presented. The next MTS should be developed in cooperation with components and partners, beginning with concrete blocks. She agreed that climate change should be more dominant than in the current MTS and should be downscaled into concrete elements to be delivered, adding also the importance of biodiversity and blue economy. She added that a bottom-up approach is better. MED POL stressed the importance for adopting innovative solutions for mobilizing financial resources to support implementation and strengthening of bilateral cooperation with key Contracting Parties, in line with their national strategies and action plans.

29. SCP/RAC agreed on the need to link to key global and regional processes, making also reference to the European Green Deal. The challenges of having SCP activities spread throughout the current MTS and programme of work were noted and that the new MTS should consider this. Also, greater emphasis should be given on circular economy and the MTS should facilitate monitoring, policy support, actions on the ground, defining future priorities and trends, and be a tool for communication and awareness raising. She stressed that SCP should be linked to circular economy and not be put under blue economy, which is restrictive. She added that types of activities should be defined to reduce silos, including monitoring, policy support (at regional and national levels), actions, trends/pressures definition, communication/awareness.

30. The Deputy Coordinator concluded that another round of discussions would be required, as part of an ECP meeting dedicated to the MTS, to work on the initial building blocks of the new MTS, with each MAP component doing its own analysis of building blocks at a higher level. She added that this was an opportunity for the ECP to follow a more innovative and free approach in the initial design of the MTS. The Coordinator noted that the CU will prepare questions to simulate more specific inputs from MAP components, in view of the next meeting, that was agreed to take place in July.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
6.	Concept Note with questions for MAP Components to provide analysis on main priorities of new MTS	Coordinating Unit	Mid-June 2020
7.	Integrative discussion during ECP meeting focusing on the MTS	All MAP Components	8-9 July 2020

VI. Agenda Item 6: Follow-up to COP 21 and to the 89th Bureau meeting

a) Discussion on major processes and strategic documents (with focus on Data Management Policy, SAP BIO, MED SO_x ECA, 2023 MED QSR, MED 2050 Foresight Study, Updated Annexes to Pollution Protocols, Regional Pollution Plans, etc.)

31. The Coordinator informed the ECP of the main conclusions of the 89th Bureau meeting, stressing the fact that the Bureau is very engaged and supportive. He added that it provided positive feedback and expressed its satisfaction on the progress achieved in the first few months of this biennium. The Coordinator called upon ECP members to give priority to the ratification of the Protocols of the Barcelona Convention.

32. The MAP Programme Officer opened the discussion on major processes and strategic documents, following the relevant discussions in the 89th Bureau meeting. He updated the members of the ECP on current situation and on the next steps and interactions that will be possibly needed with other MAP components. Both the Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator expressed the need for a contingency plan to be put in place, in relation to the COVID-19 crisis and its repercussions. The Coordinator also encouraged the RACs to be vocal and concrete on the COVID-19 impacts, as there is a need in case of big obstacles to inform the Bureau and to look for alternatives.

33. INFO/RAC informed that there are some delays regarding the data management policy, especially in relation to country visits. Online meetings will take place, but these will not allow looking at national infrastructures and speaking to all national actors. The Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator stressed the importance of this process and the need to present a very initial draft at the next Bureau meeting.

34. SPA/RAC presented the progress in relation to the SAP BIO preparation, noting that it started very early and that a roadmap was prepared and shared first with the CU and then with the SPA/BD Focal Points. The Advisory Committee was organized online in April 2020 and had a very good attendance. Work is progressing in substance, looking also to coherence and synergies with partner organizations, such as the CBD. National processes have also started; two-thirds of the Contracting Parties have already signed contracts with local experts, while reminders are being sent to the remaining Parties. National processes are to end on 31 July. The pre-final version is to be sent to the SPA/BD Focal Points meeting planned for May 2021. The Deputy Coordination expressed a concern that the delay in global processes due to the COVID-19 pandemic may result in these processes not being ready before the finalization of the SAP BIO. She added that the economics of biodiversity are also important and Plan Bleu/RAC can work on this issue. The SPA/RAC Director responded that two meetings are foreseen, the second one aligned to take account of the global processes (CBD). He added that budget is important and that SPA/RAC is discussing with the MAVA foundation to this effect.

35. REMPEC presented the progress in relation to the SO_x MED ECA, and thanked the CU, Plan Bleu/RAC and MED POL for their contributions to the process. He added that a plan of implementation of the roadmap was designed with IMO. ToRs were prepared, while there is collaboration with Plan Bleu/RAC on socioeconomic aspects. REMPEC Plan Bleu/RAC and the

Coordinating Unit are also in contact with various potential donors, including the EC and France. Regarding the national meetings that were postponed due to the COVID-19 crisis, they have to take place face to face in 2020 (due to funding deadlines), else they will take place online. He informed that the meeting of the relevant Committee of the IMO (MEPC) was postponed and will be online; this provided an opportunity to update the technical feasibility study that was sent to the Committee together with the COP 21 Decision. Plan Bleu/RAC noted that is preparing a tender on socioeconomic aspects; however, this tender has to go through a “non-objection” procedure. The Deputy Coordinator noted that the Coordinating Unit will help in the process, while MAP components asked if it is possible to receive a model of a tender.

36. The Deputy Coordinator presented the progress in the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR, noting that at technical level this is looked into by the EcAp task Force. She added that the focus is on the following steps: (a) to work together with MAP components on the IMAP implementation on the ground (the process is supported by the IMAP MPA project as well as from the GEF Adriatic project, the latter for Albania and Montenegro); (b) to define assessment criteria for achieving Good Environmental Status (supported by the EcAp MED III project); (c) CORMON meetings, including an integrated CORMON meeting in November 2020; (d) reporting to the Bureau in November 2020. The work of the multidisciplinary EcAP Task Force is very important, while an analysis is also needed on how the projects and partners are supporting the 2023 MED QSR preparation.

37. Plan Bleu/RAC presented the progress in the preparation of the MED 2050 foresight study, based on the revised roadmap adopted at COP 21. While the work is progressing, a face to face meeting planned for spring 2020 was postponed and the timeline has been shifted slightly due to the COVID-19 crisis. A meeting on the possible consequences of the COVID-19 crisis is being organized, while work is ongoing on socioeconomic issues. A high-level expert is expected to join the team during summer, while there are already some first outputs: an outlook on the demography of the region; a comparison between trends foreseen in past reports and what actually happened; and ongoing work on the long-term trends until 2050. The Coordinator noted that these outputs are very interesting and should be shared when available. The Plan Bleu/RAC Director also referred to the publication of the 2019 SoED report, noting that a professional formatting is underway and that the launching date may move to early July to accommodate the technical review requested by the Bureau. She added that exchanges take place with the gender specialist of UNEP, to ensure gender parity.

38. The Plan Bleu/RAC Director also referred to the First Assessment Report on the Current State and Risks of Climate and Environmental Changes in the Mediterranean (MAR 1), expressing her satisfaction on the report and on the work of MedECC, a large group of experts specializing on different aspects of climate change. She added that the document has been released for consultation, mainly regarding the facts presented in this purely scientific report. The consultations will take place until the end of June 2020, while a meeting is scheduled for September 2020. The report is to be presented in the UfM Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Change and then to the Plan Bleu/RAC Focal Points meeting and to COP 22. She added that MedECC has also prepared an abstract for the MED 2050 foresight study.

39. MED POL presented work progress in relation to development of (a) the six Regional Plans on pollution, and (b) the updating of the Annexes to the pollution-related Protocols. The Head of MED POL that work is already in progress for developing three regional plans for wastewater treatment, sewage sludge management and for updating the marine litter regional plan. The terms of reference for the countries’-designated working groups of experts that will review the developed Regional Plans have been revised following the discussions at the 89th Bureau meeting. The invitation letter for nominating experts will be shortly distributed. ToRs for the consultants to support this work have been advertised, while further ToRs regarding the socioeconomic aspects are being prepared. Regarding the updating of the Annexes to the LBS and Dumping Protocols, head of MED POL noted that a document providing proposed updates by the Secretariat was already prepared. Suggested proposals will form the basis for further work to update the annexes to these two protocols. Meetings of the working groups are planned to take place in October/November 2020 and March 2021.

40. The Plan Bleu/RAC Director presented briefly the progress in the preparation of the mid-term evaluation of the MSSD, followed by the SCP/RAC representative who referred to the preparations of the mid-term evaluation of the SCP Action Plan and its links with the MSSD mid-term evaluation. She also presented the progress in developing a set of regional measures to support the development of green and circular businesses and to strengthen the demand for more sustainable products, in line with the roadmap adopted at COP 21. The Director of REMPEC noted the importance of MAP components being timely consulted on these processes while he also informed the meeting on the progress of the preparation of the post-2021 Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships. He noted that it is important to ensure that the strategy takes into account the relevant work of partners and therefore a brainstorming group has been formed with main. A survey on the Strategy is being initiated and, following this, the first draft strategic document will be prepared. The importance of taking into account the Strategy for the preparation of the new MTS was also highlighted.

41. Regarding the calendar of meetings and events it was suggested that this should be revised when a clearer picture on the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis is available.

b) Update on the Host Country Agreements of RACs

42. The MAP Programme Officer informed the ECP of the progress in relation to the meeting with host countries of RACs on the Host Country Agreements, scheduled for 5 June 2020. In the ensuing discussion, it was noted that the RACs are very different entities and it will be difficult to achieve a harmonized approach. The Coordinator reminded the meeting of the relevant mandate given at COP 21 and noted that this mandate should be used in order to find principles that can apply to all RACs, while ensuring a relationship with host countries that will facilitate the RAC's work, taking into account the different character of each RAC.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
8.	Exchange information on meetings postponed/cancelled due to COVID-19	CU and MAP Components	Continuous
9.	Updates on the tentative calendar of UNEP/MAP meetings and major international events	CU in coordination with all MAP Components	June/July 2020
10.	Consider inviting consultant on MTS preparation to meetings on major strategic processes, as appropriate	All MAP Components	Continuous

VII. Agenda Item 7: Partnerships and MoUs

a) Preparation of the bilateral meeting with UfMS and update of the MoU

b) Update of the MoU with FAO/GFCM

c) Preparation of the meeting with partners on the “Joint Strategy”

d) Updates from MAP Components on bilateral agreements

43. The Coordinator updated the participants in relation to the progress regarding the cooperation with the main partners. Initially he referred to the collaboration with the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean. He noted that a meeting is scheduled for 28 May with both UfMS Divisions on Water, Environment and Blue Economy and on Energy and Climate Action, and that the Secretary General of UfMS, Mr. Nasser Kamel, will also participate in the meeting. He extended his thanks to the MAP components for providing inputs in relation to the update of the MoU with UfMS. He added

that the cooperation should focus on the complementarities of the two organizations and that the COVID-19 crisis is an opportunity to enhance collaboration.

44. The Plan Bleu/RAC Director stressed that the cooperation with UfMS on MedECC has been very successful and that reference to MedECC should be included in an updated MoU. The representative of SCP/RAC noted that there are many of areas of common interest with UfMS and that UfM could provide financing to Western Balkan countries in relation to the SWITCHMED II project. The representative of INFO/RAC also noted that together with the CU there is cooperation with the communication officer of UfMS in relation to the preparations of the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Process.

45. In relation to the cooperation with GFCM the Coordinator informed the participants that a joint project proposal has been submitted to GEF and the results of its evaluation by the GEF Council are expected soon. He also noted that the preparations for the update of the MoU with GFCM will start soon. The representative of INFO/RAC highlighted that the update of the MoU with GFCM is important in order to start with the relevant work on the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme.

46. The MAP Programme Officer referred to the progress in fostering cooperation with GFCM, ACCOBAMS and IUCN-Med, with the objectives to ensure the conservation and the sustainable use of the marine biodiversity in the Mediterranean through the application of the Ecosystem Approach, following the relevant COP 21 mandate. He noted that a letter was sent to partner organizations, and that, following the letter, a meeting has been scheduled for 25 June. During the ensuing discussion it was agreed that a provisional agenda of the meeting would be prepared and that SPA/RAC would prepare a short concept note to discuss internally. The possibility of an informal mechanism would be explored, based on the work already in place, that would enhance cooperation beyond the existing bilateral MoUs.

47. In relation to bilateral agreements of MAP components with other partners, the Director of SPA/RAC informed the meeting of two agreements with MEDPAN under preparation, that were shared with the CU. He also informed that an agreement with ACCOBAMS will follow. The Coordinator informed participants that the CU will soon provide comments and feedback on these agreements, and that the process to be followed is described in the “Framework for consultation among RACs, the Coordinating Unit and the Bureau as regards the development and conclusion of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and other legal instruments alike”.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
11.	Inputs on updating the MoU with GFCM	MAP Components, following request from Coordinating Unit	June/July 2020
12.	Preparation of the meeting with partners on area-based management measures	CU and SPA/RAC	June 2020

VIII. Agenda Item 8: Date and Venue of the 42nd ECP Meeting

48. The meeting discussed the timing of the next ECP meetings. It was decided that a meeting dedicated on the preparation of the new MTS will take place on 8-9 July 2020, and that each MAP component will prepare an analysis in advance of this meeting based on questions to be prepared by the CU. The next ECP meeting after the one of July was tentatively planned to take place on 22-23 or 29-30 September 2020.

IX. Agenda Item 9: Any Other Matters

49. The Deputy Coordinator referred to the evaluation of the MedMPA project. She noted that the comments received should be also taken into account in the preparation of the new MTS, adding that this is also relevant for other projects that have been finalized. The issue of building on the success of past projects should be followed-up, and this was proposed to be discussed in a next ECP meeting. She also referred to work done by the Coordinating Unit, Plan Bleu/RAC and MED POL to launch a collaboration with the OECD, focusing mainly on the OECD's experience from its environmental performance reviews, on sustainable financing, on economic instruments, on ocean governance and on ocean science.

50. The SCP/RAC representative informed the meeting that a Blue Economy output module was being added to the SwitchMed project, as a regional policy component, mainly in relation to the MSSD and to the LBS Protocol. She added that a project proposal submitted to the ENI-CBC Med instrument was accepted, focusing on circular economy in the textile sector (Stand Up). The SPA/RAC Director noted that a new phase of the MAVA project was accepted and will run up to the end of 2022, when the MAVA foundation will close its support to biodiversity issues.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
13.	Include in the Provisional Agenda of next ECP meeting an item on capitalizing on the successes/best practices of past projects	Coordinating Unit	Next ECP meeting (autumn 2020)

51. The meeting was closed by the Coordinator at 17:00 on 20 May 2020.

Annex I
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Annex II
Agenda

Agenda

- Agenda Item 1** Opening of the Meeting
- Agenda Item 2** Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work
- Agenda Item 3** COVID-19 and the UNEP/MAP response
- a) Concrete implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on the PoW implementation
 - b) Possible impacts of COVID-19 and proposed responses by the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system
- Agenda Item 4** Follow-up to the 40th ECP meeting
- a) Overview of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Work, including on the work of UNEP/MAP Task Forces
 - b) Update on the applicability of the GDPR EU regulation to MAP
- Agenda Item 5** Preparation of the new Medium-Term Strategy
- a) Update on the process and the involvement of the ECP
 - b) Possible elements for the structure of the new MTS
- Agenda Item 6** Follow-up to COP 21 and to the 89th Bureau meeting
- a) Discussion on major processes and strategic documents (with focus on Data Management Policy, SAP BIO, MED SO_x ECA, 2023 MED QSR, MED 2050 Foresight Study, Updated Annexes to Pollution Protocols, Regional Pollution Plans, etc.)
 - b) Update on the Host Country Agreements of RACs
- Agenda Item 7** Partnerships and MoUs
- a) Preparation of the bilateral meeting with UfMS and update of the MoU
 - b) Update of the MoU with FAO/GFCM
 - c) Preparation of the meeting with partners on the “Joint Strategy”
 - d) Updates from MAP Components on bilateral agreements
- Agenda Item 8** Date and Venue of the 42nd ECP Meeting
- Agenda Item 9** Any Other Matters



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UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

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30 July 2020
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42nd Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel

Teleconference, 8-9 July 2020

Report of the Meeting

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2020

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Annex III	List of core products as submitted by MAP Components
Annex IV	Building blocks for the new MTS identified during the meeting

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

1. The 42nd Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel (ECP) was held on 8-9 July 2020, through teleconference. The meeting was chaired by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) Deputy Coordinator and attended by the Heads of MAP Components, the MAP Programme Officer responsible for governance issues as well as other MAP officers that contributed to the preparation of the Coordinating Unit's inputs to the meeting. The consultant that supports the MAP Secretariat with the preparation of the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027 (MTS) also participated, since the meeting focused on the preparation of the MTS. The list of participants is presented in Annex I to this report.
2. Ms. Tatjana Hema, UNEP/MAP Deputy Coordinator opened the meeting at 10:30 a.m. (Athens time) on 8 July 2020. She welcomed officially the two new Regional Activity Centre (RAC) directors, namely Ms. Lorenza Babbini, new director of INFO/RAC, and Mr. François Guerquin, new director of Plan Bleu/RAC. All participants congratulated the new directors for their appointments and thanked the outgoing director of Plan Bleu/RAC, Ms. Elen Lemaitre-Curri, who also participated in the meeting, for her contribution to the work of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system.
3. Ms. Hema informed the ECP that colleagues from the Coordinating Unit that contributed to the exercise for the preparation of core products were also invited to attend the meeting.
4. The meeting reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda prepared by the Secretariat, as in document UNEP/MED ECP.42/1.

II. Agenda Item 2: Preparation of the New Medium-Term Strategy: Major Regional Products and Building Blocks

5. The MAP Deputy Coordinator thanked all participants for the inputs received in relation to the core products of the new MTS. Regarding this agenda item, she suggested that the first day of the meeting would be dedicated to each MAP Component presenting its core products (presented at Annex III to this report), and that in the morning of the second day of the meeting, the consultant that supports the MAP Secretariat with the preparation of the new MTS would present the result of a mapping exercise regarding regional and global relevant processes (strategic documents of major organizations, including the new UNEP MTS). She highlighted that this analysis would be helpful for the preparation of the new UNEP/MAP MTS. This presentation would be followed by a discussion between the participants on the major building blocks under which the core products can be distributed. Finally, she noted that this process combines a top-down and a bottom-up approach. She then gave the floor to the MAP Components, stressing the importance of the innovative aspects, and of focusing on the difference that the MAP-Barcelona Convention system wishes to make.
6. In the ensuing discussion each MAP Component presented its core products (see Annex III) in the following order: SPA/RAC, SCP/RAC, Plan Bleu/RAC, MED POL, PAP/RAC, INFO/RAC, REMPEC, Coordinating Unit. Each presentation was followed by questions and answers. Some points that participants raised in relation to the core products and to this exercise are summarized below:
 - The Director of SPA/RAC noted that the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is not fully developed yet, and this may influence the relevant products of the new MTS. He also noted that after this first discussion, the intersessional period and the next meeting should focus on putting everything together and on putting also more exact titles to the products.
 - The representative of SCP/RAC noted the role of MAP in responding to the COVID-19 crisis, especially in relation to marine litter/plastic pollution, and highlighted the very good collaboration between MED POL and SCP/RAC. She also mentioned that the name of SCP/RAC is too long for branding purposes.
 - The Director of Plan Bleu/RAC noted that the RAC did not provide the exact products under the Theme on the "Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development", including the

SIMPEER process, since there was a need to further interact with the Coordinating Unit on these products. Plan Bleu/RAC also presented some products under a Theme related to climate change that were not included in the RAC's original submission. Plan Bleu/RAC Director, on a relevant question, noted that environmental accounting is a very demanding strand of work that needs specific resources. The issue of how to address emerging issues was also discussed (e.g. through short publications).

- The Head of MED POL stressed that work would also take place in relation to the COVID-19 crisis implications. Furthermore, responding to a relevant question, he noted that the preparation of a new SAP MED has not been included in the list of MED POL products, at least at this stage, since the next period could focus more on the implementation of existing strategies and regional plans.
- The Director of PAP/RAC clarified that the main products of PAP/RAC were described in Table 1 of the Annex of Decision IG.24/5 on the *Common Regional Framework for Integrated Coastal Zone Management* (pp. 286-288 of the COP 21 Report).
- The Director of INFO/RAC, following a relevant question, noted that partnerships will be more elaborated in the proposed products of INFO/RAC, including on promoting education in the field of competence of MAP. The issues of data protection (and of the relevant GDPR EU Regulation) and of the fact that data included in assessments are usually 2-3 years old, were also raised during the discussion.
- The Director of REMPEC noted that human resources are needed to support implementation and delivery of the core products. In the discussion, it was noted that the products "Full implementation of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan (SDG 14)" and "Full implementation of the Mediterranean Ballast Water Management Strategy and other biosafety-related conventions" were general and needed to be further specified. Another issue raised was that the Offshore Action Plan ends in 2024 and that the future of this process needs to be discussed and included in the new MTS.
- The MAP Programme Officer on governance issues presented the core products of the Coordinating Unit, noting that these were prepared by the different units within the Coordinating Unit with emphasis on their field of competence. Some overlaps existed both within the products of the Coordinating Unit but also between the products of the Coordinating Unit and of other MAP Components.
- Participants agreed that the presentations and discussion showed that "we are all on the same track"; these also explained the several overlaps.
- The issue of incorporating several strands of work of UNEP/MAP into university curricula was raised by a number of participants. It was agreed that this would require an integrated approach, coordinated across the whole system.
- The meeting recognized the importance of Nature-Based Solutions, noting that further discussion is needed on if this would be a dedicated product (e.g. strategy) or incorporated into other products/strategies.
- It was noted that decision making is a systemic process, and that it is important that Contracting Parties are fully on board. The important role of MAP Focal Points in coordinating work at the national level was highlighted (and could be included within the governance aspects of the text of the new MTS).

7. Following the discussion, the Deputy Coordinator thanked participants for their inputs and noted that the next steps would be to start grouping the core products and to develop the main building blocks under which the products could be grouped. She indicated that this could start at the second day of the meeting and continue intersessionally.

8. The second day of the meeting started with a presentation by the consultant that supports the MAP Secretariat with the preparation of the new MTS on the mapping exercise of strategies of relevant organizations at the regional and global level, giving special emphasis to the process of preparation of the new UNEP MTS. Some points raised in the ensuing discussion follow:

- Participants agreed on the importance of the mapping exercise and on the need to seek complementarities.

- It was not clear how sustainable consumption and production will be included in the UNEP MTS under preparation. Other strategies of organizations relevant to economic activities/circular economy, such as UNIDO, maybe useful in this respect; also, the EU's new Circular Economy Action Plan and the strategies of organizations such as Plastics Europe and the Helen McArthur Foundation.
- Other strategies that maybe relevant to MAP, beyond the ones presented during the meeting, could include: the relevant strategy of ACCOBAMS, the FAO global fisheries strategy, relevant strategies of EEA.
- Further points raised as of relevance, were the possible impact of the COVID-19 crisis and the relevant responses; the political situation in the Southern Mediterranean.

9. The meeting then proceeded in a brainstorming exercise in order to propose 10-20 building blocks under which the different products proposed by MAP Components could be grouped. The Deputy Coordinator noted that these building blocks could be of different nature, e.g. systemic, static, dynamic, substance/thematic, cross-cutting, processes, etc.

10. The result of this exercise is presented as Annex IV to this Report. The outcome of this first brainstorming exercise includes two main types of building blocks: the first three building blocks are of a more thematic nature and the following ten building blocks of a more cross-cutting nature.

11. The meeting agreed on the following way forward: the Coordinating Unit to share the outcome of this exercise; the Coordinating Unit and consultant to prepare a template (matrix/table) that will allow the matching of building blocks and products; MAP Components to populate the matrix on the INFO/RAC portal, putting core products under one or more building blocks; the Coordinating Unit and the consultant to further work in aggregating the core products, as appropriate, and start preparing the narrative part. Then, intersessional work will continue until the next ECP meeting in autumn 2020.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
1.	Template (matrix) with list of building blocks to be prepared	Coordinating Unit	Next week
2.	MAP Components to populate the template online	All MAP Components	Mid-July 2020
3.	Matrix of building blocks and core products to be further elaborated, together with narrative part	Coordinating Unit	July-August 2020

III. Agenda Item 3: Date and Venue of the 43rd ECP Meeting

12. The meeting discussed the possible dates for the next ECP meeting, to be held in early autumn. The period 22-24 September 2020 was identified as a possibility that would allow the preparation and review of documents to be submitted to the 90th Bureau meeting and to the MTS Steering Committee meeting that will precede it (10-13 November 2020).

IV. Agenda item 4: Any Other Matters

13. No other matters were discussed during the meeting.

14. The meeting was closed by the Deputy Coordinator at 13:30 on 9 July 2020.

Annex I
List of participants

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Annex II
Agenda

Agenda

- Agenda item 1** Opening of the Meeting, Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work
- Agenda item 2** Preparation of the New Medium-Term Strategy: Major Regional Products and Building Blocks
- Agenda item 3** Date and Venue of the 43rd ECP Meeting
- Agenda item 4** Any Other Matters

Annex III

List of core products as submitted by MAP Components

CORE PRODUCTS

Coordinating Unit

Governance

1. Strategic Framework to Support the Enforcement of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols
2. Mainstream “Gender” into the Mandate of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system
3. Strategic actions for meaningful partnerships to implement the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

Front Office

A. (Overall)

4. Core Product #0: A more result-based strategic and programmatic framework in UNEP/MAP, building on indicators

B. Cluster – (new and renewed) Strategic Policy Frameworks [Sustainable Development, Blue/Circular Economy, incl. MSP; Climate Change]:

5. Core Product #1: Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) 2026-2035
6. Core Product #2: Regional Strategy on Climate Change Adaptation (2026-2035...)
7. Core Product #3: Support to sustainable development of marine renewable energy sector
8. Core Product #4: Introduction of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) as a legally binding process/measure in the BC legal framework
9. Core Product #5: Regional Strategy (or Action Plan) on single-use plastics and microplastics
10. Core Product #6: New Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan
11. State of play (and mapping) of existing area-based conservation tools in the Mediterranean, review their objectives and complementarities, especially in relation to MPA/SPAMIs – recommendations for new area designations and measures to enhance connectivity among MPA/SPAMI and OECMs, including in ABNJ.

C. Cluster – Ecosystem Approach/IMAP implementation:

12. Core Product #8: New roadmap/plan for the implementation of the ecosystem approach in the Mediterranean and achievement of GES, beyond 2023
13. Core Product #9: Full operationalization and implementation of IMAP in the Mediterranean region and IMAP Info System
14. Core Product #10: 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report

D. Cluster – Solutions and best available practices

15. Core Product #11: Mediterranean Sea and Coasts Restoration Strategy [Mediterranean Decade for Ecosystem Restoration?]
16. Core Product #12: Framework, action plan and measures for application of Nature-based Solutions in the Mediterranean for climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development/green economy
17. Core Product #13: Support to Disaster Risk Reduction and Coastal Populations Resilience for Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean
18. Core Product #14: UNEP/MAP as UN champion for the environment in the Mediterranean (for a “Green Mediterranean UN”)

E. Cluster – Stakeholder Dialogue, Capacity Building, Awareness Raising, and Communication

19. Core Product #15: Structuring Science Policy Interface(s) (SPI) to support evidence-based policymaking at the regional and national level
20. Core Product #18: UNEP/MAP Healthy Mediterranean Sea and Coast Public Awareness/Education Package
21. Core Product #19: Simplified Peer Review Mechanism 2.0 (SIMPEER)

Project Pool

22. Knowledge Management (KM) Tool
23. Gender Mainstreaming
24. Update of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework (RCCAF) for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas

Communication & Information

25. High-Level Summit on environment and development in the Mediterranean
26. Set-up of and operationalization of a fully-fledged Advocacy programme

MEDPOL

Cluster A: Pollution prevention and control measures further streamlined with EcAP and SDG Targets

27. Sectoral regional plans to support implementation of the LBS Protocol.
28. Appropriate permitting conditions as well as strengthened compliance and enforcement to control dumping activities into the Mediterranean by the Contracting Parties.
29. Information exchanged and disseminated to the Contracting Parties on best practices for management and disposal of hazardous waste in the region.
30. Communication tools (LoA, LoI, MoUs, etc.) with global organizations such as Global Programme of Action (GPA), London Protocol/London Convention, Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and Minamata Convention, etc. improved to streamline prevention and control measures to Mediterranean scale.

Cluster B: Monitoring of pollution sources and pressures/impacts to marine environment

31. National Baseline Budget of Pollutants (NBB) further improved and streamlined with e-PRTR and SDG Global Platform on data management compatibility
32. Pressure/Impact related NAP/H2020 Indicators and IMAP Common Indicators interrelated within DPSIR framework and supported with sustainable dataflows including well defined QA/QC processes.

Cluster C: Reliable, integrated and EcAp IMAP based IMAP monitoring of state of marine environment

33. Integrated, reliable and cost-effective IMAP Pollution Cluster monitoring based on application of optimal and harmonized monitoring practices established nationally and sub-regionally, along with its optimal integration with monitoring efforts related to IMAP Clusters on Biodiversity and Coast and Hydrography
34. Integrated monitoring of state of marine environment generating data related to integral monitoring of IMAP Common Indicators related to Pollution Cluster and pollution sources and pressures/impacts to marine environment (under Core product 6)
35. Continuous improvement of capacities of competent national authorities, including provision of analytical equipment, in relation to data collection, processing, assurance and control of data quality
36. Improvement of quality of monitoring data supported through regularly undertaken and coordinated sub-regional field survey campaigns

Cluster D: Data management system including quality assurance and quality control on data processing and reporting

37. Data Standards (DSs) and Data Dictionaries (DDs) prepared and built into IMAP/NBB Info System for all IMAP and NAP indicators
38. Integrated NBB and IMAP Info Systems modules, both interfaced with global (WESR; EMODNET; EEA, etc) and national information systems for data harvesting

Cluster E: Reliable Integrated EcAp based IMAP assessment of state of marine environment

39. Assessment criteria (i.e. baseline and threshold values) prepared based on Mediterranean monitoring data and applied across the region to support integrated GES assessment;
40. Integrated GES assessment for Ecological Objectives 5, 9 and 10 provided for delivering 2023 Quality Status Report by applying assessment criteria; scales of assessment and interrelating pressures and impacts, as indicated above, while addressing integration and aggregation of ecological objectives related to IMAP Pollution Cluster with another two IMAP Clusters related to Biodiversity and Coast and Hydrography.

Cluster F: Evaluation of effectiveness of implemented measures

41. Regular evaluations of the effectiveness of regional and national pollution prevention and control measures taking into account findings of indicator-based assessments of pressures/impacts/state of marine ecosystem.

SPA/RAC

42. At Least one Mediterranean country establishes national marine and coastal biodiversity targets in accordance with **Post 2020 SAP BIO** through its national Post 2020 biodiversity strategy and action plan and record biannual progress towards these targets
43. Regional strategies and action plans, developed in the framework of the **SPA/BD Protocol**, streamlined into national strategies, action plans and legal frameworks
44. **National MPA Strategies** developed or updated for all Mediterranean countries, (including highly protected zones) along with an action plan, timeline and measurable targets
45. Status and distribution of **marine key habitats** established and continuously monitored and shared through the Mediterranean biodiversity platform
46. Fill Gaps to improve conservation status & **Marine coastal species** covered by Regional Action Plans
47. **Non-indigenous species** status in the Mediterranean established and continuously monitored and shared within a georeferenced database (MAMIAS)
48. National IMAPs in MPAs and high-pressure areas fully operational, mainstreamed in national priorities using sustainable funding resources
49. Interaction Fisheries & Biodiversity
50. "Increase contributions to **climate change** mitigation adaption and disaster risk reduction from nature-based solutions and ecosystems-based approach, ensuring resilience and minimising negative impacts on Mediterranean biodiversity
51. **Georeferenced Information** on Mediterranean Biodiversity key components centralised in a "Mediterranean Biodiversity Platform (MBP)
52. Incorporation of the SPA/BD Protocol and its relevant strategies tools into Mediterranean countries relevant university curricula
53. Partnership Mechanism for marine and coastal biodiversity Conservation revitalized / Functional
54. The SPAMIs are promoted as management models for other Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean and used as a framework for **education and awareness activities**, involving civil society and NGOs.

REMPEC

55. Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (Post-2021)
56. Med SOx Emissions Control Area (ECA) in force and enforced (SDGs 3, 9, 11, 14)
57. Possible designation of the Med NOx Emissions Control Area (ECA) in progress (SDGs 3, 9, 11, 14)
58. Adequate reception facilities available in main ports and reasonable costs for the use of these facilities charged or No-Special-Fee system applied (SDGs 9, 11, 12)
59. MENELAS “Blue Fund” established to finance activities and support related to illicit ship pollution discharges in the Mediterranean (SDGs 9, 11, 12, 14)
60. Support the establishment and implementation of special protected areas and Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs) (SDG 14)
61. All CPs have a National system for preparedness and response established and regularly assessed including a National Contingency Plan adopted, in force and regularly updated and tested (SDGs 11, 12)
62. Additional Sub-regional Contingency Plans (SCPs) developed and a network of SCPs established and operational (SDGs 11, 12)
63. Full implementation of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan (SDG 14)
64. Full implementation of the Mediterranean Ballast Water Management Strategy and other biosafety-related conventions
65. Full implementation of the IMO strategy on reduction of GHG emissions from ships (Reduction of CO₂ emissions per transport work (carbon intensity), as an average across international shipping, by at least 40% by 2030) (SDGs 13 and 14)

SCP/RAC

66. PRODUCT 1: THE SWITCHERS SUPPORT PROGRAMME TO ENABLE TRANSITION TOWARDS CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN
67. PRODUCT 2: REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PLASTIC PACTS
68. PRODUCT 3: IMPLEMENTING UNEP/MAP PLASTIC STRATEGY TO EFFECTIVELY REDUCE THE HARM CAUSED BY MARINE LITTER
69. PRODUCT 4: TECHNICAL FACILITY TO PREVENT POPs-CONTAINING WASTE AND DEVELOP A CIRCULAR ECONOMY FREE OF TOXIC CHEMICALS
70. PRODUCT 5: INCREASE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON CHEMICALS IN PRODUCTS
71. PRODUCT 6: ENABLING TRANSITION TOWARDS A BLUE ECONOMY IN LINE WITH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY PRINCIPLES (TBD)

PAP/RAC

72. As in Decision IG.24/5, Table 1, pp. 286-288 of the COP21 Report.

INFO/RAC

73. InfoMAP System as the Mediterranean reference platform for marine environmental data collection, management, elaboration and sharing
74. MAP system as a framework for environmental communication, education, dissemination and awareness at Mediterranean level

Plan Bleu/RAC

Theme: health and sustainable development

75. Plan Bleu Cahier: COVID-19 impacts on environment and development in the Mediterranean (publication expected in 2023, depending on date of availability of international statistics covering at least the year 2020 such as World Bank, FAO, other UN agencies, ...)
Based on SoED 2020, which changes occurred and which ones are linked to COVID? What are the implications for sustainability, decision making and implementation of the BC?
76. Plan Bleu cahier, organization of a Med-wide conference and establishment of partnership agreement: A one-health approach for the Mediterranean, in partnership with WHO and FAO (2022/2023)

Theme: Blue, Green and Circular Economy – mainstreaming innovations

77. Med Conference / Forum on Blue economy – boosting a sustainable and inclusive Blue economy transition in the Med region
78. Plan Bleu cahier: “Circular economy in the water sector: principle & good practices in the Mediterranean Region”

Theme: MSDD and SIMPEER

- To be defined in collaboration with the Coordinating Unit

Theme: observatory

79. SoED 2026 (report to be approved at COP in 2025 and published in 2026).
80. Establishment of legal indicators for the Barcelona Convention and its protocols
81. Rejuvenating environmental observation in the Mediterranean
82. Developing a framework of specific indicators for assessing the impact of marine and coastal tourism on destinations and for promoting ecotourism

Theme: use of economic policy tools to develop environmentally efficient policy mix

83. Diversifying the policy mix in the Mediterranean
(4 products, which could be split in this list: 1. Cross-sectoral workshop on environmental economic instruments in the Mediterranean, sharing good practices across sectors (climate, water, biodiversity, pollution, fisheries; 2. Regional report on environmental economic instruments: best practices (output of the workshop + complementary writing by invited expert): collective product; 3. Regional report on environmentally harmful subsidies, in collaboration with OECD; 4. With SPA/RAC : funding biodiversity protected areas : consolidation of a training module).

Theme: prospective

84. Transitioning to a Sustainable and Inclusive Future in the Mediterranean at 2050 – Building Back Better using strategic participatory foresight
(4 products, which could be split in this list: 1. MED2050 Module on transition pathways – finalization, publication and dissemination; 2. Regional foresight focused on the sea; 3. MED 2050 dissemination at national / watershed levels: pilot(s) on the water-food-energy-ecosystems-health nexus; in relations with national / local ISP. Methodological guidelines developed on this basis; 4. Network of Mediterranean foresight institutes: consolidation on the basis of MED 2050, and follow-up work).

Theme: Socio-economic analysis

85. Conceptual framework for socioeconomic analysis in the UNEP/MAP system (2022-2027)

(4 products, which could be split in this list: 1. development of methodology and capacity building; 2. roadmap for monitoring and reporting; 3. Case studies; 4. Compendium on ecosystem valuation and cost of environment degradation).

86. Plan Bleu Cahier: “Socio-economic impact of Nature-Based solutions in Mediterranean cities”

Theme: Science-Policy Interface

87. Developing, sustaining and networking science policy interfaces on climate change in the Mediterranean Region, at regional and local levels

(6 products, which could be split in this list: 1. Thematic MedECC report on climate change impacts, risks and adaptation on the coast, including scientific evaluation of current/proposed coastal adaptation solutions and barriers to change; 2. Thematic MedECC report on water-food-energy-ecosystem and health nexus; 3. Using both themes above to strengthen local SPI on climate and environmental change and adaptation solutions; 4. Ministerial meeting on adapting Mediterranean coasts to climate change; 5. Coastal cities network of planners (urban planning agencies of coastal cities): workshop(s) on sharing good practices and bottlenecks; 6. MAR2: second MedECC assessment report on the impact of climate and environmental change in the Mediterranean (2026?))

Annex IV

Building blocks for the new MTS identified during the meeting

Outcome of the discussion on “building blocks”

1. Climate Action

- Adaptation and Mitigation
- Nature-based Solution
- Air Emission
- ICZM/Disaster

2. Nature Action

- MPAS, SPAMIs and PSSAs
- Habitats, Endangered Species and Non-Indigenous Species
- Ecosystem Restoration

3. Chemical and pollution Action / Coastal and Marine Pollution and Degradation

- Plastic Pollution
- Chemical/Contaminants Pollution
- Air Emission
- Degradation (land degradation, ...)

4. Science-Policy

- (- Preparedness to the future)

5. Environmental Governance

- Systemic Strengthening
- Implementation and Enforcement
- Policies, Measures and Strategies
- Ecosystem Approach Roadmap
- Partnerships

6. Data Action

- Data Management and Information System
- Knowledge Management (? - also includes Assessment)
- Digital transformation (? – under communication)

7. Finance and Economic transformation / Finance, Economic and Social Transformation

- Sustainable Blue Economy / ICZM and MSP (e.g. Marine Renewable Energy, Aquaculture, Tourism, Offshore Activities)
- Green and Circular Economy (e.g. Textile, Food, Construction)

8. Environment and Health

9. Observation and Monitoring of Marine and Coastal Environment (may include assessment)

10. Shared Vision for the Mediterranean/ Foresights and Assessment (TBC)

11. Capacity Building

12. Awareness Raising, Communication, Education and Advocacy

[13. Enabling Conditions]



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UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

30 November 2020
Original: English

43rd Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel

Teleconference, 28-29 September 2020

Report of the Meeting

For environmental and cost-saving reasons, this document is printed in a limited number. Delegates are kindly requested to bring their copies to meetings and not to request additional copies.

UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2020

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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

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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:
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
- 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
- Agenda Item 4** Possible Collaboration with the Africa Centre for Climate and Sustainable Development (ACSD) of UNDP
- Agenda Item 5** Date and Venue of the 44th ECP Meeting
- Agenda Item 6** Any Other Matters
a) Focal Points Meetings of MAP Components
b) Update on the Status of Projects
c) Branding of RACs, including RAC Names



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UNEP/MED ECP.44/2



**UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN**

16 March 2021
Original: English

44th Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel

Teleconference, 19-20 January 2021

Report of the Meeting

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2021

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

1. The 44th Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel (ECP) was held on 19-20 January 2021, through teleconference. The meeting was chaired by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) Coordinator and attended by the Deputy Coordinator, 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) participated during Agenda Item 3 and the consultant supporting the secretariat with the Knowledge Management module of the MedProgramme participated during Agenda Item 7. 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 19 January 2021. He welcomed the participants and noted that this is a “COP year” and therefore entering a demanding period. He added that it is also a special year for the Coordinating Unit, due to the change in Coordinator. He highlighted that work is progressing well and that he is optimistic for the way to COP22 and the successful completion of the relevant processes. He reported on his recent meeting with Prof. Birpınar, Deputy Minister of Environment and Urbanization of Turkey, in view of the preparations of COP22, as well as on the new French initiative on the “Plan d’ Action pour la Méditerranée Exemple”. Finally, he noted that, overall, there is a big delay in the achievement of the SDGs, while he stressed that the MAP-Barcelona Convention system has produced very good assessment reports during this last period (SoED, MAR1).

3. The meeting reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda prepared by the Secretariat, as in document UNEP/MED ECP.44/1, with the addition under Agenda Item 7 of an update on the process of recruitment of the new Coordinator.

II. Agenda Item 2: UNEP/MAP Programme of Work 2020-2021

a) Status of Implementation

b) Possible Impacts of COVID-19 and Proposed Responses

4. A “tour de table” was initiated on the major achievements and major concerns in relation to the implementation of the PoW, on the possible impacts of Covid-19 (activities partly/not implemented and working arrangements) and on potential savings and their possible reallocation. The main points are highlighted below:

- a) *INFO/RAC*: Staff is partly present in the office, with rotation. No major challenges or delays due to Covid-19 so far. Meetings take place online, while there are some delays in internal administrative processes, including Human Resource issues (some savings due to delays in procurement and recruitments, are planned to be used in 2021 for similar purposes). The testing phase of the IMAP InfoSystem has been completed, work on data standards and data dictionaries progresses well, while support is provided to Contracting Parties. The implementation of the Operational Communication Strategy progresses well in collaboration with the Task Force.
- b) *REMPEC*: Currently there is minimum presence at the office. Possible presence with rotation in the future, but only when things improve. On offshore issues, temporary staff to be recruited in February; JPO will be leaving in March and there will be an announcement on JPO opening. Progress ongoing with Regional Strategy and with the MED SECA proposal. Preparation of Project Document with IMO on Marine Litter is ongoing, while the West MOPoCo project was extended. Discussions are ongoing with Bosnia and Herzegovina on the contingency plan. Since face-to-face meetings will not be possible at least until July, savings of approximately 120,000 Euros are expected. There are certain ideas on how these will be used. It was noted that albeit the strict timelines, offshore activities will be fully implemented and that REMPEC resources will be used for the relevant meetings.

- c) *Plan Bleu/RAC*: Mostly working from home. Presence at office is based on individual personnel decisions, but keeping rotation. MED2050 preparation is progressing, although with delays, with new personnel being recruited for this purpose. Three meetings took place in 2020 and the fourth will take place in February 2021. The SoED dissemination/visibility continues, in collaboration with partners such as PAM and OSCE. Visibility of the MAR1 report is also promoted. Very good collaboration with REMPEC on SECA. Approximately 100,000 Euros savings from travel are expected, from which a part (about 15,000 Euros) will be used for MED2050 while the rest will be used for the same outputs as originally planned. Following a question by the Coordinator, it was clarified that the MED2050 may not be fully ready for adoption at COP22. The Coordinator highlighted the importance of following the formal process if a COP Decision is not to be met, which involves bringing the issue to the attention of the Bureau at its next meeting and providing a revised roadmap with justifications for the delay. The Plan/Bleu Director stressed that the MED2050 would greatly benefit by the support of the ECP, giving as an example the very good collaboration with all MAP components for the preparation of the SoED report.
- d) *SCP/RAC*: Flexible working arrangements are in place during the last 4 months, based on local measures. The work of the centre has not been much affected, except from the fact that meetings and trainings are held virtually. There are approximately 30% savings from the budget which are to be moved to 2021. Some delays to provision of support to Turkey on SCP, due to administrative issues, are expected to be resolved soon. The work on a Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products proceeds according to the roadmap adopted at COP21. An experts' meeting will take place on 23-24 February. Work is also proceeding in cooperation with Plan Bleu/RAC on the MSSD and SCP Action Plan mid-term evaluations. Other activities also proceed well. A new activity will take place funded by MAVA on Covid-19 impacts on green economy.
- e) *PAP/RAC*: Staff continues to work from office; only in April staff was working from home. New staff member will be recruited on MedProgramme. PoW implementation proceeds well, except CAMPs, in which delays are observed. The Mediterranean Coast Day celebration went very well, through virtual events with the support of INFO/RAC. Many local events took place in seven Contracting Parties, and this may be the way for the future. Work and ongoing projects on Marine Spatial Planning and Land-Sea Interaction proceed well. The MedOpen online course is very successful and has become an official part of academic curricula (in two universities in Morocco and Tunisia). CAMP Bosnia and Herzegovina also proceeds well, including the contingency plan where there is a very good collaboration with REMPEC. For transboundary CAMPs there is a need to use existing savings, which are limited, especially since the new agreement with Italy/IMELS may be delayed.
- f) *SPA/RAC*: Since November 2020, all staff members were requested to work from home. Work proceeds smoothly as the RAC provided all members with good tools in terms of software and hardware as well as internet connection. However, the situation in Tunisia with Covid-19 is not good and is now reaching the peak. Work agenda is very heavy but work proceeds well. Due to the early start in the preparation of SAP BIO work is on schedule. Already 21 Contracting Parties achieved good process, while internal consensus has not yet been achieved in one Party. Subregional meetings were successful, with the presence of the Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator. A main challenge is the alignment with the global process due to the delays in the CBD process/COP. SPA/RAC will follow the online SBSTTA meetings and is waiting to see the exact dates of the CBD COP15. Work on the Regional Strategy on MPAs and OECMs is also proceeding well; this process is less demanding than the SAP BIO one. SPA/RAC is redesigning the SPAMI evaluation system so that it is done online. The AGEM group was launched and work proceeds well. The process for the MPA Med Forum was launched but the Forum has been postponed to the end of 2021-beginning of 2022. The SPAMI evaluation is delayed due to the travel restrictions that do not allow to meet at the SPAMIs. On the issues of the alignment with global processes and the SPAMI evaluation,

considering the respective challenges due to Covid-19, the advice of the Coordinator was sought. The Coordinator responded that in relation to SAP BIO, the best way forward would be to advance the work to the extent possible and prepare the draft Decision so that the Contracting Parties can commit through the COP22 decision, leaving however a provision that will allow review after the COP (with the Bureau and/or the Contracting Parties) if necessary to align with the global commitments (in case the latter are finalized at a later stage). On the SPAMI evaluation, work should proceed to the extent possible online and a discussion should take place with the Focal Points on the best way forward, including the option of a possible postponement of the evaluation. A preliminary, desk-based, evaluation can be made and presented to the COP, with a note that this preliminary evaluation will be completed in 2022 with any further information from field visits.

- g) *MED POL*: Work is progressing on three major streams of work, on (a) Regional Plans and Annexes to the Pollution-related Protocols, (b) NBB capacity building, and (c) Monitoring and Assessment linked to IMAP. Any delays are not attributed to Covid-19. Savings of up to 135,000 USD are expected, half attributed to travel of consultants and the rest to meetings and related travel. The Deputy Coordinator, Ms. Tatjana Hema, noted that if delays occur that might influence adoption, then these will need to be discussed with the Bureau, as is the case for the MED2050 foresight study. Furthermore, she added that online meetings in 2021 may cost more than expected, due to platform/interpretation costs, so that overall savings may be significantly reduced.
- h) *Coordinating Unit*: Since 1 November, the office has opened with 40% physical presence (rotation, with individual presence twice per week). Work is progressing on major strategic documents and processes, including the preparation of the new MTS. There is cooperation with Contracting Parties which are also EU Member States on supporting commitments related both to EcAp/IMAP and to the implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Discussions are ongoing with Italy on a possible new agreement between UNEP/MAP and IMELS. Implementation of the GEF MedProgramme is continuing, despite some difficulties due to the departure of the Programme Officer and administrative issues. The Steering Committee meetings are organized in early March. The preparation of the 2023 MED QSR, the MSSD and SCP Action Plan mid-term evaluations are progressing. There is a need to be realistic and forward looking. Reference was made to the One Planet Summit and the relevant French initiative, as well as to the IUCN congress at which this initiative will be discussed.

5. The Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator stressed the importance to have a clear idea of the amount of potential savings, of where they originate from, and on their proposed reallocation from all MAP components, so that this information can be shared with the Bureau, in order to seek the Bureau's advice during its next meeting.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
1.	Assessment of savings with a proposal on their reallocation	All MAP Components	Early February 2021
2.	Prepare and submit to 91 st Bureau meeting revised MED2050 roadmap and justification for delays of process	Plan Bleu/RAC (in coordination with CU)	Mid-May 2021
3.	Prepare provision (for 91 st Bureau meeting) to allow review of SAP BIO, if necessary, to align with global process	SPA/RAC (in coordination with CU)	Mid-May 2021

III. Agenda Item 3: Preparation of the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027

6. The Deputy Coordinator highlighted the need for the participants to jointly review the draft text of the new MTS during the meeting and proposed to structure the discussion as follows: (a) general

discussion and questions, (b) discussion of the text section by section, and (c) discussion of next steps. The meeting agreed with this proposal. Following a brief presentation of the calendar of milestones related to the current MTS evaluation and the new MTS preparation, participants noted the importance of ensuring that the recommendations of the evaluation of the current MTS will be taken into account in the new MTS.

7. Following this general introduction, the meeting proceeded to reviewing the text of the draft MTS section by section. Specific comments were incorporated in the text, while in parallel some smaller groups were designated to work overnight in preparing specific paragraphs, especially in relation to a narrative part to explain how each outcome of the MTS will be achieved. In relation to targets and indicators, it was decided that these will be elaborated at a next stage and that they need to be aggregated and strategic. They could be included under monitoring and evaluation, or as an Annex in tabular form. During the two days of the meeting the narrative text of the outcomes was prepared, while further inputs on the text, including on targets and indicators, were agreed to be provided by the end of the week of the meeting.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
4.	ECP to provide inputs on first Draft MTS, and especially on targets/indicators	All MAP Components	22 January 2021
5.	Prepare text on timeline/links of Programme 2 with CBD Post-2020 global process	SPA/RAC	25 January 2021
6.	Finalization of first draft MTS for submission to OEWG	CU	Early February 2021

IV. Agenda item 4: Preparation of the 2022-2023 UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget

8. The meeting discussed the preparation of the 2022-2023 UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget (PoW). It was highlighted that full consistency should be ensured between the new MTS and the PoW for the next biennium and that reference should be made to the MTS within the PoW. The Deputy Coordinator highlighted the importance of focusing on deliverables and on providing links with the list of products of the MTS and with the relevant resources for the delivery of the PoW. She added that bilateral meetings with MAP components will be organized for providing specific feedback and clarifications and that there is room of further aggregation in the proposed activities under the PoW. The Coordinator highlighted the extent of work that the MAP-Barcelona Convention system delivers and the need to make it more visible. He added that working together in preparing a reasonable and concrete PoW are the keys to success.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
7.	Feedback to be provided to PoW proposals of MAP Components	CU	End January 2021
8.	Submission of the PoW to the MAP components Focal Points (only the relevant PoW items for each MAP component)	All MAP components	10 February 2021

V. Agenda item 5: Preparation of the main MAP Meetings of 2021:

a) 19th Meeting of the MCSD

9. The Coordinator highlighted that the discussion on the host of the next MCSD meeting has up to now been inconclusive. Slovenia is one candidate with which discussion have progressed well, but no final response had been yet received. The MCSD meeting will be held online, so there will be no obligations of hosting a face-to-face meeting; however, the host will hold the presidency of the MCSD for the next biennium. It was noted that if agreement with Slovenia has not been reached shortly, the

ECP members will be asked to liaise with their respective host countries to explore the possibility of hosting the meeting.

b) Meetings of the Focal Points of the MAP Components and of MAP

10. The dates of the MAP components Focal Points meeting were discussed in order to finalize the calendar of meetings and to secure that no substantive overlaps between meetings will take place. The Coordinator clarified that, also following the relevant feedback from UNON, the current assumption is that all meetings in the first semester of 2021 will take place remotely.

c) COP 22

11. The Coordinator informed the meeting that he would have an appointment the day after the meeting with the Deputy Minister of Environment and Urbanization of Turkey, Mr. Birpinar, to discuss the preparations of COP22. He noted to the ECP that there is a need to have the first inputs on the possible theme, the list of documents and the list of decisions of COP22, stressing that it is important to have as few decisions as possible, especially due to the insecurity caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and that decisions do not need to repeat what is already in the PoW. Regarding the theme of COP22 he noted that the new MTS should have a central role and that the experience for building back better from the Covid-19 pandemic is also a very timely issue. The theme of the COP is also relevant to the Ministerial declaration and the COP decisions.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
9.	Inputs by all MAP Components on COP 22: a) possible theme b) list of draft decisions c) list of documents (working and information, as appropriate)	All MAP Components	Mid-February 2021

VI. Agenda item 6: Date and Venue of the 45th ECP Meeting

12. The meeting discussed the possible dates for the next ECP meeting. The second half of March 2021 was identified as appropriate, while it was agreed that the exact dates will be decided at a later stage.

VII. Agenda item 7: Any Other Matters

a) Presentation of the Knowledge Management module of the MedProgramme

13. The consultant supporting the secretariat with the Knowledge Management module of the MedProgramme, Ms. Lucilla Minelli, made a presentation of the module with emphasis on how this can benefit the whole MAP-Barcelona Convention system. She mentioned the importance of linking knowledge management with monitoring and evaluation, while she also noted the links between knowledge management and the proposed Programme 7 of the new MTS. The meeting agreed on the importance of knowledge management and on the need to capitalize on the experience to be gained on this issue through the MedProgramme.

b) Branding of RACs, including RAC Names

14. The Director of SCP/RAC, Mr. Enrique de Villamore Martin, noted, as a follow-up to the relevant discussion in the previous ECP meeting, that SCP/RAC is considering changing its name in an informal manner, i.e. for branding purposes only, without any change in the centre's mandate nor in the official name that will be used for communication in the MAP-Barcelona Convention system. He

added that the centre has not yet done any actions in this direction, since they waited for the relevant discussion in the ECP. The Director of SPA/RAC, Mr. Khalil Attia, noted that SPA/RAC has not changed its official name but is also using a title/name specifying what the centre actually does. The Director of PAP/RAC, Ms. Zeljka Skaricic, added that PAP/RAC would not change its name, since it is a brand, but is using an explanation together with the official name to showcase what the center is doing.

15. The Director of SCP/RAC clarified that the centre does not have a specific name in mind and that they want a name for purposes of visibility towards donors. The Deputy Coordinator noted that the understanding is that SCP/RAC wants to move in a similar direction to the one noted by SPA/RAC and PAP/RAC and that it is important to make clear that there will be no institutional change. If the change is of an informal, explanatory, name to be used towards donors, this sounds viable; SCP/RAC can proceed with making a proposal, which will need to be checked with the Secretariat.

c) Information Technology Tools to Support Collaborative Work of the ECP

16. The meeting briefly discussed the online tools used for collaborative work. It was noted that the platform of INFO/RAC has in general a good performance, but other tools such as MS Teams can also be considered and tested.

d) Update on the Process of Recruitment of the new Coordinator

17. The Coordinator provided information on this issue to the meeting, noting that his last day in office is 31 May 2021, while he will also have to take by then his accrued leave. He informed the meeting that the job opening was issued in October 2020; however, it was cancelled the week of the ECP meeting. The main reason was that the Executive Director wished for an as wide as possible pool of candidates, taking into account both gender and geographical perspectives. He clarified that the re-issuing of the job opening was in no way related to a lack of satisfaction with the level of applicants. He added that this will mean a delay of the recruitment process and asked the ECP to disseminate the job opening to their networks. Finally, he mentioned the need to prepare a short briefing on the work of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system, with inputs from all MAP components, to be handed to the new Coordinator.

18. The meeting was closed by the Coordinator at 17:30 on 20 January 2021.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
10.	Short briefing for new Coordinator based on template to be provided by CU	All MAP Components	End March 2021

Annex I
List of participants

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Annex II
Agenda

Agenda

- Agenda item 1** Opening of the Meeting, Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work
- Agenda item 2** UNEP/MAP Programme of Work 2020-2021
- a) Status of Implementation
 - b) Possible Impacts of COVID-19 and Proposed Responses
- Agenda item 3** Preparation of the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027
- Agenda item 4** Preparation of the 2022-2023 UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget
- Agenda item 5** Preparation of the main MAP Meetings of 2021:
- a) 19th Meeting of the MCSD
 - b) Meetings of the Focal Points of the MAP Components and of MAP
 - c) COP 22
- Agenda item 6** Date and Venue of the 45th ECP Meeting
- Agenda item 7** Any Other Matters
- a) Presentation of the Knowledge Management module of the MedProgramme
 - b) Branding of RACs, including RAC Names
 - c) Information Technology Tools to Support Collaborative Work of the ECP
 - d) Update on the Process of Recruitment of the new Coordinator



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UNEP/MED ECP.45/2



**UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN**

10 May 2021
Original: English

45th Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel

Teleconference, 29-30 March 2021

Report of the Meeting

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2021

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

1. The 45th Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel (ECP) was held on 29-30 March 2021, through teleconference. The meeting was chaired by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) Coordinator and attended by the Deputy Coordinator, 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) participated during Agenda Item 4. 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 29 March 2021. He welcomed the participants and referred to the recent developments, progress and MAP related events of the period since the previous ECP meeting. He noted that this is a demanding period, leading to COP 22, and this will need efficient cooperation, understanding and support.
3. The meeting reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda prepared by the Secretariat, as in document UNEP/MED ECP.45/1.

II. Agenda Item 2: UNEP/MAP Programme of Work 2020-2021

a) Status of Implementation

b) Possible Impacts of COVID-19 and Proposed Responses

4. Ms. Tatjana Hema, UNEP/MAP Deputy Coordinator presented the main findings from the review of the Planning and Priorities Table as completed by MAP Components, which showed a positive overall picture on progress and achievements. She highlighted specific cells on the tables where information was missing, especially on the population of the worksheet on Indicators and Targets, on the columns relating to the assessment of activity progress (as satisfactory or not), as well as on the change of original plans and budget delivery rate. She also pointed out a number of activities for which additional information or clarifications in the reported progress would be needed.
5. The MAP Components' Directors and Heads provided clarifications on the relevant points raised by the Deputy Coordinator during a tour-de-table. The meeting noted that in general activities did not face a significant implementation risk, while there was some departure from the original planning, especially for the MED2050 which cannot be ready for endorsement at COP 22 and the SAP BIO which will need to allow for including any final amendments of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework after COP 22. The ECP agreed that the clarifications provided orally during the meeting would be inserted by the ECP members in the Planning and Priorities Table at the time of the next reporting exercise, i.e. in July 2021, when updates on the period January-June 2021 are to be provided.
6. The Deputy Coordinator informed the meeting about the status of budget revision requests regarding the use of savings generated due to travel restrictions imposed by COVID-19 and the process for the way forward including, as appropriate, providing information to the Bureau of the Contracting Parties and amending the Legal Instruments. She presented three aggregated budget revision tables which contained information required for the management to take an informed decision about the proposed revisions, in accordance with the UN Rules and Regulations, in addition to the standard detailed budget revision template. The aggregated tables were shared with ECP members; it was agreed that all Components in need of a budget revision would fill and submit them to the Secretariat within 10 days.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
1.	Provide clarifications in the Planning and Priorities Table	All MAP Components	By July 2021

2.	Submit the aggregated budget revision tables	All MAP Components	10 days after the meeting
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III. Agenda Item 3: Preparation of the 2022-2023 UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget

7. The Coordinator expressed his appreciation to the ECP Members for their inputs and progress achieved and highlighted the difficulties of preparing the PoW for the next biennium without having the MTS for the next 6 years yet finalized. He noted that the proposed way to proceed during the meeting was to go through the PoW, Programme by Programme, with the participants providing their comments and suggestions; more work would then be done after the meeting, with MAP Components providing consolidated comments in written form.

8. The Deputy Coordinator guided participants through the document and highlighted that it is very important to be more concrete and to ensure that the activities are put under the correct outcome where they belong. It was also noted that the PoW needs to be brief and to the point with activities aggregated to the extent possible, while deliverables should have enough information on what is to be achieved. Particular discussion was made on Nature-Based Solutions and how they can be best reflected in the PoW using a systemic approach. For outcome 4.2 it was noted that its title should be checked so that it is in line with the other outcome titles. On programme 5, it was noted that deliverables for the next biennium should take into account the constraints posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, that knowledge-sharing tools better fit under programme 6, and that meetings should be grouped together. It was added that thematic activities and technical capacity building should better go under the respective thematic programmes and not under programme 5. On programme 6 it was noted that complementarities and synergies should be ensured with the work under projects. On programme 7, the need of grouping of activities was highlighted under the appropriate outcomes, together with the need to put all educational activities together. On outreach issues, the importance of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system working as one was stressed, together with the important role of the Communication Task Force.

9. On next steps, the Deputy Coordinator noted the need to prepare a short, smart and precise narrative text, and to further work on the excel tables so as to: present better the main partners, include the most relevant specific SDG target (and not a general reference to SDGs), delete the rational/links to the MTS as well as the implementation means and tools (the latter to be reflected under activities). Then, the finalized tables together with the narrative text will be shared with the MAP Focal Points for consultation. It was also noted that the PoW will be sent to MAP Component/Thematic Focal Points meetings as an information document, so that they are aware of the current text, reflect on it and consult internally at an early stage.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
3.	Provide feedback on the consolidated text of the PoW 2022-2023	All MAP Components	7 April 2021
4.	Preparation of short and concise narrative text to accompany the tables	CU	Mid-April 2021
5.	Dissemination of PoW to MAP Focal Points	CU	Mid/Late-April 2021

IV. Agenda Item 4: Preparation of the MAP Focal Points Meeting on the Medium-Term Strategy

10. The MAP Programme Officer responsible for governance issues, Mr. Ilias Mavroeidis, presented the provisional agenda of the upcoming MAP Focal Points meeting on the MTS (teleconference, 13-15 April 2021), so that the ECP could discuss the preparations for that meeting. Participants referred to the document on key products/deliverables that was presented in the 90th Bureau meeting as an information document, asking if it would be revised to reflect recent changes. The Deputy Coordinator responded that this document had been very useful for preparing the MTS

following a bottom-up approach, and that the products have been used for drafting the outputs and deliverables of the PoW for 2022-23 (and will be also used for the next two biennial PoWs). She added that there are no current plans in revising the document and that the initial document can be presented as a Reference Document to the MAP Focal Points Meeting of September 2021. To this end, the Coordinator noted that the MTS is a strategic document that needs to have the appropriate level of flexibility and not go into full implementation details. Another option that was mentioned was to have the indicative list of products as an annex to the MTS, if Contracting Parties request so during the Focal Points meeting of April 2021. Several participants noted that if the products are to be included, they need to be revised to reflect current evolutions and proposed changes from the original version. Following this discussion, the meeting agreed to delete from the draft PoW 2022-3 the column on products.

11. Another point raised by the participants was the importance of the current MTS evaluation, with some noting that the fact that the two processes go in parallel may not allow for fully exploiting the results of the current MTS evaluation for the new MTS preparation. The Coordinator noted that the independent evaluation was received somewhat later than expected, but the Secretariat had made all efforts so that the new MTS benefits from the current MTS evaluation.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
6.	<i>In case the list of products is to be included as an annex to the MTS: products to be revised</i>	CU and all MAP Components	May/June 2021

V. Agenda Item 5: Preparation of the main MAP Meetings of 2021:

a) 19th Meeting of the MCSD

b) Meetings of the Focal Points of the MAP Components and of MAP

c) COP 22

12. The MAP Programme Officer responsible for governance issues, presented the progress in the preparation of the 19th meeting of the MCSD, noting that short inputs will be soon requested by MAP Components for the meeting documents.

13. On the preparations of COP 22 and following a question by a participant on the next steps regarding the preparation of the COP 22 theme, the Coordinator noted that the Coordinating Unit will distill the inputs provided by the ECP and will come with a proposal to the 91st Bureau meeting (teleconference, 7-8 July 201), which will be first shared with the Host Country of COP 22. He added that suggestions are welcomed on ways to bring the theme together, based on the proposals tabled by MAP Components. During the ensuing discussion, and in relation to the proposals tabled by MAP Components, it was noted that the wording “Paving the way...” may be redundant since the process of the 2020-2030 decade has already started; it was added that theme should not start by “Despite world crises and pandemics...”. In this respect, it was stressed that the theme should be phrased in a way to attract the attention of media and for this reason it should be also seen by the Communication Task Force. The meeting agreed that the theme should not be too general and should be linked to the new MTS.

14. The meeting also discussed the possible list of draft decisions for COP 22 consolidated by the Coordinating Unit. Several proposals of aggregations were presented and discussed, to be considered for the next version of the list of draft COP 22 decisions to be presented to the Bureau at its next meeting. The Deputy Coordinator noted that the list will be further elaborated in the Coordinating Unit and shared with the MAP Components. The importance to ensure that all mandates given by Contracting Parties are included in the proposed list of draft decisions was also stressed. The Coordinator noted the need for each MAP Component to sent 2-3 sentences on each proposed decision, as relevant, for presentation to the Bureau.

15.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
7.	MAP Components to send 2-3 sentences on each relevant proposed COP decision	All MAP Components	18 May 2021

VI. Agenda Item 6: Date and Venue of the 46th ECP Meeting

16. The meeting discussed the possible dates for the next ECP meeting. The second half of May or early June 2021 was identified as an appropriate period, while it was agreed that the exact dates will be decided at a later stage. Setting the exact dates should take into account the need to have a first proposal on the budget for the biennium 2022-3 ready for discussion at the 46th ECP meeting, so that the budget is discussed internally at the ECP before submission to the MAP Focal Points. The meeting also noted the importance of the systemic analysis to accompany the next MTS. The Coordinator highlighted that the organization supporting the Secretariat with the systemic analysis has been notified on the importance of discussing with MAP Components, especially due to their role in the next MTS implementation.

VII. Agenda Item 7: Any Other Matters

17. No other matters were raised during the meeting.

18. The ECP Members expressed their heartfelt appreciation to the UNEP/MAP Coordinator, Mr. Gaetano Leone and wished him the best for his retirement, since he is retiring in May 2021 and no other ECP meetings are foreseen in the period until then.

19. The meeting was closed by the Coordinator at 17:30 on 30 March 2021.

Annex I
List of participants

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Annex II
Agenda

Agenda

- Agenda item 1** Opening of the Meeting, Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work
- Agenda item 2** UNEP/MAP Programme of Work 2020-2021
- a) Status of Implementation
 - b) Possible Impacts of COVID-19 and Proposed Responses
- Agenda item 3** Preparation of the 2022-2023 UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget
- Agenda item 4** Preparation of the MAP Focal Points Meeting on the Medium-Term Strategy
- Agenda item 5** Preparation of the main MAP Meetings of 2021:
- a) 19th Meeting of the MCSD
 - b) Meetings of the Focal Points of the MAP Components and of MAP
 - c) COP 22
- Agenda item 6** Date and Venue of the 46th ECP Meeting
- Agenda item 7** Any Other Matters