



United Nations
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MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

First Meeting of the
Socio-Economic Committee

Athens, 27-29 September 1988

PRIORITY ACTIONS PROGRAMME
SITE-SPECIFIC COUNTRY PILOT
PROJECTS: REASONS AND PURPOSE

(Explanatory paper)

UNEP.

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P.A.P. SITE-SPECIFIC COUNTRY PILOT PROJECTS: REASONS AND PURPOSE

1. Background Information

The Executive Director of UNEP presented to the Fifth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and its related protocols (Athens, 7-11 September 1987) a document explaining the new global orientation of MAP which has geared its activity to the development of environmentally sound integrated management of the Mediterranean coast through, among others, the process of integrated planning. This orientation implies a harmonized involvement of all MAP components as well as relevant international institutions (UNEP/IG.74/3.Add.2).

The 1988-1989 Workplan of the Priority Actions Programme, adopted at the Meeting of the National Focal Points for PAP (Split, 24-26 June 1987) and approved by the Fifth Meeting of the Contracting Parties, contains the principles of the orientation of PAP towards practical application of results and experiences obtained through all priority actions and the implementation of these, in direct cooperation with national and local authorities, institutions and experts, on 6 selected sites. Focussing of PAP on integrated planning and management of Mediterranean coastal zones through Country Pilot Projects (CPPs) fully fits in the new global orientation of MAP.

2. Objectives and Purpose of the Paper

The main objective of this paper is to inform on the possibilities of setting up a permanent co-operation of PAP/MAP with interested countries of the Mediterranean region on building up a system of integrated planning of coastal development and environmentally sound management of its resources. Country Pilot Projects are expected to contribute to these efforts.

It is, therefore, necessary to explain the role and potentials of PAP and MAP in the implementation of the projects, possible modes of their organization and expected results of cooperation between PAP/MAP and the countries involved.

The paper is primarily addressed to those who take decision on the involvement of a country in a CPP (National Focal Points, in the first place), members of other decision-taking bodies who may be in the position to decide (directly or indirectly) on the CPP, as well as to non-planners and non-managers who nonetheless need to learn something about that.

3. Integrated Planning and Management of Coastal Zones: the Process and its Importance

"Development" can be defined as a process aimed at a general increase of the economic and social well-being of a given area which fully respects the environment and the area's resources being transformed through the achievement of the development goals. As "environment" is to be understood in holistic terms, therefore comprising physical as well as social resources, and as

"development" is to be viewed as a comprehensive process, the environmental and development objectives should be complementary and interdependent.*

As development has an all-embracing implication, the relevant planning process should be based on an integrated approach.

The integrated planning is a step forward in relation to the hitherto predominant types of planning. Contrary to the sectorial planning, such as separate economic, social and physical planning, the integrated planning strives for analytical understanding and establishment of interrelations and co-ordination among major development components. This secures a comprehensive coverage of a whole range of human activities in a given area.

The integrated planning is expected to provide a consistent and long-term framework for achieving a wished-for structure of the area's development which will be capable of incorporating and integrating economic, social, spatial and environmental components. At the same time, it should (a) provide instruments for achieving the inner balance in terms of location and distribution of activities, population, physical and social infrastructure while conserving, to the highest possible degree, the natural environment; and (b) offer a rationale of setting up a permanent environmentally sound management of the area's resources.

The character of integrated planning is process- and action-oriented.

The process-oriented character of integrated planning means that the preparation of an ultimate product-plan, as an ideal state which is to be reached in a certain future time, should not be its objective. Rather, the objective of integrated planning should be the provision of a framework for planning activities to be continuously carried out with the aim of achieving a permanent and environmentally sound management of all resources in a given area. This process incorporates several phases, namely, evaluation of the existing state and trends; formulation of goals and objectives; definition of the planning strategy, detailed proposals and policies; assessment of plan feasibility and implementation; monitoring and control over plan implementation. Continuity of planning implies a cyclic repetition of these phases or a modification of planning solutions should the monitoring register changes of the conditions which necessitated these solutions to have been proposed. Building "feedback loops" in the planning mechanism secures a degree of flexibility which is crucial for a realistic planning. Needless to say, the development strategy framework must be respected at all times. Such a view of the integrated planning process calls for a corresponding organizational and institutional structure.

The action-oriented character of integrated planning stems from its concern being focused on the most critical problems of the planning area (identified in the initial stages of planning), and on their resolution effectuated through specific projects which should start off as soon as their organization and financial support are secured.

* For more on the same subject, see: Tolba, M.K., Development without Destruction: Evolving Environmental Perceptions, 1982, Dublin: Tycooly International.

Furthermore, integrated planning is a rational process since it is grounded on the existing analyses, plans, studies and projects aiming at their co-ordination. It is mostly based on available data, thus reducing the effort of collecting new information to minimum.

Both the essential characteristics of the integrated planning process underline the importance of a permanent cooperation with local authorities, experts and institutions, this making the approach to carrying out CPPs different from the approach to some other activities which start out with the commitment of a group composed of mostly foreign experts who are expected to prepare a plan which is, once their work is completed, left to local experts and institutions (who are usually either partially or marginally involved in the plan preparation) to carry it into effect.

Among the reasons why the cooperation with local experts and institutions is essential, the following should be pointed out:

- Local experts are frequently the most competent persons for identifying the current problems of the project area. By making use of their knowledge the time otherwise needed for the analytical phases of the plan is considerably reduced.
- Involvement of local experts from the outset secures the planning to continue after PAP and MAP specialists have left the project area.
- Training of local experts either in planning tools or techniques is thus provided at a relatively low cost.

4. Possible Forms of Cooperation within CPPs

The bulk of MAP's past activity has been focused on the monitoring of the state of the sea and interventions aimed at improving the state of the natural system. The emerging understanding that the sources of problems are mostly land-based, has led to refocusing MAP on activities carried out in coastal zones. Harmonization of global development with the receptive capacity of the environment calls for a permanent process of integrated planning, as well as for a rational management of resources as its practical application. It is clear that a programme such as MAP per se cannot meet such an ambitious goal. That is why cooperation with local authorities, institutions, experts and general public of the Mediterranean region becomes an imperative objective. And, country pilot projects are indeed an efficient form of establishing this cooperation.

In carrying out country pilot programmes, the role of PAP and MAP - the centres which have developed a large network of relevant activities, institutions and experts - is primarily catalytic. While keeping in mind that their financial resources are limited and hardly sufficient for an all-inclusive inauguration of the process of integrated planning and management of resources in Mediterranean coastal areas, it should be emphasized that these programmes are still capable of assisting in the creation of a solid basis for further larger interventions. Their catalytic role lies in (a) galvanizing interest of local as well as national authorities, institutions and experts in cooperation; (b) making international knowledge and technologies available; (c) procuring necessary support for

expertise, training and minimum equipment which some countries are not capable of providing due to unfavourable balance of payments; (d) introducing techniques and tools for environmentally sound management; (e) cooperating with international funding institutions; (f) accentuating problems of an area by placing them in a wider national and international context; and (g) generally, promoting the environmental awareness.

Within CPP programmes, a number of areas is selected in interested Mediterranean countries. These areas have to be specific in terms of development problems and their impact on the state of environment, and there must be a need expressed for a short- and long-term solution of these problems. At the same time, these areas have to be typical so that the experience in resolving the problems faced there could be used in the entire Mediterranean coastal zone. It is essential that the countries confirm their interest in launching CPPs on their respective territories, and to allow further dissemination of crucial and typical outputs arrived at in course of the projects. Each interested country should guarantee necessary organizational and institutional conditions, primarily a pool of local and national experts capable of securing a continuity of the integrated planning and management process.

The contents of CPPs will depend upon the characteristics of the problem in a given area. The projects may, for example, be focused on a comprehensive (integrated) understanding and analysis, as well as on the provision of appropriate guidelines for tackling development problems in consistency with the need for a rational use of the area's resources. Not seldom, though, a need would arise for resolving only sectorial problems pertaining to specific issues of disturbed balance in natural systems. However, in this case, it is to be assumed that the basic development parameters, which usually are in the root of the specific problems, will be fully taken into account. In all projects, the Environmental Impact Assessment will be introduced.

The activities of PAP and MAP cover a whole range of diverse development-versus-environment problems which may appear in selected areas. A substantive contribution of PAP may relate to the use of experience gained in the frame of its priority actions. Objectives and topics of individual actions have not been chosen at random. They are the result of focusing PAP activities over a number of years on crucial problems of the Mediterranean region. An overview of relevant priority actions will help understand the contribution of PAP to the preparation of site-specific country pilot projects:

(a) "Integrated Planning and Management of Mediterranean Coastal Zones"

The exchange of experience and knowledge of interdependence between coastal development and resources, as well as of interrelations between integrated planning and environmentally sound management and development of coastal areas; training and co-operation in the application of the region-specific methodology of integrated planning.

(b) "Water Resources Management for Mediterranean Islands and Isolated Coastal Areas"

Consulting and assistance to interested national authorities and

institutions in resolving the problems of islands and coastal areas lacking fresh water, by use of conventional and non-conventional water resources; modelling of aquifer management.

(c) "Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Mediterranean Historic Settlements"

Provision of demonstration studies and region-specific methodological basis for interventions (the protection and rehabilitation practice) in historic settlements.

(d) "Solid and Liquid Waste Management"

The improvement of solid and liquid waste management in coastal areas; alleviation of undesirable effects of discharged effluent by determining discharge criteria and engineering basis for submarine outfall designs; upgrading sanitary conditions in rural and urban areas through improved planning, maintenance and operation of appropriate water management systems.

(e) "PAP/FAO Co-operative Project on Environmentally Sound Management of Mediterranean Aquaculture"

Monitoring programmes and evaluation of environmental parameters relevant for production programming and plant designs.

(f) "Development of Mediterranean Tourism Harmonized with the Environment"

Identification of problems and experience in the field; assessment of carrying capacity for coastal areas planned for tourism development harmonized with the environment.

(g) "Promotion of Soil Protection as an Essential Component of the Environmental Protection of Mediterranean Coastal Areas"

Promotion of and support to preparatory activities for a co-operative project on runoff erosion monitoring, and assistance to interested countries in resolving specific problems in this field.

(h) "Land Use Planning in Earthquake Zones"

Assistance to countries in activities related to mitigation of seismic risk; introduction of risk mitigation procedure in urban and regional planning and management of Mediterranean coastal zones.

(i) "Renewable Sources of Energy"

Assessment of renewable energy potentials and assistance in applying feasible techniques for renewable energy utilization.

(j) "Environmental Impact Assessment"

Training and co-operation in applying the region-specific EIA methodology and procedure.

Inputs of other MAP components (MED POL, LBS, Blue Plan, ROCC and SPA) can be also provided. In accordance with their possibilities, PAP and MAP will secure the application of international knowledge through the involvement of international experts, training of national experts and representatives in other countries, provision of necessary minimum equipment for use over the duration of projects, cooperation in the formulation of proposals for international financial support, etc.

5. Expected Results

CPPs can be expected to yield the following outputs:

- A permanent cooperation of local and national institutions will be developed with Mediterranean experts and institutions as well as with international organizations. Using primarily integrated planning as a tool, this cooperation will be focused on the establishment of an environmentally sound management of resources.
- Answers to some priority issues of a pilot area will be given within a relatively short time.
- In the conditions of stringent finances which is the problem common to PAP, MAP and the countries of the region, analyses of existing problems and solutions to urgent ones, preliminary studies for integrated plans, programme proposals, etc., will be obtained at a relatively low cost, as well as a sound basis for seeking international financial support for follow-up activities.
- Introducing PAP/MAP experiences in selected areas will be a practical test of gained knowledge.
- Local experts will be trained and institutions prepared to become the core of a future permanent cooperation in establishing the system of integrated planning and environmentally sound management on a local, national and, finally, international level.