



**Mediterranean
Action Plan**
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Convention



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Plan Bleu's National Focal Points Meeting

By videoconference, 19-20 May 2021

Agenda Item 6.2: Transition towards sustainable development: Living in harmony with Nature

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Introductory note

This working document presents the mandates received by Plan Bleu / RAC from Contracting Parties up to and during COP21, for activities related to transition to sustainable development / Living in harmony with Nature, the up to date achievements of Plan Bleu / RAC to implement these mandates; proposed follow-up activities for the next biennium, and some elements for possible recommendations to be adopted by the Plan Bleu's National Focal Points meeting.

Agenda for Plan Bleu's Focal Points meeting:

The Focal Points will be invited to provide comments and suggestions on the next steps during the current biennium up to the COP22; as well as on the proposed activities for the next biennium, in relation with the topic of transition to sustainable development / Living in harmony with Nature. The Focal Points might agree on formalized recommendations on this topic as outcomes of the meeting.

1. Plan Bleu's mandates

1. One of the missions of Plan Bleu / RAC is monitoring the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development.
2. The UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy (MTS) 2016-2021 includes the Strategic Outcome *1.4 Knowledge and understanding of the state of the Mediterranean Sea and coast enhanced through mandated assessments for informed policy-making* and its Key Output *1.4.4: Interface between science and policy-making strengthened through enhanced cooperation with global and regional scientific institutions, knowledge sharing platforms, dialogues, enhance of good practices publications*.
3. The Meeting of Plan Bleu's Focal Points (Marseille, France, 28-29 May 2019) appreciated Plan Bleu's role in the Interreg Med Programme, welcomed the numerous outputs and supported the involvement of Plan Bleu in the next phase of the Interreg Med programme (InnoBlueGrowth, BleuTourMed, PANACeA). The same meeting welcomed Plan Bleu's activities on Nature Based Solutions and the Centre's involvement in the IUCN 2020 congress; it pointed out the importance of such solutions for a concrete implementation of sustainable development in the Mediterranean countries.
4. The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention included further activities in the Programme of Work adopted during COP21 as the follows:
 - *1.4.4.1: Implement, sustain, and strengthen the mechanism to assist Barcelona Convention implementation with scientific institutions and promote their participation in research and development activities and facilitate transfer of technology*
 - *7.2.3.2: Promote the integration of Nature Based Solutions in Climate Change Adaptation Strategies. Expected deliverables are a) Good practices on Nature Based solutions, including innovative policy instruments identified; b) NBS promoted and disseminated, including potential Side event at IUCN 2020; c) Analyses making the case for NBS, including through economic valuation of ecosystem services identified/ developed and disseminated; d) Revised / enriched policy paper for consideration by national and regional governments prepared*

2. Elements of context

5. The MTS 2020 – 2021 Core Theme 3 *Land and sea interaction and processes* states that *this theme corresponds to the first MSSD objective and to SDG 14 and 15 and defines Coastal zones are complex natural systems exposed to various natural processes with important interactions between their land and sea parts. They represent the major interface between humans and the environment as coastal ecosystems (terrestrial and marine ones) are those most heavily impacted by human activity.*

6. This document provides information on two distinct but linked areas of work of Plan Bleu related to transitions towards sustainable development: Living in harmony with Nature, as follows: (i) Interreg Med projects (Mediterranean Biodiversity), (ii) Nature based solutions, in particular but not restricted to support to adaptation to climate change.

7. Plan Bleu / RAC has been involved in the previous phase of the Interreg Med project PANACeA (2016-2019) and now is involved in the new phase: the Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community (2019-2022).

8. The role of Plan Bleu in the Interreg Med project is to contribute to the capitalisation of good practices and the transfer of technology and knowledge developed in the Mediterranean region. The Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community relies on nearly 300 organizations (public authorities, private companies, universities, NGOs and international organizations) in the Mediterranean. This community continues to promote biodiversity protection by capitalizing and disseminating the good practices developed by its 15 projects.

3. Main achievements in 2020 - 2021

3.1. Support to strengthen the interface between science and policy-making through enhanced cooperation with scientific institutions – (Programme of work item 1.4.4.1)

9. Under the Interreg Med projects, Plan Bleu leads targeted capitalization activities which relate to this item of the Programme of Work.

10. Under the PANACeA project (now Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community) which gathers 15 thematic projects, different topics have been developed, such as: marine litter, climate change, small-scale fisheries, monitoring and MPA management and wetlands, among others. Plan Bleu has contributed to the following outputs:

- The **Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection tools Catalogue**¹ (available in English, French and Arabic), which includes tools for ecosystem-based management in the Mediterranean, which are developed by the Biodiversity Protection Community projects. These tools may be adopted and implemented by a wide range of stakeholders, including MPA managers, local authorities, citizens, researchers, and a diverse range of stakeholders (e.g. fishermen, business sector);
- The **Mediterranean biodiversity protection knowledge platform**², which includes a digital Library of resources from and for the projects in the community, a spatial data tool to represent the partners in the various initiatives and their spatial data collected (i.e. Posidonia beaches, temperatures, pilot sites participating...), including a catalogue of other external spatial data sources related to biodiversity and protection in the Mediterranean (i.e. protected area coverage in the Mediterranean, EBSAs, Med-IAMER results, ACCOBAMS...);

¹ [PANACeA Tools Catalogue.pdf \(interreg-med.eu\)](#)

² [MBPKP | Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Knowledge Platform \(uma.es\)](#)

- The **MedBioLitter**³ thematic database on research efforts concerning marine litter interactions with marine biodiversity in the Mediterranean;
- The **Declaration for Ecosystem-based approaches for biodiversity protection and management**⁴ (available in EN, FR, IT, SP, AR and MT);
- The technical factsheet on “**Using Ecological Sensitivity to guide Marine Renewable Energy Potentials in the Mediterranean region**”⁵;
- The MBPC has also organised numerous capitalisation events such as the last one during the EU Green Week on “**Healthy wetlands: our best natural answer to the biodiversity crises: the Mediterranean case**”⁶. The event, to which Plan Bleu was an active contributor, gathered international experts and EU policy representatives to highlight the status of wetlands in policy and research, and the pressing need for agreements and actions to protect and sustainably use wetland habitats. It also showcased European projects’ regional efforts to develop tools and solutions to achieve these objectives in Mediterranean wetlands.

11. More capitalisation events will be organised to capitalise good practices and to improve the transfer of knowledge between science and policy-making. The Blue Growth, Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection and Sustainable Tourism communities will work together on regional guidelines on sustainability on cruise and recreational boating, in particular regarding boating within Marine Protected Areas.

3.2 Promotion of Nature-based solutions (Programme of work item 7.2.3.2) and indicators linking biodiversity and climate change (Programme of work item 7.4.1.1)

12. A consortium of 13 Mediterranean organizations working in the conservation field, including Plan Bleu and SPA / RAC, collaborated to put in place, with the support of MAVA Foundation, a Mediterranean partnership stand during the IUCN 2020 congress (MEDStand) which aims to i) showcase the importance of the Mediterranean Basin as a biodiversity hotspot with its cultural specificity; ii) increase the visibility of the work done in the Mediterranean region related to biodiversity conservation, sustainable use of nature resources, nature-based solutions, etc. ; iii) share the latest nature conservation initiatives, innovations and solutions to better integrate human activities with the natural environment and iv) highlight the importance of intergovernmental/regional / multipartner cooperation, featuring successful initiatives in this regard.

13. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the IUCN congress has been postponed several times and is now planned to be held from 3 to 11 September 2021 in Marseille.

14. Within the MEDStand, Plan Bleu will co-organize 3 sessions:

- “Current state of the Mediterranean environment and development and linked drivers, pressures, impact and responses”; This session will be the opportunity to highlight the outputs from the SoED2020;
- “Transfer of knowledge on impact of climate change on Mediterranean ecosystems & tools”; This session will be the opportunity to highlight the MAR1 report from MedECC;
- “To cope with climate change: Work with Nature!” – Enhancing the Mediterranean’s climate resilience through nature-based solutions”; This session, co-organized with Tour du Valat, will build on outputs (policy paper, best practices) from the international workshop on NBS co-organized by Plan Bleu in 2019. The event will also be an opportunity for sharing the results of two thematic projects of the Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community (MPBC): the MPA Networks and MPA Engage. It will contribute to share best practices and challenges in terms of NBS, and to raise awareness of policy makers on the importance of healthy ecosystems for effective adaptation to climate change, specifically by bringing Nature-based Solutions into action.

³ https://panaceacatalogue.adabyron.uma.es/gvsigonline/core/public_project_load/marinelitter/

⁴ [SUPPORT THE MED BIODIVERSITY COMMUNITY DECLARATION \(jotform.com\)](https://www.jotform.com/survey/med-biodiversity-declaration/)

⁵ [MBPC Technical Factsheet on BAT BEP for Marine Renewable Energy FINAL.pdf \(interreg-med.eu\)](https://www.interreg-med.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/MBPC-Technical-Factsheet-on-BAT-BEP-for-Marine-Renewable-Energy-FINAL.pdf)

⁶ [MBPC report 22Oct 2020 FINAL 9nov20.pdf \(interreg-med.eu\)](https://www.interreg-med.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/MBPC-report-22Oct-2020-FINAL-9nov20.pdf)

15. A technical report entitled “Development of indicators to evaluate and monitor climate change impacts on socio-economic trends linked to Biodiversity and natural resources in Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs)” has been published in October 2020⁷.

4 Proposals of activities 2022 - 2023

During the biennium 2022-2023, Plan Bleu proposes to continue the work previously conducted and develop the following activities:

16. Under the programme: *Towards Healthy Mediterranean Ecosystems and Enhanced Biodiversity*, Outcome 2.1. *Ecosystem resilience improved through restoration of those with best regeneration potential*, Activity 1 *Promote the implementation of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration in the Mediterranean: Identify innovative actions, capitalize and promote replication*, Plan Bleu proposes:

- a. An activity on wetland / peatland restoration with 6 action sites in which Plan Bleu will develop an advocacy paper, dissemination of best practices and lessons learnt through a report, social media and dedicated events including a side-event during COP23 (pending approval of on-going external funding request);
- b. An activity on coastal reefs restoration with 4 pilot sites, developing an advocacy paper; and dissemination of best practices and lessons learnt through social media and in events (pending approval of on-going external funding request);
- c. A policy paper issued on transformative challenges for the conservation, restoration and wise use of biodiversity in the Mediterranean, co-funded by the Interreg Med MBPC project.

17. Under the programme: *Towards a Climate Resilient Mediterranean Outcome 3.1. Nature-based solutions implemented to prevent or reduce the impact of climate change on coastal and marine ecosystems/ Activity 1 Promote and develop tools for the application of nature-based solutions in the Mediterranean for adaptation and mitigation to climate change, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development/green economy*. Plan Bleu proposes to develop:

- a. A decision-making guide prepared for use and funding of Nature-based Solutions by local authorities in the Mediterranean;
- b. Assessments of socio-economic impacts of the practical implementation of NbS (thematic publications in different contexts, for example “in Mediterranean cities”);
- c. Guidelines based on best practices of nature-based solutions for climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development /green economy.

⁷ <https://planbleu.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Report-on-soc-ec-indicators-for-CC-monitoring-in-SPAMIs.pdf>