



---

---

---

---

---

---

# **United Nations Environment Programme**



UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.127/Inf.3  
16 May 1997

Original: ENGLISH

---

## **MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN**

Meeting of MED POL National Coordinators

Delphi, Greece, 20-23 May 1997

### **PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MED POL (July 1996-May 1997)**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
1. Implementation of MED POL Phase III	1
2. Pollution assessment	1 - 4
3. Pollution control	4 - 6

## **Introduction**

This document contains information on the implementation of the activities related to MED POL, including the LBS Protocol and Dumping Protocol, since the Meeting of the Contracting Parties held in Montpellier in July 1996. It is submitted to the attention of the MED POL Coordinators for information and comments.

### **1. Implementation of MED POL Phase III**

Extensive work was carried out by the Secretariat in order to prepare the basis for the implementation of the MED POL Phase III Programme adopted in Montpellier. A letter was sent in February 1997 to all MED POL National Coordinators presenting the ideas of the Secretariat in relation to the implementation of the approved Programme and asking for comments. In addition, since the adoption of the Programme, several contacts were made with authorities and scientists of the region to exchange opinions on the various aspects of the future Programme. The XXX Meeting of the Inter-Agency Advisory Committee for MED POL was also held in Athens from 9 to 11 December 1996 to review the activities implemented in 1996 and to discuss and prepare the work for the implementation of Phase III. As a result of the above, the Secretariat prepared document UNEP(OCA)MED WG.127/3 containing proposals concerning the line of work and the modalities of implementation of the Programme which is submitted to this Meeting for comments, amendments and approval.

In particular, as part of the Pollution Assessment component of MED POL Phase III, the Secretariat worked on the compilation of a draft operational document for the pollution trend monitoring. Several contacts were made with scientists, experts in the field, from and outside the region and a small consultation meeting was held in Athens on 10-11 April in order to formulate a programme which would take into account the experience gained from other programmes and which would, at the same time, take into consideration the specific needs of the region. The draft operational document for the monitoring of trends of pollution is presented to this Meeting as document UNEP(OCA)MED WG.127/4 for comments and approval.

As part of the Pollution Control component of MED POL Phase III, the Secretariat, with the assistance of experts of the region, worked on the compilation of a draft operational document for the compliance monitoring. The document was prepared and is presented to this Meeting as document UNEP(OCA)MED WG.127/5 for comments and approval.

### **2. Pollution assessment**

#### Monitoring activities

With regard to the implementation of the national monitoring programmes, in view of the very limited funds available, during 1996 only one agreement was finalised for Malta (40,000 US \$) and limited assistance was given to Algeria (3,500 US \$) and Egypt (13,500 US \$) in the framework of their respective data quality assurance programmes. Instruments for airborne pollution monitoring were purchased for Morocco (11,500 US \$). One expert mission was made by an WMO expert to Morocco for the establishment of a pollution airborne monitoring station.

### Training and Fellowships

As in the past, training was provided to MED POL participants to upgrade their participation in the different monitoring and data quality assurance activities. In addition, travel grants were provided to MED POL participants to attend scientific meetings and workshops where they presented the results of their work and exchanged data and information. As a result, in 1996 51 scientists from 13 Mediterranean countries benefited from this assistance component.

### Biomonitoring

With reference to Biological Effects monitoring, this component was initiated in 1996 on a pilot scale with the long-term aim of assessing the effects of pollution on the marine ecosystem. The programme started with the participation of 11 laboratories from 8 countries and with training offered to additional laboratories to develop and apply one or more of the four recommended techniques (metallothioneins, EROD, lysosomal membrane stability and DNA alkaline elution technique). An intercalibration exercise was also initiated through the University of Genoa for metallothioneins and lysosomal membrane stability. The results of this pilot phase are at present being examined and will be evaluated by a review meeting planned to take place in 1997. The intention of the Secretariat is to propose that, once all the details of the programme are agreed upon, biomonitoring is included, on a country by country basis, in the national monitoring programmes. It is expected that by the end of 1998 an agreement will be reached on the details of the programme.

### Data processing

The two-year project "Enhancement of Data Processing Facilities for Environmental Data at the Coordinating Unit for the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MEDU)", which had been signed in 1994 between UNEP/MAP and the Italian Government, was formally completed in December 1996 with a final closure meeting that took place in Rome, Italy, on 6 March 1997. The Italian Government provided the main funding of this project (US\$ 312,000) and the Laboratory of Marine Biology (LMB) of the University of Trieste was designated as the supporting and cooperating organization. The LMB provided the scientific expertise by seconding a full-time Data Analyst to Athens for the entire duration of the project, and the International Centre for Science and High Technology (ICS) of Trieste provided a part-time Scientific Advisor.

The three main objectives of the project were: a) to strengthen UNEP/MAP with additional scientific know-how and technology, hardware equipment and software in order to upgrade handling of the MED POL marine pollution data (collection, computerization, verification, analysis, and presentation); b) to improve UNEP/MAP capabilities in marine pollution data processing and analysis; c) to improve regional cooperation and transfer the acquired know-how to Mediterranean Institutes.

With the completion of this project, the following was achieved: a) MEDU PC hardware was upgraded, and the users were trained on the use of Windows and various other PC software; b) the MED POL marine pollution data at MEDU was computerized and maintained in a database constructed using PC ORACLE software; c) computerized MED POL data were analysed to provide information on the quantity of data, strategy of monitoring activity and statistics on contamination; d) a training course on handling, processing, interpretation and presentation of Mediterranean marine pollution data was jointly organized by LMB, UNEP/MAP and ICS at the International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste, Italy, 11-16 December 1995; it was attended by 22 technical officers and scientists from the Mediterranean region; e) Geographic Information System/desktop mapping (GIS/DM) and desktop publishing (DTP) were established at MEDU; and f) MEDU was connected to Internet in December 1994

with the purchase of high-speed MODEMs from project funds (as a follow-up to the project, a major study on UNEP/MAP's Internet connection and home-page setup is now underway and will be finalized before the summer 1997).

The project was instrumental for MED POL to improving on a permanent basis the existing database and, for the duration of the project, to enhance the capability to process and statistically analyse monitoring data which is considered essential for the future implementation of the trend and compliance monitoring activities of MED POL Phase III. The various aspects of the project and its outputs were presented at several meetings of Mediterranean countries where the overall value of the project for MAP/MED POL was underlined.

#### Data Quality Assurance, Intercalibration, Maintenance and Reference Methods

Since the Contracting Parties' Meeting held in Montpellier in July 1996, the Data Quality Assurance activities continued to be implemented. One group training course on determination of trace metals, organized by IAEA/MEL, was held in Monaco in November/December 1996, which was attended by six participants from five countries. Under the supervision of IAEA/MEL, one DQA mission was made to one country to perform monitoring and analysis of organochlorine pesticides and missions to additional three countries are planned for 1997. In the framework of data quality assurance for the monitoring of airborne pollution, certified reference samples were purchased by WMO, at no cost to MED POL, for the participating laboratories to improve the quality of analyses of contaminants in precipitation samples. Two intercomparisons exercises (sea plant omogenate for trace metals) were achieved by IAEA/MEL and a third exercise (coastal sediment for pesticides, chlorinated and petroleum hydrocarbons, PCBs and sterols) was commenced. The bank of reference materials and calibration standards for organic contaminants and trace metals stored at IAEA/MEL in Monaco continued to be developed also in cooperation with GESREM. The standards are available cost-free to all MED POL participating institutes. Maintenance and installation missions related to the MED POL instruments were implemented by the IAEA/MEL Engineer to 13 institutes from six countries. Missions to two additional countries have also been scheduled in 1997. In view of the termination of the post of Maintenance Engineer scheduled for June 1997, a report is being prepared on the possible alternatives for maintenance of the MED POL instruments based on commercial services available in the various countries. Eight reference methods were prepared or revised by IAEA in cooperation with IOC and FAO.

#### Research

On the basis of the research proposals submitted to the Secretariat, by the end of 1996 there were 42 ongoing projects covering the research areas related to pollution assessment:

Research area I (Development and testing of methodologies for the characterization and measurement of specific contaminants)

Projects completed in 1996: 2

Projects ongoing: 10

Total financial assistance: US \$ 20,500

Research area II (Study of the physical, chemical and biological mechanisms of the pollutants' transport from the sources to the repository)

Projects completed in 1996: 3

Projects ongoing: 10

Total financial assistance: US \$ 8,000

Research area IV (Study of the fate of contaminants, including micro-organisms, in the marine environment, i.e. survival, degradation, transformation, bioaccumulation, etc.)

Projects completed in 1996: -

Projects ongoing: 16

Total financial assistance: US \$ 19,000

Research area VI (Eutrophication and plankton blooms case studies)

Projects completed in 1996: 3

Projects ongoing: 6

Total financial assistance: US \$ 10,000.

Information of the research projects relevant to pollution control are given under chapter 3. of this document.

### **3. Pollution control**

#### Barcelona Resolution

In the framework of the implementation of point 6. of the Barcelona Resolution, regarding toxic, persistent and liable to bioaccumulate substances, a Meeting was organized in Marseille from 2 to 4 October 1996 in cooperation with the Industry and Environment Office of UNEP in Paris and with the financial support of the French Government. The scope of the Meeting, which was attended by more than 90 experts from and outside the Mediterranean, representatives of the industry and NGOs, was to assist in the identification and the formulation of methods, programmes and timetables for the elimination by the year 2000 of the greatest number of substances which are toxic, persistent and liable to bioaccumulate. The results of the Meeting are being used by the Secretariat for the formulation of the activities related to the implementation of the LBS Protocol. The report of the Meeting will soon be prepared and will be distributed to all National Coordinators.

#### LBS Protocol

In order to prepare the necessary basis and facilitate the implementation of the provisions of the LBS Protocol amended in Siracusa in March 1996, immediately after the Conference of Plenipotentiaries which adopted the revised text, the Secretariat submitted a proposal for a grant to the GEF Secretariat, for the formulation of a Strategic Action Programme to address pollution from land-based activities. The proposal was approved and the activities started in 1997.

The activities include the formulation of a costed and targeted Strategic Action Programme to address pollution from land-based activities as well as Guidelines for the preparation of national action plans. The Programme is to be prepared on the basis of (1) a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis of the major Mediterranean environmental problems of transboundary significance which will include the identification of the problems, their causes and the identification and cost of remedial actions and (b) a Report on the priority pollution "Hot Spots" and sensitive areas to be identified country by country. The Strategic Action Programme will also include an investment portfolio which will be examined by a Donors' Conference who will consider the possibility to launch a full project in 1998.

MED POL was assigned the responsibility of the overall coordination of the project while WHO was asked to be technically responsible for the preparation of the Report on the pollution "Hot Spots".

A letter was sent on 24 October 1996 to all MAP Focal Points to inform them of the launching of the project and to ask them to designate national Focal Points for the coordination of the project. All MAP Focal Points were also asked to examine the possibility to establish inter-ministry committees in view of the multidisciplinary nature of the project. As at May 1997 only two countries have not yet nominated National Coordinators.

A first Meeting of the project's Steering Group, composed of MAP/MED POL, GEF Coordination Unit in Nairobi, UNDP and World Bank, was held in Athens in January 1997 to agree on the overall implementation strategy and on the selection of the regional experts in charge of the preparation of the various documents. An Ad hoc Consultation Meeting was also held in January 1997 to discuss with the experts and to agree on the first draft outlines of the documents. Three National Coordinators (at the time of the Consultation only very few Coordinators had been nominated) also attended the Consultation (see document UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.123/2).

The activities related to the preparation of the report on the priority pollution "Hot Spots", coordinated by WHO, are being carried out in close cooperation with the designated National Coordinators to the project and with the assistance of a number of experts from the region. The background documentation, including questionnaires, definition and methodology were prepared by WHO and were discussed and approved at the above mentioned Ad hoc Consultation Meeting held in Athens in January 1997. In spite of the very short time available, national reports on priority pollution "Hot Spots" and sensitive areas were prepared by the National Coordinators with the assistance of experts wherever required and were discussed and analysed at a technical consultation held in Athens in April 1997.

According to the over-all work plan and timetable of the activity, all draft documents will be presented to a Meeting of Government-designated experts scheduled to take place in Ischia, Italy, from 15 to 18 June 1997 which will examine and discuss the draft Strategic Action Programme including the Guidelines for the formulation of national action plans, the draft Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and draft Report on the Pollution "Hot Spots". The documents, as amended, will be transmitted to a Meeting of the designated National Coordinators which is planned to be held in Athens in September/October 1997, for comments and approval. Subsequently, the documents will be presented to the Meeting of the Contracting Parties in Tunis in November 1997 for adoption.

After the adoption of the documents by the Contracting Parties, the Donors' Conference will be held in December 1997 to examine the follow up to the results of the project.

*The Secretariat feels that the outputs of the activity will greatly assist all Contracting Parties and establish a solid basis for the future activities specifically required by the provisions of the Protocol.*

In particular, with reference to the report on pollution "Hot Spots" and sensitive areas, the ongoing activity is resulting in the identification of major pollution "Hot Spots" on the basis of contaminants reaching the Mediterranean Sea from (a) coastal cities and urban agglomerations with more than 100,000 inhabitants and (b) main industries discharging directly into the sea. On this basis, a list of national priority hot spots is being prepared which will include the proposed remedial actions and their cost. The report also identifies, country by country, the areas particularly sensitive to damage from land-based pollution. The report is therefore going to provide the necessary database for the implementation of the LBS Protocol.

In addition, the activity will produce a regional strategic programme and the guidelines for the formulation of national action plans to address pollution from land-based activities, in line with the provisions of the 1996 revised LBS Protocols.

Finally, the activity will provide the regional Donors with an initial platform of information on problems and costed remedial actions which could be the basis for future investments.

#### Dumping Protocol

During 1996, a full report on the dumping permits released during 1995 was submitted to the Secretariat by Italy.

As a follow up to the Meeting of Government-designated Experts to prepare Guidelines for the Handling of Dredged Spoils held in Valencia in May 1996 (document UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.114/4), the Secretariat is working on the preparation of a revised draft text which will be examined by a second expert Meeting tentatively scheduled to be held in Malta in October 1997.

The Guidelines, if approved by the Expert Meeting, will be submitted for adoption to the Contracting Parties Meeting scheduled to be held in Tunis in November 1997. The Guidelines will greatly assist the Mediterranean countries in appropriately handling a problem which is very common in the region.

#### Hazardous Wastes Protocol

No activities were implemented by the Secretariat in 1996 as a follow up to the adoption of the Hazardous Wastes Protocol. Concerning future activities, which are proposed to be initiated in 1998, see document UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.127/3.

#### Research activities

On the basis of the research proposals submitted to the Secretariat, by the end of 1996 there were 24 ongoing projects covering the research areas related to pollution control:

Research area III (Effects of selected contaminants on marine organisms, communities and ecosystems or man and human population)

Projects completed in 1996: 10

Projects ongoing: 24

Total financial assistance: US \$ 30,000

Research area V (Determination of factors affecting the efficiency of waste treatment and disposal methods and development of environmental quality criteria)

Projects completed in 1996: -

Projects ongoing: -

Total financial assistance: -

Information of the research projects relevant to pollution assessment are given under chapter 2. of this document.