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Kickoff and Inception Meeting of the Mediterranean Sea Programme (MedProgramme):
Enhancing Environmental Security (GEF ID 9670)

Videoconference, 20-22 July 2020

Agenda item 3: Introduction on the MedProgramme

MedProgramme Overview

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THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA PROGRAMME (MEDPROGRAMME): ENHANCING ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY (GEF ID 9607)

Overview

The UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) is launching the Mediterranean Sea Programme (MedProgramme): Enhancing Environmental Security (GEF ID 9607) in the framework of the strategic partnership with the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

The MedProgramme aims to kick start the implementation of agreed upon priority actions to reduce the major transboundary environmental stresses affecting the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal areas, while strengthening climate resilience and water security, and improving the health and livelihoods of coastal populations. It does so through a holistic approach focusing on: i) Hotspots of land-based sources of pollution; ii) Harmful chemicals and wastes (POPs and Mercury) and excess nutrients; iii) Critical sections of the coastal zone particularly affected by climatic variability; iv) Freshwater stress and habitat degradation; v) The efficient and sustainable management of priority marine protected areas; and vi) Measuring the progress to impacts.

Background

The **Mediterranean Sea** - the largest semi-enclosed sea in the world - is shared by 21 countries with a coastline of 46,000 km. Its coastal areas are undergoing a dramatic process of development. The populations of coastal states have doubled in the last 40 years to 450 million and will reach over 600 million in 2050. The region is characterized by a unique and rich, yet fragile biodiversity, hosted by many diverse ecosystems, which together form an invaluable natural capital on which populations and economies depend on. A range of human activities threatens many of these species. Pollution from land-based sources, such as discharges of excess nutrients and hazardous substances, marine litter, and degradation of critical habitats, are among the key factors responsible for this biodiversity loss.

The **MAP** was the first initiative to be developed under the UNEP Regional Seas Programme and became the model for other seas across the globe. The Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution (**Barcelona Convention**) was adopted in 1976. With their institutional, regulatory and implementation dimensions, the Barcelona Convention and MAP set a unique legally binding framework for coordinated strategies of all the Countries around the shoreline of the Mediterranean Sea.

In this context, UNEP/MAP and the GEF set an important and result oriented partnership aiming to support the action of the Mediterranean Countries in reaching the objectives of the Barcelona Convention and ultimately fostering the sustainable development of the region. This collaboration delivered several strategic products between 1997 and 2015, among them the **Mediterranean Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA)**, the **Strategic Action Programme to Address Pollution from Land-Based Activities (SAP-MED)**, the **Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity (SAP-BIO)** and the **Mediterranean National Actions Plans (NAPs)**. These results were achieved through a coordinated effort to setup and catalyze the policy and legal and institutional reforms, necessary to reverse the degradation trends affecting the Mediterranean LME that resulted in more than 150 activities, 80 demonstration projects on ground which impact in the long term on the sustainability of the region, over 300 documents including technical reports, guidelines and policy

THE MEDPROGRAMME IN SHORT

Title: Mediterranean Sea Programme (MedProgramme): Enhancing Environmental Security

GEF ID: 9607

GEF Grants: USD 43,376,147

Co-Financing: USD 861,666,654

8 Child Projects organized in four Components

Countries: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey

GEF Implementing Agencies: UNEP and EBRD

Leading Executing Agency: UNEP/MAP

Executing Partners: UNESCO/IHP, EIB, IUCN Med, GWP Med, WWF Med, MED POL, Plan Bleu, PAP/RAC, SCP/RAC and SPA/RAC.

analysis, over 500 meetings, workshops, and trainings reaching out to thousands of stakeholders and bringing together local actors, civil society, regional experts and international institutions. All this work has been instrumental to support governance at the national and regional level and to trigger environmental changes that otherwise would not be sustainable in the long term, nor would generate an impact on the ground.

What is the MedProgramme

The MedProgramme builds on the successful partnership between UNEP/MAP, the GEF and the 22 Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention. It is based on an overarching vision for change that generates a series of 8 interconnected Child Projects: "*A healthy Mediterranean with marine and coastal ecosystems that are productive and biologically diverse contributing to sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations*". It represents the first GEF programmatic multi-focal area initiative in the Mediterranean Sea aiming to operationalize priority actions to reduce major transboundary environmental stresses in its coastal areas while strengthening climate resilience and water security and improving the health and livelihoods of coastal populations.

The MedProgramme will be fully integrated in the UNEP/MAP 2022-2027 Medium Term Strategy (MTS) meant to guide the path for the protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean as a clear expression of the commitment and support of the Mediterranean Countries to the sustainable development of the Region.

The Programme is implemented in 10 Countries sharing the Mediterranean basin: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey¹. Its 8 Child Projects² cut across four different Focal Areas of the Global Environment Facility International Waters (IW), Biodiversity (BD), Chemicals and Waste (CW), and Climate Change (CC) and involve a wide spectrum of developmental and societal sectors, ranging from banking institutions, the private sector, governmental and non-governmental bodies, industry, research, media, and various other organizations. The four GEF focal areas joint hands in providing a grant of USD 43,376,147 to support the MedProgramme. This effort will foster the implementation of a strategic, holistic and coordinated set of fully-fledged projects³ for the protection and sustainable use of a major transboundary waterbody such as the Mediterranean Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (LME).

The innovative approach of the MedProgramme

The MedProgramme is structured around four components which fully reflect the priorities identified by the TDA for the Mediterranean Sea and that are supported by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, namely i) Reduction of Land Based Pollution In Priority Coastal Hotspots, and measuring progress to impacts; ii) Enhancing Sustainability and Climate Resilience in the Coastal Zone; iii) Protecting Marine Biodiversity; and iv) Knowledge Management and Programme Coordination. The Programme is meant to achieve multiple benefits at the national, regional and global levels, providing at the same time a collective response to regional and global soft and binding international environmental agreements. The extensive experience of GEF in the development of SAPs has shown that in many, if not most cases, the priority responses to environmental degradation of transboundary waterbodies involve interventions that require integration among focal areas. In this sense the MedProgramme is a pioneering initiative that could lead the way to the systematic adoption of programmatic approaches in the GEF International Waters SAP implementation whenever the consolidation of transboundary cooperation frameworks will allow, and the complexity of the drivers of degradation will require.

In this context the fourth component of the MedProgramme (Knowledge Management and Programme Coordination) plays a key role as it "*implements mechanisms for Programme-wide learning and dissemination of knowledge, monitoring the Programme's progress to impacts, and fostering synergistic interactions among Child Projects*". Within the GEF programmatic approaches there is a need to ensure programme coherence and impact through coordination among diverse sets of multi-focal area CPs contributing to the same programme outcomes. This component of the MedProgramme

¹ Turkey endorsed only the Chemical and Waste Component of CP1.1 (GEF ID 9684), therefore it will participate to this project only.

² At the time of its approval in October 2016, the MedProgramme was comprised of seven Child Projects. Subsequently, a Mediterranean climate change adaptation project was developed by UN Environment/MAP for financing through the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). It was agreed by the UN Environment/MAP, UN Environment and the GEF Secretariat that this SCCF project would be managed for all intents and purposes as an additional Child Project of the MedProgramme. Hence the reference to eight Child Projects of the MedProgramme.

³ The complete Project Documents endorsed by the Countries and the GEF are available on the Web pages of UNEP/MAP (<https://www.unenvironment.org/uneppmap/news/press-release/medprogramme-new-push-depollute-mediterranean-sea-and-coast-and-underpin>) and the GEF (<https://www.thegef.org/projects>).

provides a trait d'union (a common link) by supporting the execution of crosscutting Knowledge Management (KM) and Gender Mainstreaming Strategies. The KM Strategy aims to maximize the MedProgramme impact by i) Strengthening coordination and operational coherence among CPs and their partners; ii) Monitoring the execution of the activities under the entire Programme to assess progress to impact; iii) Leveraging and systematically sharing knowledge assets generated by the CPs with the intended beneficiaries and audiences; iv) Strengthening the science-policy interface (SPI) and influencing decision making through data and information sharing, capacity building, and regional stakeholder engagement; v) Supporting the objectives of the Barcelona Convention and the work of the MAP system through effective stocktaking and scaling up of Programme's results; and vi) Fostering incremental innovation within GEF programmatic approaches and enriching the knowledge base of GEF Implementing and Executing Agencies. The Gender Mainstreaming Strategy aims to provide tailored action points to improve the gender status quo in the Countries; place gender-responsive activities and gender-aware policy-making at the core of the MedProgramme agenda; and partake as well as further the existing efforts on gender equality, to leverage opportunities for inclusive and accessible environmental and social co-benefits.

Moreover, the MedProgramme will introduce a long-term impact and innovative factor, namely the coordination between technical assistance interventions with a large investment portfolio to address the needs defined by the Mediterranean NAPs supported by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the European Investment Bank (EIB). These two International Financial Institutions will provide a cash co-financing of USD 700 million in the form of loans granted to the Countries and to public/private actor to foster market creation and transformation and ensuring sustainability through the private sector and municipal involvement.

MedProgramme GEF ID 9607				
MedProgramme Component	Child Project	GEF Focal Areas	GEF Grant	Implementing and Executing Agencies
1. Reduction of Land Based Pollution in Priority Coastal Hotspots, and measuring progress to impacts.	CP1.1 Reducing Pollution from Harmful Chemicals and Wastes in Mediterranean Hot Spots and Measuring Progress to Impacts GEF ID 9684	IW and CW	USD 14,250,000	UNEP UNEP/MAP MED POL, SCP/RAC and Plan Bleu
	CP1.2 Mediterranean Pollution Hot Spots Investment Project GEF ID 9717	IW	USD 5,000,000	UNEP UNEP/MAP EIB and MED POL
	CP1.3 Mediterranean Sea Finance for Water Systems and Clean Coasts (FINWACC) GEF ID 9691	IW and CW	USD 8,750,000	EBRD
2. Enhancing Sustainability and Climate Resilience in the Coastal Zone.	CP2.1 Mediterranean Coastal Zones Climate Resilience Water Security and Habitat Protection GEF ID 9687	IW	USD 7,000,000	UNEP UNEP/MAP UNESCO/IHP, PAP/RAC, Plan Bleu and GWP Med
	CP2.2 Mediterranean Coastal Zones: Managing the Water-Food-Energy and Ecosystem NEXUS GEF ID 9685	IW	USD 3,500,000	UNEP UNEP/MAP GWP Med
	SCCF Enhancing regional climate change adaptation in the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas GEF ID 9670	SCCF	USD 1,000,000	UNEP UNEP/MAP PAP/RAC, Plan Bleu and GWP Med
3. Protecting Marine Biodiversity	CP3.1 Management Support and Expansion of Marine Protected Areas in Libya GEF ID 10158	BD	USD 1,376,147	UNEP UNEP/MAP SPA/RAC, IUCN Med and WWF Med
4. Knowledge Management and Programme Coordination	CP4.1 Mediterranean Sea Large Marine Ecosystem Environment and Climate Regional Support Project GEF ID 9686	IW and CW	USD 2,500,000	UNEP UNEP/MAP

The expected results and impacts of the MedProgramme

The MedProgramme will deploy more than one hundred coordinated actions at both regional and national levels over the next 5 years. This holistic approach will result in several specific environmental benefits in the region, among others: the disposal of 3,250 tons of POPs, 50 tons of Mercury, the prevention of the use of 1,309 tons of POPs per year, the development of an updated TDA including gender assessment, investments for the depollution of the waters in drains and canals in the Nile Delta, for wastewater collection systems in coastal hotspots in Lebanon and for upgrading 10 WWTPs to improve the quality of Tunisian surface water, groundwater, and coastal waters. Work will also focus on local and national ICZM and to the Water Energy Food and Ecosystem (WEFE) Nexus plans in several Countries, and on improving the effective management of coastal aquifers in the whole region. Specific activities will be executed to increase the resilience to climate change in Morocco and Montenegro as well as at the regional level. The Programme will work towards expanding seascapes under protection and improving protected marine area management in Libya. Moreover, the execution of the cross-cutting KM and Gender Mainstreaming Strategies will provide a pilot for further integration into the operation of the Barcelona Convention.

An additional innovative feature of the MedProgramme is acting as a hub to attract additional investments to complement the ongoing activities. This is already happening for example through the cooperation with FAO and the General Fishery Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) in the framework of the recently approved GEF project *Fisheries and Ecosystem Based Management for the Blue Economy of the Mediterranean* - (FishEBM MED-GEF ID 10560), aiming to reverse the over-exploitation of selected commercial living marine resources in the Mediterranean Countries and through the involvement of private equity funds that expressed interest in investing in the region.

The MedProgramme will contribute to strengthening UNEP/MAP's position as a leading actor of a large coordinated and comprehensive effort in the Mediterranean region to promote the sustainable utilization of coastal and marine resources. It will strategically contribute to the sustainable development efforts in the Mediterranean basin and to the dialogue, cooperation, and therefore peace and security in the region.



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