



**UNITED
NATIONS**

EP

UNEP/MED ECP.41/2



**UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN**

UNEP

8 July 2020
Original: English

41st Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel

Teleconference, 19-20 May 2020

Report of the Meeting

For environmental and cost-saving reasons, this document is printed in a limited number. Delegates are kindly requested to bring their copies to meetings and not to request additional copies.

UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2020

Table of contents

	Pages
Report	1-13
Annexes	
Annex I	List of Participants
Annex II	Agenda

I. Agenda Item 1: Opening of the Meeting

1. The 41st Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel (ECP) was held on 19-20 May 2020, through teleconference. 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, the MAP Programme Officer responsible for governance issues and the Policy and Programming Expert. The consultant that supports the MAP Secretariat with the preparation of the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027 participated during Agenda Item 5. The list of participants is presented in Annex I to this report.

2. Mr. Gaetano Leone, UNEP/MAP Coordinator opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. (Athens time) on 19 May 2020.

II. Agenda Item 2: Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work

3. The Coordinator welcomed the ECP members and announced the changes in the management teams of INFO/RAC and Plan Bleu/RAC. He noted that, following the retirement of Ms. Monacelli, the new INFO/RAC Director will be soon appointed, while Mr. Guerquin will assume duties in July 2020 as Plan Bleu/RAC Director, due to the end of duties of Ms. Lemaitre-Curri.

4. The meeting reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda prepared by the Secretariat, as in document UNEP/MED ECP.40/1.

III. Agenda Item 3: COVID-19 and the UNEP/MAP response

(a) Concrete implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on the PoW implementation

(b) Possible impacts of COVID-19 and proposed responses by the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system

5. The Coordinator introduced the issue and asked the ECP members to share concrete implications that the COVID-19 pandemic had on their respective work. He also referred to the document prepared by UNEP Headquarters and the relevant concept note prepared by the Coordinating Unit and shared with MAP components. He stressed that the main scope of this agenda item was to (a) to discuss this concept note and turn it into a MAP-Barcelona Convention system document, and (b) acknowledge possible delays in the delivery of activities, including the organization of meetings, so to better address them. He added that the Policy and Programming Expert was responsible to collect the inputs of MAP components on the note, based on four questions prepared by the Secretariat.

6. The directors of the MAP components provided inputs and presented the main implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mandates of their respective components. The main points are summarized as follows:

(a) Plan Bleu/RAC: A workshop in the context of MED 2050 preparation will take place on the issue of COVID-19 and its implications, looking at critical topics, such as circular, blue and green economy; ECP members were welcomed to attend. Plan Bleu had already held a number of online meetings, in some cases with interpretation. There may be a need to add new indicators on the dashboard following the COVID-19 crisis, in terms of inequalities and environmental budget. It is very important for the MAP system to be ready to make concrete proposals on the post-crisis investments plans, when recovering from the crisis.

(b) SPA/RAC: The COVID-19 crisis has had a tremendous impact on the Mediterranean countries, which are some of the most impacted countries in the world. The MAP system to make an analysis of how best to respond. This crisis is linked to all aspects: social, cultural, environmental and economic. This is an opportunity to make concrete proposals to see, for example, how wastewater could transfer traces of COVID-19 into the sea. It would be very interesting to share these analyses also among the partner organizations. In terms of responses, it is an opportunity to introduce new ways to analyse and

investigate through assessment studies, for example examining the relationship between health and biodiversity in a holistic manner. More attention should now be given to these topics in the MAP strategic documents under preparation, so that the MAP system will produce very relevant documents that include these aspects and look at impacts and relationships. Thus, this is a good timing for MAP to take the lead. Many international and regional meetings have been postponed for 2021 and there are still uncertainties about their holding/timing.

(c) MED POL: The issue of wastewater and wastewater treatment is crucial. COVID-19 virus has been detected by a number of cities in raw wastewater through human excreta. Infectious medical waste generated from healthcare facilities is also an issue for solid waste management. Waste polluted by the COVID-19 virus may end-up in river water and sea, affecting quality of marine environment. It is important to note that many countries in the south reuse treated/untreated wastewater for irrigation of agricultural food products. MAP addresses these issues through its protocols on land-based sources and hazardous waste. The new Regional Plans can address these issues, whether through wastewater treatment, sewage sludge management or marine litter management. Issue can be also addressed when updating the annexes to the LBS Protocol, and through closer collaboration with WHO and the ongoing MoU with the Basel Convention.

(d) SCP/RAC: We will shortly send comments on the concept note. Given the mandate of the centre, the work mainly focuses on block 3 of the concept note. High relevance of responses to this crisis as it has a huge impact on the lifestyle such as single-use products, increase on water demand, food provisions in supply changes, food delivery at home with an important increase in packaging waste. Urban transport and social practices, shopping practices with increase in e-commerce and also the touristic trend are topics with great interest in the frame of the COVID-19 pandemic. Tourism is a very important sector in the Mediterranean and has been severely affected. This makes it interesting to see if the above will be long-term trends or not. Our work on green economy/green and circular businesses is very relevant. Use of single-use plastics and chemicals has increased and this is something we should address. The mid-term evaluation of the SCP Action Plan will also look at these aspects. We can support Contracting Parties in understanding the importance of the environmental aspects of the COVID-19 crisis and in putting into place the conditions for long term solutions. SCP/RAC is continuing with online meetings and trainings, rather than postponing them. Rely also on local partners in the countries for the national activities. There will be some activities postponed to next year, especially activities related to tourism. Fully agrees with SPA/RAC that this biennium is very strategic for MAP so as to adapt and make advantage of all strategic processes that we have, and to bring responses to the system.

(e) PAP/RAC: The main impact will be on economics; a very negative one. Also, on the environment, such as waste. Some implications will have a positive environmental impact, at least in the short term, such as the reduction of tourism. Responses on planning for adaptation to COVID-19 include different schemes for urban development, tourism planning, nature-based solutions; these responses can have a long-term benefit for the Mediterranean. It is important how long will this crisis last. Some activities were postponed: awareness-raising activities, but also projects/activities with national and local character, and through participatory approaches. The budgetary implications are also important; impacts on national economies may also affect the RACs' finances. There is a need to also consider these questions for the future.

(f) REMPEC: the SO_x Emissions Control Area (SECA) process is clearly one of the issues on which COVID-19 has a direct impact. The resilience of human health can be affected by emissions, especially near ports. Those concerns have been raised in relation to the work on the possible SECA. A number of Contracting Parties want MAP to look at a possible NO_x ECA during the next biennium, which is also relevant. From an operational point of view, the impact of the COVID-19 crisis resulted in holding the events online, to avoid overloading the next year with activities. This trend has resulted in savings on travel expenses. We can discuss if these savings can be used to prepare a study on the impacts of emissions on human health/resilience, in collaboration with WHO and IMO.

Communication is crucial for an emergency center such as REMPEC. For this, REMPEC established a virtual system of communication, to be reachable when out of office. This has been an opportunity to improve the whole communication system. Also, assess with Contracting Parties the capacity for online meetings. Possibility to look at the use of savings from the meetings to develop e-learning tools. This new situation and its effects on mobility, waste treatment, and tourism could also be addressed through the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award (ways of cities to cope with COVID-19 and the environment). In terms of waste, synergies can be enhanced with IMO in the framework of global projects and of the Marine Litter MED project. One of the main issues related to COVID-19, is for maritime transport to secure that medical and food supply continues. IMO has released a paper addressing the issue mostly from a safety point of view rather than an environmental one. Work on MED 2050 and MED QSR 2023 could also look into the impact of COVID-19.

(g) INFO/RAC: There will be a slight delay on scheduled activities, particularly regarding bilateral activities on management data policy, environmental monitoring and impact of collection and transmission of data. This is a great opportunity to work together as a system to boost the e-learning and training platforms. A paper to be developed on the necessity of raising awareness on the linkages between environment and human health in the Mediterranean, considering also the issue of gender. The target audience to whom the paper will be addressed is crucial. INFO/RAC uses the “GotoMeetings platform” for online meetings. Comment on communication: there is a risk that COVID-19 pandemic decreases attention to the environment; however, this is the most favorable moment for communicating the importance of the link between human health and environmental protection (e.g. links between zoonotic diseases-invasion to natural habitat).

7. Following the interventions, the Coordinator welcomed all inputs from MAP components and thanked them for their reflections. He noted that it is important to provide a concrete response to this crisis, to work with partners, such as UfMS and GFCM, and to take the lead as a system in responding to the current crisis. In relation to strategic documents and the assessment reports of MAP, he stressed the need of providing a substantive narrative on how they are relevant and part of the solution to the implications of the current crisis. He also noted the possible financial implications of the crisis during the next biennium, stressing that the Net Cash Balance and Working Capital reserve are important tools that the MAP-Barcelona Convention system has put into place. However, he highlighted that it is vital to develop MAP’s own contingency plans for the shorter and medium terms. He added that online meetings have worked very well, and that UNEP uses the platforms Webex and Teams Meetings. The main pending issue is the provision of online interpretation; UNEP headquarters are working on this issue and a solution will soon be provided. On the issue of savings due to the reduced number of face-to-face meetings, he stressed that such savings will exist, and their use will be addressed when the picture will be clearer. He added that the concept note prepared by the Secretariat will be revised and shared with MAP components for comments, before being disseminated further.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
1.	Document on UNEP/MAP Strategic response to the COVID-19 crisis finalized	CU to prepare revised version and send it to MAP Components for final agreement	June 2020

IV. Agenda item 4: Follow-up to the 40th ECP meeting

a) Overview of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Work, including on the work of UNEP/MAP Task Forces

8. The MAP Programme Officer presented an overview in relation to the Action Items of the previous ECP meeting. He noted that the Secretariat is using MS Teams and Webex for

communication and teleconferences, following the indications from Headquarters. Several MAP components noted that they also use the MS Teams platform.

9. The Deputy Coordinator referred to the update of the Planning and Priorities Table to be done in July 2020 and asked the MAP components to provide any feedback that they may have. She also asked meeting participants how they see the progress in the implementation of the POW. She noted that the timing is good to state in a concrete manner what are the activities that are affected by the COVID-19 crisis and what is the proposed way to respond. She added that there is currently a discussion in the Secretariat on procurement issues in relation to RACs and especially on the “no-objection” approach.

10. The PAP/RAC Director referred to progress and difficulties faced. She noted that there is a need to request to the EC to prolong the GEF Adriatic Project until June 2021. She added that INFO/RAC provided a very good contribution to the project. The Coast Day celebration, planned to take place in Malta, will be affected by the COVID-19 crisis and will most probably not take place as a live event, but through promotional material including a video; the support of INFO/RAC on the video would be very welcomed. CAMPS are local projects, with national counterparts, and so there is concern on them being affected by the crisis. The CAMP Bosnia and Herzegovina is still not progressing, while regarding the CAMP between Cyprus and Israel things continue to develop but with several difficulties. Several activities proceed regarding IMAP implementation, while the MEDOPEN online programme has proved very beneficial. She added that regarding the MedProgramme child project, there are some difficulties in contacting Egypt due to the current crisis, but otherwise progress is good. The small GEF project on Climate Change is progressing well; due to the crisis there is consideration to ask for a 6 months prolongation.

11. The SPA/RAC Director noted that they are doing their best to accommodate the new conditions due to the COVID-19 crisis. SAP/BIO preparation, which is the most important process, is progressing; national process has started, and two-thirds of the countries have provided feedback. Continuous contacts are pursued with countries who have not yet responded. Other activities related to the implementation of COP Decisions have started and proceed well, such as the periodic revision of the SPAMIs with all relevant countries and the preparation of a new strategic document on MPAs in the Mediterranean. The preparations of the MedMPA Forum, scheduled for the end of November in Monaco, are being well supported by Monaco. On the GEF Adriatic Project, it was noted that there is need to be extended until June 2021. The SPA/RAC Director also mentioned that regarding the ICZM Protocol ratification in Tunisia, this is still in the hands of the Parliament.

12. The Head of Office of REMPEC informed the meeting that the preparation of the regional strategy on pollution from ships is proceeding; a link to the survey was distributed and the CU is coordinating collection of inputs. Cooperation is going on with the oil and gas industry. In relation to the Offshore Protocol, the secondment of an expert has not taken place, due to the oil industry crisis and drop of oil price. Work on marine litter is progressing well in relation to the Marine Litter MED project and global projects. Thanks to collaboration among the RACs and the CU, several activities are ongoing to support the preparation of the 2030 MED QSR and the implementation of the MED2050 roadmap. Discussions are ongoing regarding the trilateral agreement between Cyprus, Egypt and Greece. On the Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention (MENELAS), it appears difficult to have a face to face meeting in September 2020 as planned. There are some difficulties regarding the implementation of the roadmap on the SECA, due to the COVID-19 crisis; however, preparation of the call for proposals has proceeded with the contribution of Plan Bleu/RAC and the Coordinating Unit.

13. The representative of INFO/RAC, noted that there is a smooth implementation of all activities, with only some slight delays on the development of the data management policy due to the fact that the bilateral meetings with Contracting Parties were planned to be held face to face; most probably, at the end they will be held virtually. The agreement on data aggregation is planned for the CORMON meeting scheduled to take place in November 2020. The implementation of the Operational

Communication Strategy is proceeding through the work of the Communication Task Force. INFO/RAC is also ready to support in the best way the upcoming launch of the 2019 SoED and the Ocean Day digital campaign.

14. The Director of Plan Bleu/RAC stressed that the centre is very actively preparing the launch of the 2019 SoED, while this exercise is experiencing short delays due to some further steps to go through. Relevant material is finalized with the contribution of the CU and MAP components, together with the Communication Task Force. The COVID-19 crisis led to postponing/cancelling some meetings/events, for example in relation to Blue Economy. The MEDECC report consultation was launched; the report provides very interesting information on mid-term trends. The introductory meeting on foresight in relation to MED 2050 study took place; three publications have been prepared and Plan Bleu/RAC asked for the support of the whole MAP system in disseminating them.

15. The Head of MED POL, noted that PoW focus is on the mandate provided by COP 21. This is mainly related to marine pollution monitoring and assessment (IMAP); updating the Annexes of the Pollution Protocols (LBS and Dumping Protocols); the three new/updated Regional Plans (wastewater treatment, sewage sludge management and marine litter); the mid-term evaluation of the updated National Action Plans; and aspects related to addressing shortcomings in the implementation of the 4th Cycle National Baseline Budget in last biennium, including updated guidelines, etc. Work on IMAP common indicators is in progress. On the GEF-funded MedProgramme, MED POL is preparing the implementation plan with regards to Child Project 1.1, including disposal of mercury and PCBs and the TDA. It is anticipated that as many as 18 consultants may need to be recruited, while 9 technical meetings are foreseen at this stage.

16. The representative of SCP/RAC noted that activities related to plastics are proceeding well. She added that a regional training has been postponed for the second half of the year, so that it can eventually take place face to face, depending on the evolution of the situation regarding COVID-19 after the summer. The Marlice Forum is planned for 2021 but dates will be confirmed after the summer. Demo Marine Litter activities on MedMPAs had to be postponed to the next summer because most of these demos are linked to tourism activities in Spain and Italy, two Mediterranean countries heavily affected by COVID-19. Regarding chemicals, work is starting under Child Project 1.1 of the MedProgramme. Work is proceeding well on the regional measures for green and circular businesses. Regarding the Green Business Award, it is planned to be launched during an online event in November 2020; main characteristics of the award were successfully presented to the MCSDD members. Two award categories are foreseen for the first edition, focused on businesses and on public authorities supporting the development of green and circular businesses. Furthermore, the work on SCP indicators is about to be launched in linkage with the Mediterranean dashboard and the work of Plan Bleu/RAC. The mid-term evaluation of the SCP Action Plan also started in full coordination with the MSSD mid-term evaluation.

17. The Deputy Coordinator informed the meeting participants on the update of the Planning and Priorities Tables. She also updated participants on the progress regarding EC-funded projects and project proposals and noted that an email will be circulated soon regarding EcAp Med III EC-funded project. She thanked the Communication Task Force for its contribution, and referred to the launch of the MEdProgramme and its kick-off meeting, to take place in July 2020.

18. The MAP Programme Officer updated the ECP on the progress regarding the task forces composed of members of the MAP components and led by the Coordinating Unit. He focused on the work of the three main Task Forces, namely the Administration and Finance Task Force, the Communication Task Force and the Ecosystem Coordination Group Task Force. He also mentioned that other task forces exist on ad hoc matters, such as the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award Task Force, as well as more informal groups, such as the group on Reporting and Overall Assessment. In the ensuing discussion, the Coordinator stressed that this is a very efficient way to manage work and ensure the involvement of all MAP components, while he also expressed his gratitude to the RAC directors and to the RAC staff participating in the Task Forces. Regarding a question on the

responsibilities within the CU, it was noted that the QSR Programme Management Officer, Ms. Daria Mokhnacheva, is responsible for the EcAp Task Force and the EcAp MED project, under the supervision of the Deputy Coordinator and the overall responsibility of the Coordinator.

19. The Coordinator updated the meeting on the work under the bilateral agreement with Italy/IMELS, noting that the first period has ended and that now discussions are held on a possible follow-up agreement. He informed participants that interest has been expressed from Italy, however, there are currently some changes in the Italian Ministry and the relevant discussions have not been yet finalized. The initial interest that has been expressed is for a wider framework to be agreed, for a period coinciding with that of the new MTS (i.e. until 2027). Some areas of possible cooperation include Assessments/ ICZM/MSP, Biodiversity, Pollution and Marine Litter, and Blue Economy, while cross-cutting activities, including capacity building, technology transfer, climate change and circular economy/SCP, are also of interest. There is strong interest and the preparation process is to start soon, but the Agreement is not foreseen to start before 2021 due to procedural aspects.

b) Update on the applicability of the GDPR EU regulation to MAP

20. The MAP Programme Officer presented a brief overview of the relevant information received from UNEP Headquarters, noting that the General Data Protection Regulation of the EU does not apply to United Nations System Organizations. In the ensuing discussion it was noted that RACs, especially those located in EU Member States will have repercussions from the application of the regulation; even the RAC located outside the EU (SPA/RAC) needs to handle EU data. To this end, this issue needs to be discussed, including through the Communication Task Force. It was agreed that INFO/RAC will present in mid-June 2020 a note analyzing the steps needed for the application of the GDPR regulation to the MAP system.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
2.	Develop online tool for collaborative work on documents (possibly MS Teams / Sharepoint)	Coordinating Unit	June 2020
3.	Update the Planning and Priorities Tables (PPT)	All MAP components	Early July 2020
4.	Follow-up on COP 21 decision on CAMP Bosnia and Herzegovina	PAP/RAC, in coordination with CU	June 2020
5.	Proposed steps to apply GDPR EU Regulation to MAP Components, as appropriate	INFO/RAC	Mid-June 2020

V. Agenda Item 5: Preparation of the new Medium-Term Strategy

a) Update on the process and the involvement of the ECP

21. The MAP Programme Officer presented the revised calendar for the preparation of the Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027 and the evaluation of the current strategy, containing also information of the relevant bodies involved including the ECP, as updated after the 89th Meeting of the Bureau (22-23 April 2020).

22. It was suggested by SCP/RAC that it would be beneficial to keep in mind the timeline and calendar of the SCP Action Plan and MSSD evaluations, which will run in parallel to the MTS evaluation and the development of the new MTS 2022-2027, to maximize synergies. This will assist in the planning so as to ensure that the key findings of these evaluations are fully considered during the

development of the new MTS. In response, it was agreed that further alignment of timelines would take place and that the processes will be in close contact.

b) Possible elements for the structure of the new MTS

23. Following an introduction by the Coordinator, a brief presentation on the initial mapping of relevant global and regional strategies and possible elements for the new MTS was given by Ms. Virginie Hart; the consultant supporting the Secretariat in the preparation of the new MTS. A number of key points to consider were presented based on background documents of the 21st Meeting of the Contracting Parties, the 40th ECP meeting and the 89th Meeting of the Bureau, as well as initial discussions with the MAP Secretariat. The main highlighted points follow. The MTS should be sharp and clear and should undertake a different approach with emphasis on the overall vision, objectives and targets, and on the way to reach these objectives/targets. This includes a need to move towards headings that are aggregated and to address strategic outcomes so as to allow enough flexibility to work at the output and activity level at a biannual basis. The MTS should also be used as a communication and visibility tool and prioritize partnerships and closer links with centres of excellence (such as in academia, science, research and innovation). New ways of work should be explored to strengthen financial mobilization and emphasize the unique role of MAP, in particular its role in enforcement, and to ensure collaboration with other MEAs and global programmes/initiatives to promote regional and national level enforcement and implementation. The MTS will integrate the results of the 2016-2021 MTS evaluation, plus the MSSD and SCP Action Plan evaluations, integrate relevant global goals and targets (SDGs, CBD post 2020, also considering the MTS of UNEP and of Regional Seas, etc.) and be inspired by good examples of other global and regional strategies and assessments. The presentation referred to the four themes of COP 21 of (1) Pollution and Marine Litter, (2) Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Biodiversity, (3) Climate Change, (4) Blue Economy, with a focus on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and Sustainable Tourism. The presentation also included questions to trigger the discussion.

24. In the discussion that followed, it was observed that the new MTS need not necessarily follow these four themes of COP 21 but work should start from mapping key blocks of priorities. The Coordinator noted the importance of having a structured MTS that can facilitate the development of the biennium work programmes, as was the case with the current MTS; he also noted the need to give greater emphasis to climate change. He added that the MTS vision is probably still valid. The Deputy Coordinator agreed on the importance of the structure of the MTS and noted that the aim of initial discussions within the ECP are to clarify the best approach to be taken in developing the MTS, including possibly a bottom-up approach. She added that it is important to gather experiences from other organizations globally and in the region, such as IUCN, WWF, IMO, etc.

25. SPA/RAC also agreed that the new MTS is an opportunity to develop a new more innovative and efficient way of working, with greater emphasis on results and impacts in the field. This should include mainstreaming with regional and national priorities and plans, closer links with regional organizations, and particular emphasis on how to engage partners in the national level implementation of actions (such as fisheries and tourism sector, when addressing bycatch in MPAs). It was stressed that ultimately the protection of the environment has to be led by the socio-economic sectors responsible for the main pressures to the marine and coastal environment, whilst UNEP/MAP will support in terms of policy development and implementation, monitoring, assessments, capacity building, etc. Therefore, the new MTS should strengthen and define cooperation with key sectors and partners. The MTS will incorporate the post-2020 SAP BIO to be developed in 2020-2021, based on national priorities and needs. This will also consider closely the development of the CBD post-2020 process in which SPA/RAC participates; many relevant meetings are ongoing in this respect, including the next meeting of the Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) to be held in August 2020.

26. Plan Bleu/RAC also expressed willingness to work in an integrated manner together with partners at the regional and national level, beyond just Environment Ministries, which will need an innovative approach. Regarding the themes it was noted that the Naples declaration was the conclusion of the current MTS and should be reviewed for the purposes of the new MTS. It was suggested to have a specific ad-hoc ECP meeting to discuss this further. She stressed that it is important to define the critical objectives that the system wants to be achieved. The Coordinator noted also the need to define strategic objectives and to focus on the practical engagement of key sectors (such as tourism, fisheries, and other economic activities), taking steps beyond blue economy in general. He added that the new MTS needs to be a bit more focused than the current one, at least for some themes. PAP/RAC stressed the need to be more integrated and focused, and to base the MTS initially on major “blocks” rather than themes. The Common Regional Framework for Integrated Coastal Zone Management also took this approach and includes an analysis of how all the UNEP/MAP system interlinks and contributes to the ICZM Protocol. She added that all issues are cross-cutting. The Deputy Coordinator suggested to initially focus on the elaboration of key blocks where MAP can achieve concrete impacts, to then be further developed in terms of integration and financing.

27. REMPEC expressed support to all the suggestions raised and noted that one key element is on how the MTS will strengthen cooperation and ensure synergies and efficiency. The post 2021 Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships and the revision of the Ballast Water Management Strategy are under development and the approach used for the post 2021 strategy was highlighted: it includes the establishment of a brainstorming group consisting of representative of main key players in the field (IMO, UNEP/MAP, EC, oil and gas industry), an on line survey for Focal Points and for member of the brain storming group, involving all from an early stage. He also noted the importance of themes such as climate change - where he stressed that the issue will be also addressed by IMO - marine litter, biodiversity and MPAs, pollutant emissions, and of enforcement.

28. INFO/RAC suggested that, regarding global processes, the G7 and G20 process should be also considered in addition to the others presented. The next MTS should be developed in cooperation with components and partners, beginning with concrete blocks. She agreed that climate change should be more dominant than in the current MTS and should be downscaled into concrete elements to be delivered, adding also the importance of biodiversity and blue economy. She added that a bottom-up approach is better. MED POL stressed the importance for adopting innovative solutions for mobilizing financial resources to support implementation and strengthening of bilateral cooperation with key Contracting Parties, in line with their national strategies and action plans.

29. SCP/RAC agreed on the need to link to key global and regional processes, making also reference to the European Green Deal. The challenges of having SCP activities spread throughout the current MTS and programme of work were noted and that the new MTS should consider this. Also, greater emphasis should be given on circular economy and the MTS should facilitate monitoring, policy support, actions on the ground, defining future priorities and trends, and be a tool for communication and awareness raising. She stressed that SCP should be linked to circular economy and not be put under blue economy, which is restrictive. She added that types of activities should be defined to reduce silos, including monitoring, policy support (at regional and national levels), actions, trends/pressures definition, communication/awareness.

30. The Deputy Coordinator concluded that another round of discussions would be required, as part of an ECP meeting dedicated to the MTS, to work on the initial building blocks of the new MTS, with each MAP component doing its own analysis of building blocks at a higher level. She added that this was an opportunity for the ECP to follow a more innovative and free approach in the initial design of the MTS. The Coordinator noted that the CU will prepare questions to simulate more specific inputs from MAP components, in view of the next meeting, that was agreed to take place in July.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
6.	Concept Note with questions for MAP Components to provide analysis on main priorities of new MTS	Coordinating Unit	Mid-June 2020
7.	Integrative discussion during ECP meeting focusing on the MTS	All MAP Components	8-9 July 2020

VI. Agenda Item 6: Follow-up to COP 21 and to the 89th Bureau meeting

a) Discussion on major processes and strategic documents (with focus on Data Management Policy, SAP BIO, MED SO_x ECA, 2023 MED QSR, MED 2050 Foresight Study, Updated Annexes to Pollution Protocols, Regional Pollution Plans, etc.)

31. The Coordinator informed the ECP of the main conclusions of the 89th Bureau meeting, stressing the fact that the Bureau is very engaged and supportive. He added that it provided positive feedback and expressed its satisfaction on the progress achieved in the first few months of this biennium. The Coordinator called upon ECP members to give priority to the ratification of the Protocols of the Barcelona Convention.

32. The MAP Programme Officer opened the discussion on major processes and strategic documents, following the relevant discussions in the 89th Bureau meeting. He updated the members of the ECP on current situation and on the next steps and interactions that will be possibly needed with other MAP components. Both the Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator expressed the need for a contingency plan to be put in place, in relation to the COVID-19 crisis and its repercussions. The Coordinator also encouraged the RACs to be vocal and concrete on the COVID-19 impacts, as there is a need in case of big obstacles to inform the Bureau and to look for alternatives.

33. INFO/RAC informed that there are some delays regarding the data management policy, especially in relation to country visits. Online meetings will take place, but these will not allow looking at national infrastructures and speaking to all national actors. The Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator stressed the importance of this process and the need to present a very initial draft at the next Bureau meeting.

34. SPA/RAC presented the progress in relation to the SAP BIO preparation, noting that it started very early and that a roadmap was prepared and shared first with the CU and then with the SPA/BD Focal Points. The Advisory Committee was organized online in April 2020 and had a very good attendance. Work is progressing in substance, looking also to coherence and synergies with partner organizations, such as the CBD. National processes have also started; two-thirds of the Contracting Parties have already signed contracts with local experts, while reminders are being sent to the remaining Parties. National processes are to end on 31 July. The pre-final version is to be sent to the SPA/BD Focal Points meeting planned for May 2021. The Deputy Coordination expressed a concern that the delay in global processes due to the COVID-19 pandemic may result in these processes not being ready before the finalization of the SAP BIO. She added that the economics of biodiversity are also important and Plan Bleu/RAC can work on this issue. The SPA/RAC Director responded that two meetings are foreseen, the second one aligned to take account of the global processes (CBD). He added that budget is important and that SPA/RAC is discussing with the MAVA foundation to this effect.

35. REMPEC presented the progress in relation to the SO_x MED ECA, and thanked the CU, Plan Bleu/RAC and MED POL for their contributions to the process. He added that a plan of implementation of the roadmap was designed with IMO. ToRs were prepared, while there is collaboration with Plan Bleu/RAC on socioeconomic aspects. REMPEC Plan Bleu/RAC and the

Coordinating Unit are also in contact with various potential donors, including the EC and France. Regarding the national meetings that were postponed due to the COVID-19 crisis, they have to take place face to face in 2020 (due to funding deadlines), else they will take place online. He informed that the meeting of the relevant Committee of the IMO (MEPC) was postponed and will be online; this provided an opportunity to update the technical feasibility study that was sent to the Committee together with the COP 21 Decision. Plan Bleu/RAC noted that is preparing a tender on socioeconomic aspects; however, this tender has to go through a “non-objection” procedure. The Deputy Coordinator noted that the Coordinating Unit will help in the process, while MAP components asked if it is possible to receive a model of a tender.

36. The Deputy Coordinator presented the progress in the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR, noting that at technical level this is looked into by the EcAp task Force. She added that the focus is on the following steps: (a) to work together with MAP components on the IMAP implementation on the ground (the process is supported by the IMAP MPA project as well as from the GEF Adriatic project, the latter for Albania and Montenegro); (b) to define assessment criteria for achieving Good Environmental Status (supported by the EcAp MED III project); (c) CORMON meetings, including an integrated CORMON meeting in November 2020; (d) reporting to the Bureau in November 2020. The work of the multidisciplinary EcAP Task Force is very important, while an analysis is also needed on how the projects and partners are supporting the 2023 MED QSR preparation.

37. Plan Bleu/RAC presented the progress in the preparation of the MED 2050 foresight study, based on the revised roadmap adopted at COP 21. While the work is progressing, a face to face meeting planned for spring 2020 was postponed and the timeline has been shifted slightly due to the COVID-19 crisis. A meeting on the possible consequences of the COVID-19 crisis is being organized, while work is ongoing on socioeconomic issues. A high-level expert is expected to join the team during summer, while there are already some first outputs: an outlook on the demography of the region; a comparison between trends foreseen in past reports and what actually happened; and ongoing work on the long-term trends until 2050. The Coordinator noted that these outputs are very interesting and should be shared when available. The Plan Bleu/RAC Director also referred to the publication of the 2019 SoED report, noting that a professional formatting is underway and that the launching date may move to early July to accommodate the technical review requested by the Bureau. She added that exchanges take place with the gender specialist of UNEP, to ensure gender parity.

38. The Plan Bleu/RAC Director also referred to the First Assessment Report on the Current State and Risks of Climate and Environmental Changes in the Mediterranean (MAR 1), expressing her satisfaction on the report and on the work of MedECC, a large group of experts specializing on different aspects of climate change. She added that the document has been released for consultation, mainly regarding the facts presented in this purely scientific report. The consultations will take place until the end of June 2020, while a meeting is scheduled for September 2020. The report is to be presented in the UfM Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Change and then to the Plan Bleu/RAC Focal Points meeting and to COP 22. She added that MedECC has also prepared an abstract for the MED 2050 foresight study.

39. MED POL presented work progress in relation to development of (a) the six Regional Plans on pollution, and (b) the updating of the Annexes to the pollution-related Protocols. The Head of MED POL that work is already in progress for developing three regional plans for wastewater treatment, sewage sludge management and for updating the marine litter regional plan. The terms of reference for the countries’-designated working groups of experts that will review the developed Regional Plans have been revised following the discussions at the 89th Bureau meeting. The invitation letter for nominating experts will be shortly distributed. ToRs for the consultants to support this work have been advertised, while further ToRs regarding the socioeconomic aspects are being prepared. Regarding the updating of the Annexes to the LBS and Dumping Protocols, head of MED POL noted that a document providing proposed updates by the Secretariat was already prepared. Suggested proposals will form the basis for further work to update the annexes to these two protocols. Meetings of the working groups are planned to take place in October/November 2020 and March 2021.

40. The Plan Bleu/RAC Director presented briefly the progress in the preparation of the mid-term evaluation of the MSSD, followed by the SCP/RAC representative who referred to the preparations of the mid-term evaluation of the SCP Action Plan and its links with the MSSD mid-term evaluation. She also presented the progress in developing a set of regional measures to support the development of green and circular businesses and to strengthen the demand for more sustainable products, in line with the roadmap adopted at COP 21. The Director of REMPEC noted the importance of MAP components being timely consulted on these processes while he also informed the meeting on the progress of the preparation of the post-2021 Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships. He noted that it is important to ensure that the strategy takes into account the relevant work of partners and therefore a brainstorming group has been formed with main. A survey on the Strategy is being initiated and, following this, the first draft strategic document will be prepared. The importance of taking into account the Strategy for the preparation of the new MTS was also highlighted.

41. Regarding the calendar of meetings and events it was suggested that this should be revised when a clearer picture on the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis is available.

b) Update on the Host Country Agreements of RACs

42. The MAP Programme Officer informed the ECP of the progress in relation to the meeting with host countries of RACs on the Host Country Agreements, scheduled for 5 June 2020. In the ensuing discussion, it was noted that the RACs are very different entities and it will be difficult to achieve a harmonized approach. The Coordinator reminded the meeting of the relevant mandate given at COP 21 and noted that this mandate should be used in order to find principles that can apply to all RACs, while ensuring a relationship with host countries that will facilitate the RAC's work, taking into account the different character of each RAC.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
8.	Exchange information on meetings postponed/cancelled due to COVID-19	CU and MAP Components	Continuous
9.	Updates on the tentative calendar of UNEP/MAP meetings and major international events	CU in coordination with all MAP Components	June/July 2020
10.	Consider inviting consultant on MTS preparation to meetings on major strategic processes, as appropriate	All MAP Components	Continuous

VII. Agenda Item 7: Partnerships and MoUs

a) Preparation of the bilateral meeting with UfMS and update of the MoU

b) Update of the MoU with FAO/GFCM

c) Preparation of the meeting with partners on the “Joint Strategy”

d) Updates from MAP Components on bilateral agreements

43. The Coordinator updated the participants in relation to the progress regarding the cooperation with the main partners. Initially he referred to the collaboration with the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean. He noted that a meeting is scheduled for 28 May with both UfMS Divisions on Water, Environment and Blue Economy and on Energy and Climate Action, and that the Secretary General of UfMS, Mr. Nasser Kamel, will also participate in the meeting. He extended his thanks to the MAP components for providing inputs in relation to the update of the MoU with UfMS. He added

that the cooperation should focus on the complementarities of the two organizations and that the COVID-19 crisis is an opportunity to enhance collaboration.

44. The Plan Bleu/RAC Director stressed that the cooperation with UfMS on MedECC has been very successful and that reference to MedECC should be included in an updated MoU. The representative of SCP/RAC noted that there are many areas of common interest with UfMS and that UfM could provide financing to Western Balkan countries in relation to the SWITCHMED II project. The representative of INFO/RAC also noted that together with the CU there is cooperation with the communication officer of UfMS in relation to the preparations of the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Process.

45. In relation to the cooperation with GFCM the Coordinator informed the participants that a joint project proposal has been submitted to GEF and the results of its evaluation by the GEF Council are expected soon. He also noted that the preparations for the update of the MoU with GFCM will start soon. The representative of INFO/RAC highlighted that the update of the MoU with GFCM is important in order to start with the relevant work on the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme.

46. The MAP Programme Officer referred to the progress in fostering cooperation with GFCM, ACCOBAMS and IUCN-Med, with the objectives to ensure the conservation and the sustainable use of the marine biodiversity in the Mediterranean through the application of the Ecosystem Approach, following the relevant COP 21 mandate. He noted that a letter was sent to partner organizations, and that, following the letter, a meeting has been scheduled for 25 June. During the ensuing discussion it was agreed that a provisional agenda of the meeting would be prepared and that SPA/RAC would prepare a short concept note to discuss internally. The possibility of an informal mechanism would be explored, based on the work already in place, that would enhance cooperation beyond the existing bilateral MoUs.

47. In relation to bilateral agreements of MAP components with other partners, the Director of SPA/RAC informed the meeting of two agreements with MEDPAN under preparation, that were shared with the CU. He also informed that an agreement with ACCOBAMS will follow. The Coordinator informed participants that the CU will soon provide comments and feedback on these agreements, and that the process to be followed is described in the “Framework for consultation among RACs, the Coordinating Unit and the Bureau as regards the development and conclusion of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and other legal instruments alike”.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
11.	Inputs on updating the MoU with GFCM	MAP Components, following request from Coordinating Unit	June/July 2020
12.	Preparation of the meeting with partners on area-based management measures	CU and SPA/RAC	June 2020

VIII. Agenda Item 8: Date and Venue of the 42nd ECP Meeting

48. The meeting discussed the timing of the next ECP meetings. It was decided that a meeting dedicated on the preparation of the new MTS will take place on 8-9 July 2020, and that each MAP component will prepare an analysis in advance of this meeting based on questions to be prepared by the CU. The next ECP meeting after the one of July was tentatively planned to take place on 22-23 or 29-30 September 2020.

IX. Agenda Item 9: Any Other Matters

49. The Deputy Coordinator referred to the evaluation of the MedMPA project. She noted that the comments received should be also taken into account in the preparation of the new MTS, adding that this is also relevant for other projects that have been finalized. The issue of building on the success of past projects should be followed-up, and this was proposed to be discussed in a next ECP meeting. She also referred to work done by the Coordinating Unit, Plan Bleu/RAC and MED POL to launch a collaboration with the OECD, focusing mainly on the OECD's experience from its environmental performance reviews, on sustainable financing, on economic instruments, on ocean governance and on ocean science.

50. The SCP/RAC representative informed the meeting that a Blue Economy output module was being added to the SwitchMed project, as a regional policy component, mainly in relation to the MSSD and to the LBS Protocol. She added that a project proposal submitted to the ENI-CBC Med instrument was accepted, focusing on circular economy in the textile sector (Stand Up). The SPA/RAC Director noted that a new phase of the MAVA project was accepted and will run up to the end of 2022, when the MAVA foundation will close its support to biodiversity issues.

	Action Item	Responsibility	Deadline
13.	Include in the Provisional Agenda of next ECP meeting an item on capitalizing on the successes/best practices of past projects	Coordinating Unit	Next ECP meeting (autumn 2020)

51. The meeting was closed by the Coordinator at 17:00 on 20 May 2020.

Annex I
List of participants

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COORDINATION PANEL

MED POL

Mr. Mohamad Kayyal
Head of MED POL
Tel: +30 210 727 3122
Email: mohamad.kayyal@un.org

**INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATION REGIONAL
ACTIVITY CENTRE (INFO/RAC)**

Ms. Lorenza Babbini
Director
Tel: +3906 5007 2277
Email: lorenza.babbini@info-rac.org

Mr. Arthur Pasquale
Deputy Director
Tel: +39 32 8941 0002
Email: arthur.pasquale@info-rac.org

**PLAN BLEU REGIONAL ACTIVITY
CENTRE (PB/RAC)**

Ms. Elen Lemaitre-Curri
Director
Tel: +33 6 4769 2407
Email: elemaitre-curri@planbleu.org

**PRIORITY ACTIONS
PROGRAMME REGIONAL
ACTIVITY CENTRE (PAP/RAC)**

Ms. Zeljka Skaricic
Director
Tel: +385 2134 0471
Email: zeljka.skaricic@paprac.org

**REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION
EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE
FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA
(REMPEC)**

Mr. Gabino Gonzalez
Head of Office
Tel: +356 2133 7296
Email: ggonzalez@rempec.org

**SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS
REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE
(SPA/RAC)**

Mr. Khalil Attia
Director
Tel: +216 7120 6649
Email: director@rac-spa.org

**SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION REGIONAL
ACTIVITY CENTRE (SCP/RAC)**

Mr. Roger Garcia i Noguera
Deputy Director
Tel: +34 93 553 87 90
Email: rgarcia@scprac.org

Ms. Magali Outters
Team Leader Policy Area
Tel: +34 93 554 16 66
Email: moutters@scprac.org

**COORDINATING UNIT OF THE MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN - SECRETARIAT TO
THE BARCELONA CONVENTION**

Mr. Gaetano Leone

Coordinator

Tel: +30 210 727 3101

Email: gaetano.leone@un.org

Ms. Tatjana Hema

Deputy Coordinator

Tel: +30 210 727 3115

Email: tatjana.hema@un.org

Mr. Ilias Mavroeidis

Programme Management Officer

Tel: +30 210 727 3132

Email: ilias.mavroeidis@un.org

Mr. Stavros Antoniadis

Policy and Programming Expert

Tel: +30 210 727 3140

Email: stavros.antoniadis@un.org

Ms. Virginie Hart

Consultant

Email: virginie.hart@gmail.com

Annex II
Agenda

Agenda

- Agenda Item 1** Opening of the Meeting
- Agenda Item 2** Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work
- Agenda Item 3** COVID-19 and the UNEP/MAP response
- a) Concrete implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on the PoW implementation
 - b) Possible impacts of COVID-19 and proposed responses by the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system
- Agenda Item 4** Follow-up to the 40th ECP meeting
- a) Overview of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Work, including on the work of UNEP/MAP Task Forces
 - b) Update on the applicability of the GDPR EU regulation to MAP
- Agenda Item 5** Preparation of the new Medium-Term Strategy
- a) Update on the process and the involvement of the ECP
 - b) Possible elements for the structure of the new MTS
- Agenda Item 6** Follow-up to COP 21 and to the 89th Bureau meeting
- a) Discussion on major processes and strategic documents (with focus on Data Management Policy, SAP BIO, MED SO_x ECA, 2023 MED QSR, MED 2050 Foresight Study, Updated Annexes to Pollution Protocols, Regional Pollution Plans, etc.)
 - b) Update on the Host Country Agreements of RACs
- Agenda Item 7** Partnerships and MoUs
- a) Preparation of the bilateral meeting with UfMS and update of the MoU
 - b) Update of the MoU with FAO/GFCM
 - c) Preparation of the meeting with partners on the “Joint Strategy”
 - d) Updates from MAP Components on bilateral agreements
- Agenda Item 8** Date and Venue of the 42nd ECP Meeting
- Agenda Item 9** Any Other Matters