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Plan Bleu's National Focal Points Meeting

By videoconference, 19-20 May 2021

Agenda Item 5: Integrating Climate Change as a priority

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Introductory note

This working document presents the mandates received by Plan Bleu/RAC from Contracting Parties up to and during COP21, for activities related to adaptation to climate change, in particular through support to the MedECC network; the up-to-date achievements of Plan Bleu/RAC to implement these mandates; proposed follow-up activities for the next biennium.

Agenda for Plan Bleu's Focal Points meeting:

The Focal Points will be invited to provide comments and suggestions on the next steps during the current biennium up to the COP22; as well as on the proposed activities for the next biennium, in relation with the topic of adaptation to climate change. The Focal Points might agree on formalized recommendations on this topic as outcomes of the meeting.

1. Plan Bleu's mandates

1. One of the missions of Plan Bleu / UNEP/MAP Regional Activity Center is monitoring the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development. The Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) 2016-2025 identifies, under its Objective 4 "*Addressing Climate Change as a Priority Issue for the Mediterranean*", the establishment of "*a regional science-policy interface mechanism (...) with a view to preparing consolidated regional scientific assessments and guidance on climate change trends, impacts and adaptation and mitigation options*" as a regional Flagship Initiative. The network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC) materializes this MSSD Flagship Initiative.

2. In Decision IG.19/5 "Mandates of the components of MAP", Annex II, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention assigned a leadership role to Plan Bleu concerning activities on climate change carried out within the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system.

3. The Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas also called for "*Better informed decision-making through research and scientific cooperation and availability and use of reliable data, information and tools*" (Strategic Objective 4) through "strengthening the science-policy interface and the accessibility of related knowledge".

4. The UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy (MTS) 2016-2021 identifies Climate Change Adaptation as one of its cross-cutting themes, setting the objective to better understand climate change impacts as a condition to strengthen resilience. To reach this objective, the MTS highlights the necessity to strengthen the interface between science and policy-making through enhanced cooperation with scientific institutions (Key Output 1.4.4).

5. The Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols at their 21st Meeting expressed their appreciation to the "*progress being made by the network of Mediterranean experts on climate and environmental change (MedECC) on the first assessment report on the current state and risks of climate and environmental changes in the Mediterranean (MARI)*" (Decision IG.24/4)", approved "*the Roadmap for the Consultation of Decision-Makers and Stakeholders on the First Assessment Report on the Current State and Risks of Climate and Environmental Changes in the Mediterranean*" (Annex IV to the Decision IG.24/4), and included the following further activities in the Plan of Work adopted during COP21:

- Line 1.4.4.1 Main activities: *Implement, sustain, and strengthen the mechanism to assist Barcelona Convention implementation with scientific institutions and promote their*

participation in research and development activities and facilitate transfer of technology / Expected deliverables: f) Assessment report on Environmental and Climate Change Drivers and Risks and Summary for Policy-Makers discussed, finalized and disseminated.

- Line 7.5.1.1 Main activities: *Improve the adaptation of existing tools such as Imagine to engage stakeholders on climate change adaptation strategies. / Expected deliverables: a) Climagine method (integrating climate change issues in the Imagine participatory approach) developed and implemented on several coastal sites; b) Case studies published and disseminated; c) Climagine implementation guide prepared and disseminated.*
- Line 7.5.1.2 Main activities: *Promote regional dialogue on climate change impacts and adaptation strategies / Expected deliverables: a) Regional actors better informed of the impacts of climate change; b) Scientific results, lessons learned and best practices on adaptation strategies shared.*

6. Plan Bleu / RAC works in partnership with the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean to support MedECC in the framework of their agreements. The 1st agreement covered the 2018-2020 period. The second partnership convention to support MedECC covers the 2021-2023 period.

7. Furthermore, the UNEP/MAP Bureau in its 90th meeting (13 November 2020) issued the following outcome: *"The Bureau notes with appreciation the successful collaboration between UNEP/MAP and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) regarding the network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC) and its First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) to be issued in November 2020, and urges the Contracting Parties to provide their support to the completion of the important MAR1 report and its Summary for Policy Makers, in view of its possible endorsement at COP 22."*

8. Article 22 of the ICZM Protocol states *"... [the Parties] shall undertake vulnerability and hazard assessments of coastal zones and take prevention, mitigation and adaptation measures to address the effects of natural disasters, in particular of climate change"*.

2. Elements of context

9. The network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC) was launched during a side event organized at the Conference 'Our Common Future under Climate Change' (CFCC) in Paris, (France) in July 2015. MedECC is an open and independent network of scientists working towards a regional science-policy interface for climatic and other environmental changes across the Mediterranean. MedECC scientists are based in 35 countries, including 19 Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and 23 countries that are members of the Union for the Mediterranean.

10. MedECC as a voluntary initiative has a loose governance framework, composed of a Steering Committee and represented by 2 scientific coordinators. Recent exchanges within the Steering Committee pointed to the need to formalize the governance framework while maintaining the scientific independence of the network.

11. The objectives of MedECC are to prepare scientifically robust assessments of the risks associated with climate and environmental change in the Mediterranean Basin, based on published research; and to serve as a regional science-policy interface on climate and environmental change in the Mediterranean, approved by policymakers.

12. MedECC is financially supported in part by Plan Bleu/RAC (via the Mediterranean Trust Fund), and in part by external funding, the larger share from the budget coming from the Union for the Mediterranean, complemented by contributions from the Government of the Principality of Monaco, the French Ministry for Ecological Transition, the Government of Catalonia (Spain),

ADEME (France), Aix-Marseille University (France), the French National Institute of Research for Sustainable Development (IRD), MISTRALS Research Programme, and Aix-Marseille Provence Métropole (France).

13. The last Meeting of Plan Bleu's Focal Points (Marseille, France, 28-29 May 2019) highlighted the importance of MAR1 for all MAP policies, as climate change interacts with most themes of MAP interest. They recommended a broad consultation process of all MAP components and their Focal Points to be organized by the Secretariat (Plan Bleu) in collaboration with the MedECC Scientific Steering Committee and Secretariat.

3. Main achievements in 2020 – 2021

3.1. Support to the Science – Policy Interface on Climate Change (activity 1.4.4.1)

14. In the framework of the approved roadmap for the consultation of decision makers and stakeholders, as per Annex IV to the Decision IG.24/4, a two-step process of consultation was proposed: *“i) MAP Components, their Focal Points and MCSD Members will be invited to participate in the review of the Final Draft and its Summary for Policy-Makers, tentatively planned in February 2020; and, ii) discussion on the Summary for Policy-Makers in Spring 2020, pending confirmation of available budget. During the plenary discussion findings reported in the SPM will be discussed to ensure clarity and full justification”*. The online consultation with policymakers, governments, decision makers and stakeholders on the Summary for Policymakers (SPM) of the 1st Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) was held between April and June 2020. The full MAR1 was also shared as a supporting document. As a result of the consultation, the MedECC Secretariat received completed sheets with comments from 21 governments, decision makers, stakeholders and partners (10 from national Focal Points of Plan Bleu and UfM and 11 from partner organisations). In total, the MedECC Secretariat received 453 comments on the SPM (268 on the substance and 185 editorial comments) and 196 comments on MAR1.

15. The revised SPM was discussed during a dedicated MAR1 plenary consultation, which was held on 22 September 2020 (online because of the COVID pandemic). The specific aim of the plenary consultation was to ascertain that MAR1 findings, as presented in the SPM, are fully comprehensible and unambiguous and that the remarks from the online consultation were well integrated. This meeting gathered more than 100 participants. It was attended by representatives from 15 countries. This event was an important step in reinforcing the science-policy dialogue. The agreed changes were implemented in the SPM. At the end of the meeting, the conclusions and recommendations were adopted.¹

16. MedECC plays an important role in the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), as it contributes to the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6). The AR6 will include a cross-chapter paper dedicated for the first time to the Mediterranean. It will be prepared under the leadership of one of MedECC's coordinators, ensuring a strong synergy across assessment reports.

17. MedECC contributed to the report on the State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean 2020 (SoED) (UNEP/MAP and Plan Bleu) by co-piloting the chapter on climate change.

18. Plan Bleu has been hosting the MedECC secretariat since May 2018. During the period from May 2018 to December 2020, the MedECC Secretariat was mainly funded by the UfM through financial support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Since

¹ <https://www.medecc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Medecc-Plenary-recommendations.pdf>

January 2021, it is funded by Plan Bleu / RAC. In March 2021 the association statutes of Plan Bleu have been modified through a General Assembly resolution to acknowledge this change in activities and responsibilities. The following sentence was added: “The Center hosts the scientific secretariat of the network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC) and supports all of its activities in relation to partner institutions and in accordance with the decisions of the MedECC Steering Committee.”

19. Plan Bleu/RAC pursues its efforts to raise funds to ensure continuity of the activity. A first result was obtained through the signature of an agreement between Plan Bleu/RAC and UfM for coordinated support to MedECC for the 2021 – 2023 period.

3.2 Improve the adaptation of existing tools such as Imagine to engage stakeholders on climate change adaptation strategies (activity 7.5.1.1)

20. During the 2020-2021 biennium, Plan Bleu focused its efforts on organizing a technical meeting regarding the lessons learnt from the implementation of the Climagine methodology, held on 15th February 2021. The objectives of the meeting were to lay the ground for the future implementation of Climagine in 2 pilot sites (in Morocco and Montenegro) within the frame of the GEF MedProgramme, in collaboration with PAP/RAC and the development of ICZM strategies and plans. The meeting zoomed in on the lessons learnt from the implementation of the Climagine participatory method in the two demonstration pilot cases from 2013 to 2015 (Kerkennah Archipelago, Tunisia and Šibenik-Knin County, Croatia). In the second half of 2021, 2 consultants will be tasked with producing an intermediate Climagine status report, based on the Climagine experience during the past period. The reports (10 pages maximum, available in English and French) will inform the updating process of Climagine in the context of MedProgramme’s activities. A Climagine Guide for ICZM Practitioners will be drafted by 2025.

3.3 Promote regional dialogue on Climate Change impacts and adaptation strategies (activity 7.5.1.2)

21. The 1st Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) was released in November 2020 during the Med2020 online conference. 190 authors from 25 countries participated in drafting the report. The SPM has been translated to French, Arabic, Spanish and Catalan. The infographic presenting the main results has been produced. Several press articles highlighted the publication of the MAR1.²

22. MedECC was awarded with the 2020 North-South Prize of the Council of Europe for “*its efforts to address climate change and biodiversity conservation in the Mediterranean and in particular by drafting the first-ever scientific assessment on climate and environmental changes impacts in the Mediterranean Basin*”.

23. MedECC was presented during an e-workshop organized by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) in collaboration with the UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit on 14 December 2020. During the One Planet Summit, held on 11 January 2021, the French Minister of Ecological Transition, Barbara Pompili, quoted MedECC and its results. On 29 January 2021, the meeting of MedECC with Hugo Moran Fernandez (Secretary of State for the Environment, Spain) and Valvanera Ulargui (Director General, Spanish Climate Change Office) was held and resulted in the decision to consider the results of MAR1 in the Spanish National Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

² <https://www.medecc.org/media/>

24. MedECC communicates on its activities through its website, its mailing list (more than 700 subscribers), a quarterly newsletter and Twitter. The MAR1 webpage has been consulted more than 14,400 times since the publication of the report in November 2020. The atlas of maps³ of projected seasonal temperature and precipitation changes has also been prepared (and translated to French). The online platform on local initiatives and publications⁴ related to the climate and environmental changes in the Mediterranean has been developed.

25. Reference to MedECC and MAR1 is envisaged in the draft 2nd Ministerial Declaration of the UfM on Environment and Climate Action, as well as in the Action Plan 2021-2025 of the UfM CCEG.

26. The next steps towards broader political recognition of MedECC include submitting the SPM in 2021 for possible endorsement to the next UfM Ministerial meeting, currently scheduled in 2021 in Cairo (Egypt). As per the outcomes of the 90th meeting of the UNEP/MAP Bureau, it is also envisaged to submit the SPM for possible endorsement to the 22nd Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP 22).

27. Plan Bleu has been a partner in the implementation of the Mediterranean Climate Change Adaptation Awards organized by the French Agency for Ecological Transition (ADEME) rewarding the best achievements (exemplary and concrete actions) in the field of adaptation to climate change in the Mediterranean. During the 1st edition (2016), Plan Bleu, as a member of the technical jury, participated in the selection of the nominee for group 2 entitled “Ecosystems and natural resources”. For the 2nd edition held in 2019, 3 groups were also proposed and Plan Bleu participated in the selection of nominees for two categories (1. Ecosystems and natural resources; 2. Methods for designing and implementing public policies).

28. After the success of the last two editions, ADEME and its Mediterranean partners, the Union for the Mediterranean and Plan Bleu/RAC launched on 20 January 2021 the new edition of the Mediterranean Climate Change Adaptation Awards. Plan Bleu will participate in the selection of the nominees as a member of the technical jury for 3 categories (1. Resilient facilities and infrastructure; 2. Preservation of ecosystems and nature-based solutions; 3. Designing, implementing and monitoring public policies) and as far as possible in the steering committees and in the launching and awarding workshops.

29. In order to ensure MedECC’s visibility among all Mediterranean countries, Plan Bleu/RAC proposes a side-event during COP 22. The theme of the side-event will be adaptation to climate change and the agenda will include a presentation of the Mediterranean Climate Change Adaptation Awards process.

4. Proposals of activities 2022 – 2023

30. In the proposed Programme of Work 2022-2023, under Programme 3. *Towards a Climate Resilient Mediterranean*, Outcome 3.4. *Better understanding and knowledge of climate change and its impacts on environment and development*, Activity 1 *Develop and provide policy recommendations to address thematic impacts of climate change*, three outputs are proposed, aiming at deepening the analysis of MAR1 on specific topics:

- a. Output 1: *MedECC Report on adaptation in coastal zones, based on literature review, issued (2022)*,

³ <https://www.medecc.org/atlas/>

⁴ <https://www.medecc.org/organisation/local-initiatives/>

- b. Output 2: *MedECC Report on climate change and water - energy- food - ecosystems management at watershed level, based on literature review, issued (2022),*
- c. Output 3: *MedECC Report on environment, conflicts and migration, based on literature review, issued (2023).*

31. Other goals for the near future include broader communication on the results of MAR1, the identification of knowledge gaps and reinforcing the network and capacity-building in the South and the East of the Mediterranean, to improve the geographical balance among future MedECC contributors and to further strengthen the science-policy interface.