

3. MANDATE FOR THE COORDINATING UNIT

This chapter concerns the body established in Athens by UNEP to provide the Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention as stipulated in article 17 of the Convention. It does not, however, address the mandate of the MED POL team which is functionally equivalent to a RAC and whose specific mandate is therefore covered in section 4.

The Coordinating Unit should be known externally as the “Barcelona Convention / MAP Secretariat”. The term MEDU should be used only as absolutely required for internal purposes within UNEP.

As the Secretariat for the Barcelona Convention, the overall mission of the Coordinating Unit is to take all steps necessary to promote and facilitate the full and proper implementation of the Barcelona Convention, its protocols and strategies, and the decisions and recommendations taken at the Meetings of the Contracting Parties. The Coordinating Unit will accomplish this mission by ensuring the good functioning of the MAP system and facilitating the work of the Contracting Parties to meet their commitments under this Convention.

The work of the Coordinating Unit is to be undertaken with the technical support and assistance of the MAP Regional Activity Centres (including MED POL) in accordance with their individual mandates, and with specific decisions of the Contracting Parties.

According to article 17 of the Barcelona Convention, certain specific tasks are assigned to the Secretariat of the Convention, with subparagraph vii. of this article stating that other tasks may be assigned to the Secretariat by the Contracting Parties.

The MAP Work Programme (see section 6) should clearly identify whether a task is to be undertaken by the Coordinating Unit and/or by one or more of the RACs. Other decisions taken by the Contracting Parties at the Meetings of the Contracting Parties should likewise clearly identify if they are specifically addressed to one or more RAC. When this is not stated, the Coordinating Unit will be considered directly responsible for the execution of decisions assigned to the Barcelona Convention / MAP Secretariat by the Contracting Parties,

On this basis and with regard to its overall mandate, the following tasks should be performed by the Barcelona Convention / MAP Secretariat:

Representation and relations^{*}:

- Ensuring high-level policy and political dialogue with the Contracting Parties and third countries, in all matters related to the implementation of the Barcelona Convention, its protocols and strategies;
- Representation of the Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention at international fora; liaison with the CSD and other similar international and regional bodies;
- Liaison with countries hosting RACs, on matters related to their establishment and functioning;
- Maintaining regular contact with the Contracting Parties, via their designated MAP Focal Points;

^{*} Aspects of this task may also be delegated by the Coordinator to the Directors of the RACs (including MED POL) when appropriate.

- Liaison with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local authorities and private actors about matters of horizontal relevance to the Barcelona Convention and its protocols and strategies, particularly on matters concerning legal issues and general policy;
- Oversight to ensure policy coherence and approval for distribution of all publications (including paper and digital publications) and press releases drafted by the MAP components.

Legal affairs:

- Management of the legal aspects of the Barcelona Convention; coordination of the legal instruments of the Barcelona Convention; and advice to the Contracting Parties and the RACs (including MED POL) on legal matters related to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.
- Ensuring the functioning of the reporting system and the compliance mechanism required by the Barcelona Convention and its protocols, including tracking information on the status of all decisions and resolutions of the Contracting Parties.

Preparation and organization of meetings:

- Providing the secretariat and organizing meetings of any high-level advisory bodies or horizontal working groups established by the Contracting Parties (including the MCSD), as well as providing the secretariat and organizing the Meetings of the Contracting Parties, plenipotentiary meetings, meetings related to legal/reporting/compliance issues, meetings of the MAP Focal Points, meetings of the Bureau of the Convention, etc.

Work Programme development and implementation:

- Ensuring overall coherence and complementarity of the work undertaken by the RACs (including MED POL) and by the Coordinating Unit itself, by:
 - Coordinating the preparation of the proposals to the Contracting Parties concerning the five-year Indicative Programme and the biannual Work Programme;
 - Monitoring the implementation of the MAP Work Programme (including the components assigned to the RACs and MED POL), and reporting regularly to the Contracting Parties thereon;
 - Providing formal and informal guidance to the RACs and MED POL on issues requiring involvement of the Coordinating Unit in their work, particularly issues of a legal or horizontal nature;
 - Facilitating and encouraging the regular flow of information between and among the RACs (and MED POL), including bilateral networking and cooperation between the MAP components.

Information and communication:

- Coordination of the implementation and periodic updating of the MAP information and communication policy

Financial issues:

- Ensuring financial management of the MAP system, with full respect for the rules in force and with due consideration for all recommendations of internal and external auditors, including:
 - Managing and monitoring all contributions to and disbursement from the MTF, and
 - Monitoring the contributions from external resources received by the MAP components (RACs including MED POL) in order to ensure that the activities financed are consistent with their individual mandates and the overall objectives of the MAP system;
- Maintaining, in coordination with the Directors of the RACs (including MED POL), up-to-date information concerning all staff posts within the MAP system, including job descriptions; ensuring appropriate training for MAP staff;
- Development and implementation of a strategy to attract additional resources (financial and human) to increase the capacity of the Barcelona Convention / MAP Secretariat and the RACs (including MED POL), from sources including the Contracting Parties, donor countries, the private sector, etc.

The Barcelona Convention / MAP Secretariat is overseen by the MAP Coordinator, with the support and assistance of a Deputy Coordinator. The diplomatic and representational tasks of the Secretariat should be undertaken primarily by the Coordinator, with the Deputy Coordinator playing a greater role in the day-to-day operational issues of the Secretariat (e.g. review of documents, relationship with RACs and MED POL, etc.) The detailed division of tasks shall be identified in their respective job descriptions.