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34th Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel

Sophia-Antipolis, France, 5-7 February 2018

Report of the Meeting

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2018

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I. Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting

1. The 34th Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel (ECP) was held on 5-7 February 2018, hosted by Plan Bleu/RAC, in Sophia-Antipolis, France. 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 Consultant for the implementation of the bilateral agreement with the Government of Italy attended the relevant sessions of the meeting. The list of participants is presented in Annex I to this report.

2. Mr. Gaetano Leone, UNEP/MAP Coordinator opened the meeting at 16.00 on 5 February 2018 and introduced the provisional agenda.

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 20, highlighting its key outcomes and expressing his overall satisfaction for the meeting. He noted that the 34th ECP meeting will focus on the main tasks for the biennium 2018-2019 and in particular for its first year.

4. The meeting reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda prepared by the Secretariat, as in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED ECP.34/1.

III. Agenda item 3: PoW 2018-2019: Major Assignments and Strategic Priorities for 2018

5. The Coordinator introduced the major assignments and strategic priorities for 2018 as they stem from the Programme of Work and Budget (PoW) for 2018-2019 (Decision IG.23/14) as well as from the other decisions adopted at COP 20. He stressed that the work for the implementation of the PoW has already started and that the first milestone is the 85th Bureau meeting, set to take place on 18-19 April 2018, in Athens, Greece. He noted that this is a very important biennium, since the system has stabilized and has the capacity to deliver; at the end of the current biennium the process of preparation of the next Mid-Term Strategy will start. He highlighted the following key aspects:

- Emphasis on impact, efficient planning and implementation (noting also the role of the Compliance Committee)
- Working together in coordinated manner, both within the MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat (stressing the fundamental role of the MAP Components) as well as with Contracting Parties and partners
- Information and communication, where substantial progress is needed
- Focus on substantive issues, such as biodiversity (CBD post 2020 strategy, fisheries, effects of marine litter), integrated coastal zone management-marine spatial planning, sustainable consumption and production, assessments

6. The members of the ECP discussed the priorities of the biennium, highlighting aspects of importance, such as data and information management, outreach and visibility, partnerships, the use of assessments for communication purposes, compliance under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, fundraising, the use of indicators, and the link between different assessment reports. Each MAP Component presented the main priorities for the biennium, which were sent to the Coordinating Unit before the meeting and compiled to a consolidated meeting document.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
1.	Preparation of list with reporting requirements for MAP Components	Coordinating Unit	Mid-February 2018

IV. Agenda item 4: Preparation of 2018-2019 Planning and Priority Tables

7. The Coordinator introduced the agenda item, noting that the discussion will focus on the most important activities and especially those that require the involvement of all MAP Components. He also stressed that the Planning and Priorities Tables for 2018-2019 need to be timely prepared by all MAP Components and sent to the Coordinating Unit.

8. The meeting discussed the main priorities for the biennium, based on the mandate provided by the COP 20 decisions, as presented in the document on “processes and actions mandated by COP 20 decisions” prepared by the Coordinating Unit.

9. Items highlighted during the discussion, also in view of the 85th Bureau meeting, included the preparation of the updated communication strategy, the Joint Cooperation Strategy, the preparation of the Thematic Focal Points meeting for SPA/BD, the Host Country Agreements for RACs, the 2nd phase of the Simplified Peer Review process under the MSSD 2016-2025, the follow-up to the IMAP decisions, the preparation of Pollution Reduction Regional Plans, the preparation of the Regional Framework on ICZM / Conceptual Framework on MSP, and the need to strengthen efforts to expand the list of SPAMIs.

10. In relation to the mandates originating from decisions of COP 19, the meeting discussed the need to prepare an analysis of synergies between all existing databases and platforms within the MAP system. It was also noted that there is a lack of clarity on the timing of the mid-term evaluation of the Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production and of the mid-term review of the status of implementation of the MSSD 2016-2025. Although the text of the decision refers to COP 21, other references in the decisions and their annexes indicate that such evaluations should be presented to COP 22, which is also in-line with the cycle of the Mid-Term Strategy. The meeting agreed to bring this issue the attention of the Bureau for further guidance.

11. The meeting decided that the Planning and Priority Tables will be submitted every six months (i.e. 15 January, 15 July), while *ad hoc* reporting on three-month basis will take place in cases of delayed implementation.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
2.	Preparation of Planning and Priorities Tables of 2018-2019	MAP Components and Coordinating Unit	20 February 2018
3.	Updated document on processes and actions mandated by COP 20 decisions (including comments/actions, where appropriate)	Coordinating Unit (to send to all MAP Components)	Mid-February 2018
4.	Preparation of a vision/concept note on Information Systems for all MAP Components (incl. type of databases, what data are available, etc)	INFO/RAC	June 2018
5.	Inform the Bureau on the dates of the mid-term evaluation of the Action Plan on SCP and of the Mid-term review of the status of implementation of the MSSD 2016-2025	MAP Secretariat	85 th Bureau meeting/April 2018

V. Agenda item 5: Calendar of Meetings and Main Events for 2018-2019

12. The MAP Programme Officer introduced the calendar of meetings and main events for 2018-2019, as described in information document UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.23/Inf.13 submitted to COP 20.

13. The MAP Components updated briefly the ECP on their upcoming events. Furthermore, the meeting also discussed the timing of the MCSD meeting and of the MAP Components' Focal Points meetings. It was decided that the Secretariat will update the Bureau on the timing of meetings and on the possible challenges, and will ask for its guidance.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
6.	Updates on the tentative calendar of UNEP/MAP meetings and major international events	MAP Components	20 February 2018
7.	Inform Bureau on timing of meetings in second semester of 2019, and ask for its guidance	Secretariat	85 th Bureau meeting/April 2018

VI. Agenda item 6: Process and Timetable for the 2019 SoED and MED 2050

14. The Coordinator briefly introduced the issue, with reference to Decision IG.23/4, adopted at COP 20, and its Annex II, emphasizing the shared responsibility of all MAP Components for the preparation of these assessment products. The Director of the Plan Bleu Regional Activity Centre made a very detailed presentation of the preparations for the 2019 Report on the State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean (SoED), including on the process and timeline, and presented the draft table of contents of the report. She noted that the report will include two deliverables: the full report and a shorter version/executive summary for decision-makers.

15. The meeting welcomed the process and timeline, noting that it is a very challenging and important task which indeed requires the involvement of all MAP Components. Participants provided comments and inputs to the process, timeline and content, while they also discussed the links with other reports, such as the MED QSR and the MED 2050. The INFO/RAC representatives have asked for further clarifications on the process and procedure for the development of indicators and for the data sets to be used. They have also asked for further information to consider this as a "Use Case" to drive the InfoMap data integration.

16. The Director of the Plan Bleu Regional Activity Centre also presented the timeline and process for the MED 2050 report, noting the importance of developing trends and scenarios for the Mediterranean region, since the last such report was prepared in 2005. She explained that 35 relevant studies in the Mediterranean have been benchmarked and that the MED 2050 report will compare and discuss various futures for the Mediterranean region.

17. The meeting welcomed the process, noting that its timeline should be fine-tuned to feed the new Mid-Term Strategy. The members of the ECP agreed that a Steering committee, where all MAP Components are represented, will be very useful in preparing the report.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
8.	Contribution to the preparation of the 2019 SoED report (and inclusion in MAP Components' Project Documents)	All MAP Components	Continuous 2018/2019
9.	Preparation of synthesis of discussion on 2019 SoED report and updated Table of Contents	Plan Bleu/RAC	End of February 2018
10.	Establishment of Steering Committee for the preparation of MED 2050 report	All MAP Components	Linked to timeline of MED 2050 report

VII. Agenda item 7: Bilateral Cooperation Agreement with Italy: Project Fiches

18. The Deputy Coordinator introduced the agenda item and facilitated the discussion of each Project Fiche. The discussion was based on the consolidated document prepared by the Secretariat, in view of the bilateral meeting with the representatives of the Government of Italy that would take place back-to-back with the ECP meeting, on the afternoon of Wednesday, 7 February.

19. The members of the ECP discussed the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement with Italy and provided their comments and inputs on the Project Fiches. It was noted that the goal of the meeting with the representatives of the Government of Italy was to finalize the Project Fiches; then, the process of receiving the voluntary contribution from Italy could be initiated.

VIII. Agenda item 8: Date and Venue of the 35th ECP meeting

20. The ECP discussed the date and the venue of its 35th meeting, and agreed to hold the meeting in Split, Croatia, on 27-28 September 2018, back-to-back with the Coast Day celebration and the meeting of the Working Group on the Regional Framework for Integrated Coastal Zone Management. Thus, the ECP meeting will be also linked with the celebration for the 40 years Anniversary of PAP/RAC.

IX. Agenda item 9: Any Other Matters

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

22. The Coordinator updated the ECP on the preparation and on the needed inputs in view of the 85th Meeting of the Bureau, set to take place on 18-19 April 2018, in Athens, Greece.

23. The Director of REMPEC suggested that the agenda of each ECP meeting should leave adequate time to be dedicated to bilateral discussions, since it presents an excellent opportunity for face-to-face interaction. The meeting agreed with this suggestion.

24. The directors of the Regional Activity Centres raised the issue of finding appropriate ways to address the need for strengthening the structures of the RACs. Reference was made to the increased mandates of the MAP system as well as to the possibility of an increase to the salaries of the staff of the RACs. During the discussion it was also noted that RACs have different situations. It was agreed that inputs for the development of a shared position and of a paper containing arguments in support of higher contributions to the operational costs of the RACs will be prepared by the RACs and shared among all MAP Components, and that approximately two weeks later a teleconference will be organized to discuss consolidation and to propose next steps. Inputs provided by the RACs would include current size, functioning, staff, salaries, increases in mandate, challenges faced and budget needs to face difficulties.

25. The Deputy Coordinator informed the meeting on the workshop that will take place in the EEA Headquarters in Copenhagen, on 26-27 February 2018, which will present a very good opportunity for an exchange of views and best practices in relation to the assessment mandates.

26. Finally, the Director of SPA/RAC informed the meeting that there is a need to sign a short amendment on the Centre's Host Country Agreement, to address a change in the way that the contribution from Tunisia is received.

27. The meeting was closed by the Coordinator at 13:00 on 7 February 2018.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
11.	Inputs for 85 th Bureau meeting on: (a) Tentative calendar of UNEP/MAP meetings and major international events, (b) updates of Project Fiches, (c) update on the status of Host Country Agreements and challenges faced	All MAP Components	20 February 2018
12.	Inputs for 85 th Bureau meeting to: (a) Progress Report, (b) Progress Report COP 20 Implementation (colour coded table), and (c) Report on Specific issues	All MAP Components	28 February 2018
13.	Concept note with timeline for the preparation of the updated communication strategy	INFO/RAC	End-February/Early-March 2018
14.	Inputs on needs for strengthening RAC structures	All RACs	15 April 2018
15.	Teleconference to discuss needs for strengthening RAC structures	All MAP Components	Beginning of May 2018

Annex I

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