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Mid-term Review Meeting on the
Progress of the Co-ordinated
Mediterranean Pollution Monitoring
and Research Programme (MED POL)
and Related Projects of the
Mediterranean Action Plan

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JOINT MEDITERRANEAN SHIP PROGRAMME
(MED CRUISE)

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As part of, or as a contribution to, the Mediterranean Pollution Monitoring and Research Programme (MED POL), in the past two years several joint cruises have been undertaken to cover the open waters of the Mediterranean (see Chapter 10 of UNEP/WG.11/3 (Prov.)). These cruises provided an excellent opportunity to a dozen scientists from several Mediterranean countries for joint work, exchange of ideas, familiarization with new techniques, intercalibration of methodologies and training, in particular when the participants in the cruises were from less developed countries.
- 1.2 At the recent expert consultations reviewing the achievements of the individual MED POL pilot projects (Dubrovnik, 2-13 May 1977; Barcelona, 23-27 May 1977; Rome, 30 May - 1 June 1977) the value and potential benefits of joint cruises were repeatedly stressed and it was recommended that a more systematic approach be adopted to the use of joint research in the open waters of the Mediterranean. Without neglecting the great benefits of bilateral exchange of scientists on cruises organized by institutions participating in the MED POL pilot projects the expert consultations recommended that by using a chartered vessel a longer cruise, code-named MED CRUISE, should be organized during 1978.
- 1.3 In view of the complexity of the problems involved in organizing the MED CRUISE advice is sought from this meeting on the principles which should be followed if such a joint venture is undertaken. Some suggestions and alternatives are listed in the following section.

2. MED CRUISE

2.1 Objectives

The long-term objectives of MED CRUISE could be defined as a contribution to the understanding of biogeochemical processes influencing the fate of pollutants in the Mediterranean.

Short-term objectives of MED CRUISE, which could be achieved during 1978, are:

- (a) training of scientists and technicians from countries without adequate facilities of their own in ship-board techniques and open water research in general,
- (b) collecting data and environmental samples from open waters of the Mediterranean for studies related to its pollution,
- (c) conducting pollution monitoring and research in the coastal waters of the Mediterranean at the specific request of countries having jurisdiction over these coastal waters.

2.2 Scope

The duration of MED CRUISE is tentatively planned to last for 4-6 months, all during 1978.

The research vessel used for the cruise would be chartered by UNEP and operated by the Co-ordinating Committee for MED CRUISE (see Section 2.6 of this document).

The research vessel would accommodate 10-20 scientists at a time and would be equipped with the basic facilities needed for the implementation of the programme.

Participants in the scientific programme of the MED CRUISE would be selected from among the scientists involved in MED PDL pilot projects, priority being given to participants from institutions with no facilities for open water research or coastal research requiring the use of a research vessel.

The MED CRUISE programme would be interdisciplinary and based on the MED PDL pilot projects and technical guidelines adopted for these projects.

The activities of MED CRUISE would be closely co-ordinated with other joint cruises planned for 1978.

2.3 Geographic area to be covered

The MED CRUISE programme would primarily concentrate on the international waters of the Mediterranean Sea. The final selection of the areas to be studied would be based on the need for meaningful data from zones for which data are missing or are not well enough known.

Coastal waters of the Mediterranean would be covered only at the specific, official request of Mediterranean countries, describing the type of monitoring and research activities needed and specifying any other requirements that might have to be met.

2.4 Research and monitoring that could be accomplished

The basic scientific programme of the MED CRUISE would consist of:

collection of environmental samples (sea-water, biota, sediments) for analysing the levels of selected pollutants; the type of samples and pollutants to be analysed would be selected in such a way as to provide complementary data to the data collected in the framework of the MED PDL pilot projects,

measurement of basic hydrographic parameters and making basic meteorological observations relevant to the assessment of the fate of pollutants in the Mediterranean.

2.5 On-board training possibilities

The value of the MED CRUISE as a first-class training opportunity, in particular for scientists from less developed countries, is at least of equal importance to the scientific programme of the cruise. Therefore a carefully planned training programme would be prepared as an integral part of the MED CRUISE scientific programme.

2.6 Logistic requirements

A Steering Committee would be created consisting of a small number of Mediterranean scientists and of representatives of UNEP and the specialized United Nations bodies (IAEA, FAO/GFCM, IDC, WMD) interested in supporting

the MED CRUISE. One of the specialized United Nations bodies would be selected as the "lead organization" and would act as the overall co-ordinator for MED CRUISE.

The task of the Steering Committee would be to outline the:

- (a) objectives
- (b) scope
- (c) geographic area to be covered
- (d) research and monitoring that could be accomplished
- (e) on-board training facilities
- (f) tentative cruise programme and grid of stations
- (g) logistic requirements, including a budget projection

of the planned MED CRUISE.

The outline would be distributed to the principal investigators of the MED POL pilot projects inviting their comments and suggestions for the improvement of the outline. Taking into account the comments and suggestions received, the Steering Committee would prepare the final draft outline to be submitted to the Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mediterranean Action Plan (Monaco, November/December 1977) for the Meeting's consideration and eventual endorsement.

If the MED CRUISE outline were endorsed by the Intergovernmental Meeting, UNEP would start negotiating the charter of an adequate research vessel and the Steering Committee would be transformed into the MED CRUISE Co-ordinating Committee charged with the task of implementing the agreed MED CRUISE programme during 1978.

3. SUMMARY

A Mediterranean ship-programme seems highly desirable and feasible, particularly in the shape of a joint cruise of participants in the MED POL pilot projects. It would substantially contribute to the assessment of the state of pollution in the Mediterranean and would provide an excellent opportunity for training scientists in open-water monitoring and research techniques.