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28<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel

Athens, Greece, 22-23 March 2016

**Report of the Meeting**

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UNEP/MAP  
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## **I. Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting**

1. The 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel (ECP) was held in Athens, Greece on 22-23 March 2016. The meeting was chaired by the UNEP/MAP Coordinator and attended by the Heads of all MAP Components. The list of participants is presented in Annex I to this report.
2. Mr. Gaetano Leone, UNEP/MAP Coordinator opened the meeting at 9.30 and introduced the provisional agenda.

## **II. Agenda item 2: Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work**

3. The Coordinator welcomed the ECP members and thanked them for a successful COP 19.
4. The Coordinator informed ECP members that the 82<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Bureau would take place on the 19-20 April 2016 in Athens, Greece and recalled the Bureau membership.
5. The Coordinator referred to his missions abroad and meetings since COP 19. He announced that the priority of the MAP system for the current biennium would be on implementation. He stressed the importance of ECP coordination and partnership and acknowledged the efforts already made by ECP Members towards more inclusive ways of work.
6. The Coordinator updated ECP members on the status of the UNEP/MAP Coordination Unit's in terms of human resources. He informed the meeting of the closure of the Deputy Coordinator position and of the recruitment stages of the Governance Officer, Legal Officer and Social Economic Development Officer.
7. The Coordinator initiated an around the table discussion for ECP members comments and expectations on the 28<sup>th</sup> ECP Meeting. The main issues raised by ECP Members were the following: importance of bilateral talks with components to improve cooperation; concern for the short length of the current biennium but heavy in deliverables; need to mobilize resources; challenges of data collection; difficulties in terms of limited human and financial resources; need to better organize and start earlier discussions on the preparation of the budget for COP 20; need to expedite the process of approval of PCAs and disbursement of resources; and possibility to consider revised 3-year cycles instead of the current biennia of work for the MAP system.
8. The MAP Fund/Administrative Officer was invited to explain to ECP members the challenges faced with the administrative processes and ongoing technical difficulties of the new Umoja system. RACs were encouraged to share information on additional problems, if any.
9. In reference to the Host Countries Agreements, the Coordinator suggested to prepare together with the RACs an analysis for the Bureau meeting of October 2016, to clarify the various legal differences between the six countries hosting the RACs to the attention of the Contracting Parties.
10. The Coordinator informed that memberships of the Compliance Committee were moving forward. ECP Members were also notified that, in preparation for future MAP governance meetings, the Coordination Unit would apply the UN 16-page rule for Reports length and that RACs involvement in the revision of existing documents would be asked in due

time. He also called for the support of the ECP in mobilizing the interest of local authorities for the Global Environmental City Award in view of the COP 20.

### **III. Agenda item 3: Planning 2016-2017**

11. The Coordinator presented the draft timetable developed for internal use, showing the MAP Planning and Priorities for 2016 and 2017 with the aim to enhance cooperation efforts, planning, and coordination amongst components, by each part stating their major activities, major deliverables and outputs.

12. A common process and harmonized terminology amongst components is to be put in place in order to tackle occurring challenges and seek opportunities for collaboration. The Coordinator asked for ECP Members input to accurately update the MAP Planning tables by 1 April 2016. The Secretariat will revise the text in the tables for formulation and consistency and to send them back to ECP Members.

13. The Coordinator made it clear that there was a crucial need to find external funding.

14. INFO/RAC was briefed on the updates needed for the MED POL pollution, info and monitoring systems, the creation of a databank by 2016, having the infrastructure established and extend the info system to fit indicators under IMAP, together with the need to support countries in uploading documents.

15. Each component should start developing their relevant baselines and discuss them during the next ECP Meeting. Several ECP members stressed the complexity of the task but agreed that this was an urgent issue. It was suggested to prepare an explanatory paper for all components to be able to interpret indicators in the same way. As for now, these are different for each other and make up one of the biggest challenges when reporting.

16. The Coordinator suggested that INFO/RAC could organize a webinar on the INFOMAP system. It was agreed that this would be held during the second quarter of 2016.

17. The Coordinator reminded ECP Members that these tables were meant for planning purposes and not to be confused with the quarterly reporting and monitoring similar table that they need to start filling at the beginning of April 2016 for the first quarter of 2016.

18. The Coordinator suggested that for COP 20 one issue, one theme, one document needs to be identified that would be the flavor of the Meeting.

19. Several ECP members raised the difficulty of collecting and exploiting data, due to important differences amongst countries. It was reminded that in order to create common tools and processes amongst the Mediterranean countries, a period of two years at least was needed but, on the other hand, this would empower the scientific work of the RACs and of the MAP system. It was suggested by PB/RAC to hold a thematic meeting in order to design and consider each RACs' concrete contribution in coordinating one indicator each.

20. There is a need to find ways to better share information among components, clarify data access matters. Data sharing policy topic to be updated and discussed at COP level.

21. The meeting addressed cross-cutting themes. A discussion followed on the desirability of a stronger focus of the MAP system on issues related to sustainable tourism. PB/RAC offered to take the lead on starting an analysis on the issue of tourism, to be reviewed before COP 20.

**IV. Agenda item 4 Status of Project Documents**

22. It was emphasized that the RAC Projects Documents must be completed and finalized for action at UNEP HQs as soon as possible. The Coordinating Unit will do all the necessary to avoid delays that greatly hamper the activities of the Components.

**V. Agenda item 5 Financial and administrative issues**

23. Bilateral meetings between the components and the Fund/Administrative Officer if needed were agreed. ECP Members received an update on budget issues and procedures, including delays occurring through UMOJA.

**VI. Agenda item 6 Outreach (including names of RAC's), Information, and Publications**

24. The Coordinator informed ECP Members that the current MedPartnership Information Officer would soon leave the office and he was actively seeking for a solution. He mentioned that the new website was going to be finalized and launched very soon. The Coordinator asked INFO/RAC for an urgent update during the following week regarding its capacity in terms of information and communication support to the whole MAP systems. It was agreed that the current Information Officer would call for a meeting with INFO/RAC for hand-over.

25. Given the shortage of resources, the Coordinator urged ECP Members to find creative ways for making the most in terms of visibility and outreach. Collective and concerted work amongst components is needed, for optimal results. The use of similar designs, re-issuing certain documents based on existing resources and partnerships, were mentioned as simple but effective starting points. The Coordinator highlighted the need for a coherent and periodic communication set of action addressing the Contracting Parties and Partners regularly.

26. ECP members shared their suggestions of event opportunities to present UNEP MAP work to external parties. The Coordinator stressed the importance of dissemination opportunities for the decisions taken at COP 19.

27. In terms of visibility and in line with budget restrictions, the Coordinator suggested pragmatic, simple and rapidly feasible solutions to tackle today's challenges. He proposed to build on already existing events and inputs and presented a MAP Power Point presentation that needs to be further refined and used as appropriate for the context and audience of various events. ECP Members to send 3-5 bullets text to present their work, essential themes and a summary of each RAC's contribution to the implementation of the MAP mandate. This was a simple but important tool to generate interest and understanding of the MAP/Barcelona Convention.

28. The ECP Members were encouraged by the Coordinator to communicate on publications ideas with a purpose to outreach with the overall aim of enhancing the visibility of the MAP system. It was reminded that online publications were a way forward and a common policy on publications, crucial.

29. It was agreed that as soon as resources became available, all components would proceed with starting the publications process of the documents adopted at COP 19. Common overall look and cover page were needed. The above-mentioned Task Group will work on a common template, graphic design, logos, and legal aspects, during the second half of the year, and will review and update as needed the UNEP/MAP 2010 Communication Strategy document.

30. The Deputy Coordinator mentioned that in the past, there was a technical publication series and that all documents were prepared matching the latter. He suggested to be a good idea, to continue the specific publication series. It was agreed that this should be decided by the Task Group. The Coordinator stated that this could also be raised as an issue for the next COP, taking into consideration the importance of the matter for the reputation of the MAP system.
31. INFO/RAC agreed to create a picture database, with clear credits and locations. In-house material coming from partners and demonstrations is to be used and better exploited. INFO/RAC will inform the ECP on relevant developments during the next ECP Meeting.
32. It was agreed that the existing MAP Task Group on Information and Communications would meet soon, before the departure of the Information Officer.
33. ECP members shared with the Coordinator their concern regarding the public name of the RACs. External stakeholder have difficulties to refer to the RACs, due to the complexity to identify with the Centers. The Coordinator referred to the legal complexity of changing names, regarding the fact that the latter are explicitly referred to in decision by the Parties and Host Country Agreements. The Coordinator highlighted that, while taking into consideration that in terms of marketing, a more appealing name could be useful, changing the name of the RACs could become counterproductive, losing the existing link with UNEP/MAP.

## **VII. Agenda item 7 Reporting**

34. The idea of a tutorial on the BCRS to be presented in the second quarter of 2016 was evoked and a follow-up on the 2012 Reports, highlighted. There is a need for guidelines and for a new format to be put in place, to ease RACs work, and for a specific meeting on this theme to take place as soon as possible.
35. The Coordinator introduced the new Project Fiche that will facilitate the understanding of the activities of each component and the opportunities for collaboration and coordination. He asked ECP Members to comment and fill-in, by 8 April 2016. Project fiches were intended for non MTF funded projects in which components were already involved and/or applying, for information purposes only, not reporting. A compilation will be shared with all. The Coordinator encouraged ECP Members to stick to maximum two pages.
36. The participants spoke to the current complexity of the reporting and monitoring for the COP process and the urgent need for homogeneity. Quarterly tables of implementation are important for monitoring purposes and to show implementation status. The Coordinator took the opportunity to mention that there was a need for balance between reporting on impacts and activities, as well as a need to respect the maximum of 16 pages reports, recommended by UN guidelines.
37. An online system where the Components can update information is desirable. Once information is uploaded, one template could serve different documents. This could be done through a database from which the relevant reporting information would be easily extracted, as suggested by REMPEC Head of Office and MED POL Officer. It was agreed that REMPEC and MED POL would develop a reporting template by 11 April 2016.
38. The MED POL Programme Officer suggested to make a bibliography of all the reports, to link them in a in a logic way, to be updated with each reporting cycle with outcomes and outputs. Once created, the document or Excel sheet will enable an easy update every each quarter with hyperlinks for the whole MAP system. INFO/RAC should verify and

communicate if such Bibliography of Reports can be build-up. It was agreed that ECP members would send their proposal for a bibliography structure to INFO/RAC by 8 April 2016.

#### **VIII. Agenda item 8 Date and Venue of the 29<sup>th</sup> ECP meeting**

39. The REMPEC Head of Office invited all components to attend REMPEC 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Malta on 4 October 2016. After attending the high level meeting, he offered to host a two days meeting (5-6 October 2016) for the 29<sup>th</sup> ECP in Malta. This will be confirmed in due course, but no objection was raised to the REMPEC proposal.

40. PB/RAC and PAP/RAC made an open invitation for hosting next ECP Meetings.

41. The Coordinator announced that the Deputy Coordinator would be leaving the Coordination Unit soon, to take new functions at UNEP Headquarters, in recognition of his competences and work.

#### **IX. Agenda item 9 Any Other Matters**

42. The Coordinator informed ECP Members that Italian Cooperation Agreement was confirmed and the process of clearance was being finalized.

43. ECP Members raised issues to the Coordinator for discussion on security and safety of their missions. Due to increased political instability, ECP Members wanted to know if a specific protocol of security was in place and if the RAC staff could benefit of the UN safety and security procedures and coverage when on mission in dangerous areas for professional reasons.

44. The Coordinator acknowledged the seriousness of this issue and initiated a round of table discussion for ECP Members views. He confirmed to clarify RAC staff protection status in the MAP system with Headquarters. REMPEC informed other components that there was UNDSS training accessible online regarding security and guidelines, accessible to all.

45. The issue of the EC-sponsored Virtual Knowledge Center was raised. ECP Members were contacted to respond to questionnaire. The Coordinator informed ECP Members that whilst contacts were made with the European Commission on this matter for clarification, no additional information was given. REMPEC will distribute the questions they had received recently and the Coordinator re-check with the European Commission what was needed.

46. The MedPartnership Project Manager made a presentation on the draft Mediterranean Sea Programme. He encouraged ECP Members to give their thoughts and suggestions by 1 April 2016.

#### **X. Agenda item 10 Conclusions and Recommendations**

47. The conclusions of the meeting were summarized as described in the above paragraphs.

#### **XI. Agenda item 11 Closure of the Meeting**

48. DAY 1 Meeting closed at 19.00 and DAY 2, Meeting closed at 17.30.

## **Annex I**

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