

MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN BARCELONA CONVENTION

CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE
ENVIRONMENT AND THE COASTAL REGION OF THE
MEDITERRANEAN AND ITS PROTOCOLS

OVERVIEW



UNEP





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A FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION AND POLICY

The first ever United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972.

The conference provided the framework for comprehensive consideration of environmental issues and encouraging a common outlook and direction in efforts to improve the situation through cooperation and agreement.

The establishment of the [United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#) was one of the major outcomes of the Conference.

In 1974 UNEP established its [Regional Seas Programme](#) with the scope of coordinating activities aimed at the protection of the marine environment through a regional approach.

The Mediterranean Action Plan was the first initiative to be developed under the Programme and became the model for other Programmes across the globe.

In 1975, the Mediterranean States and the European Community approved the [Mediterranean Action Plan \(MAP\)](#) as the institutional framework for cooperation in addressing common challenges of environmental degradation.

The MAP's main objectives were to assist the Mediterranean Governments to assess and control marine pollution, to formulate their national environmental policies and to improve their

capacities to identify better options for development and sound decision bases for the allocation of resources. The MAP also endorsed the preparation of a framework convention for the protection of the marine environment against pollution, as well as two related protocols that would provide a legal basis for cooperation in protecting the Mediterranean marine environment.

The [Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution](#) (Barcelona Convention) was adopted in 1976, together with two Protocols addressing prevention of pollution by dumping from ships and aircraft, and cooperation in combating pollution in cases of emergency. The three legal instruments entered into force on 12 February 1978. The Convention also made provisions for additional legal instruments to be adopted and was soon complemented by the Protocol on pollution from land-based sources (1980), the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas (1982), and the Offshore Protocol (1994).

Although the MAP's initial focus was on marine pollution control, experience soon confirmed that socio-economic trends, combined with poor management and planning of development, are at the root of most

environmental problems, and that meaningful and lasting environmental protection is inseparably linked to social and economic development. The MAP's focus gradually widened from a sectoral approach to pollution control to integrated coastal zone planning and management as the key tool through which solutions are being sought. MAP Phase II was designed, taking into account the achievements and shortcomings of the MAP in the context of developments of environmental protection policies at the international level.

The Action Plan for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Sustainable Development of the Coastal Areas of the Mediterranean (MAP Phase II), adopted in 1995, aims to achieve the following objectives:

- to ensure the sustainable management of natural marine and land resources and to integrate the environment in social and economic development, and land-use policies;
- to protect the marine environment and coastal zones through prevention of pollution and by reduction and, as far as possible, elimination of pollutant inputs, whether chronic or accidental;
- to protect nature, and protect and enhance sites and landscapes of ecological or cultural value;
- to strengthen solidarity among Mediterranean coastal States in managing their common heritage and resources for the benefit of present and future generations; and
- to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life.

The MAP's renewed focus was also reflected in the amendments of the Barcelona Convention legal instruments. The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention), adopted in 1995, provides a substantially extended field of application and defines the obligations of the Contracting Parties in protecting the environment and contributing to the sustainable development of the Mediterranean Region. These obligations include:

- the application of the precautionary principle in taking cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation;
- the application of the polluter pays principle for the cost of pollution prevention, control and reduction measures;
- the undertaking of environmental impact assessment for activities that are likely to cause a significant adverse impact on the marine environment; the promotion of cooperation in environmental impact assessment between and among States, including beyond the limits of their national jurisdiction, on the basis of notification,

exchange of information, and consultation;

- the promotion of the integrated management of the coastal zones taking into account the protection of areas of ecological and landscape interest and the rational use of natural resources.

The main objectives of the Barcelona Convention are to assess and control marine pollution;

- to ensure sustainable management of natural marine and coastal resources;
- to integrate the environment in social and economic development;
- to protect the marine environment and coastal zones through prevention and reduction of pollution, and as far as possible, elimination of pollution, whether land or sea-based;
- to protect the natural and cultural heritage;
- to strengthen solidarity among Mediterranean coastal States; and
- to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life.



Seven Protocols addressing specific aspects of Mediterranean environmental conservation complete the MAP legal framework:

- The Protocol for the Prevention of Pollution in the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft (adopted in 1976, amended in 1995);
- The Protocol concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea (adopted 2002, replacing the related Protocol of 1976);
- The Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (adopted in 1980, amended in 1996);
- The Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (adopted in 1995, replacing the related Protocol of 1982) and Annexes (adopted in 1996, amended in 2009, 2012, and 2013);
- The Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil (adopted in 1994);
- The Protocol on the Prevention of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (adopted in 1996);
- The Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean (adopted in 2008).



In addition to national legislation implementing the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, the Contracting Parties have also adopted a large number of strategies, action plans, programmes, and measures that facilitate and enhance the effectiveness of the legal instruments at the regional and national levels.

The Contracting Parties transmit to the Secretariat reports on the legal, administrative, and other measures taken for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, and the recommendations adopted during their meetings. The Contracting Parties' reports include information on the effectiveness of the measures as well as the problems encountered in their implementation. They also provide the basis for the assessment of compliance and for the provision of recommendations on the necessary steps to achieve full compliance.

In 2013, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols decided to launch a process to assess MAP Phase II with the intention of addressing effectively the challenge of sustainable development and the irreversible nature of impacts on the environment and resources, with a view to elaborating a long term common vision.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The 22 Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention are: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and the European Union.

The Contracting Parties decide on the MAP policies, strategies, budget and programme of work at their ministerial level meetings, held every two years. They appoint Focal Points to review the progress of work and ensure the implementation of recommendations at the national level. A rotating Bureau of six representatives of the Contracting Parties provides guidance on the implementation of the Programme of Work in the interim period between the biennial meetings.

The Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSDD) was established in 1995 as an advisory body to the Contracting Parties, to assist them in their efforts to integrate environmental issues in their socioeconomic programmes and to promote sustainable development policies in the Mediterranean region. The MCSDD is unique in its composition which includes, on an equal footing, government representatives, local

authorities, socioeconomic actors, IGOs, and NGOs. The MCSDD coordinated the preparation of the Mediterranean Strategy on Sustainable Development (MSSD), which was adopted by the Contracting Parties in 2005.

The Compliance Committee was established in 2008 to advise and assist the Contracting Parties in meeting their obligations under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, and to facilitate, promote, monitor, and ensure such compliance.

PLANNING AND PROGRAMME OF WORK

Activities carried out in the framework of the MAP and Barcelona Convention and its Protocols are planned based on an indicative programme that outlines the goals and expected outputs forecast for the following six years. The Contracting Parties review and revise the six-year programme, to ensure its effectiveness and relevance, considering the interim results and status of implementation submitted by the MAP Secretariat as well as the results of State of the Environment (SoE) and compliance monitoring exercises.

Each Meeting of the Contracting Parties also adopts a detailed two year

Programme of Work and corresponding Budget, specifying the actions that will be undertaken in the following biennium.

The MAP Programme of Work is designed to facilitate and promote the full implementation of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols and Strategies, as well as the Decisions and Recommendations adopted by the Meetings of the Contracting Parties. The Programme of Work is prepared and implemented by the MAP Coordinating Unit with the assistance of the Regional Activity Centres.

The Programme of Work is implemented through assessed contributions provided by the Contracting Parties and additional voluntary resources provided in support to specific projects and activities.

At their 15th meeting, the Contracting Parties agreed to progressively apply an ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment for the promotion of sustainable development. They adopted their ecological vision for achieving the good environmental status of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast as "A healthy Mediterranean

with marine and coastal ecosystems that are productive and biologically diverse for the benefit of present and future generations" and a list of related objectives, targets and indicators.

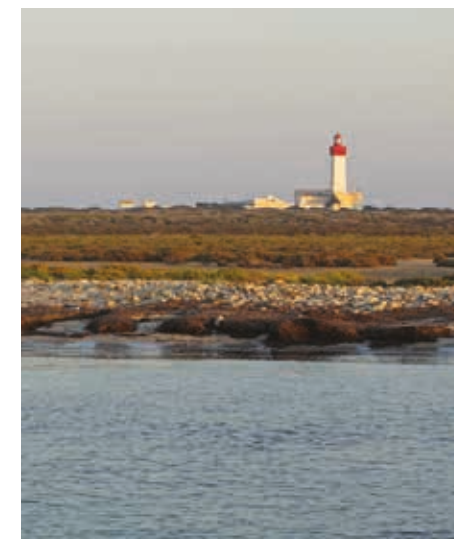
ORGANIZATION OF WORK

UNEP provides secretariat services to the Contracting Parties through its MAP Coordinating Unit, established in Athens in 1982, on the basis of a Host Country Agreement between Greece and UNEP. The Greek Government provides financial and logistical support to MAP and accords the Secretariat diplomatic status.

The overall mission of the Coordinating Unit is to promote and facilitate the implementation of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols and Strategies, and of the Decisions and Recommendations of the Contracting Parties. It ensures the good functioning of the MAP system, develops and implements the Programme of Work, and supports the Contracting Parties in meeting their commitments under the Convention. The Coordinating Unit organizes and provides the secretariat services for the meetings of bodies established within the MAP framework. It represents the Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention at the

international and regional levels and ensures high-level policy and political dialogue with external parties. The Coordinating Unit also ensures the functioning of the Reporting System and the Compliance Mechanism of the Barcelona Convention and Protocols, and is entrusted with regularly reporting on the State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean.

In implementing its Programme of Work, the Coordinating Unit receives the technical support and assistance of the MAP Components in accordance with their individual mandates, and with specific decisions of the Contracting Parties.





THE MEDITERRANEAN POLLUTION ASSESSMENT AND CONTROL PROGRAMME (MED POL)

MED POL's main objective is to contribute to the prevention and elimination of land-based pollution of the Mediterranean. MED POL assists the Contracting Parties, through planning and coordination of initiatives and actions, including promoting and catalyzing synergies and investment programmes, to meet their obligations under the Barcelona Convention and the Dumping, LBS and the Hazardous Wastes Protocols.

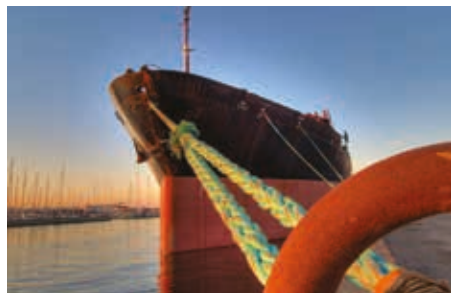
MED POL also facilitates the implementation of National Action Plans to address land-based pollution and LBS-related legally binding programmes and action plans; and continuously assess the status and trends of pollution of the Mediterranean.

Main fields of action:

- assessing the status and trends in the quality of the marine and coastal environment including health-related aspects of marine pollution;
- promoting policy reforms for the implementation of national action

plans, including programmes and measures, for the reduction and gradual elimination of pollution, the mitigation of the impacts of pollution and the restoration of systems damaged by pollution;

- catalyzing and facilitating the realization by the countries of the pollution reduction actions listed in their National Action Plans by bridging between countries and international and regional donors and financial institutions;
- regularly assessing loads of pollution reaching the Mediterranean, and determining trends in coastal areas including pollution hot-spots;
- collecting, analyzing and disseminating data and information on pressures and state of the marine and coastal environment;
- supporting the Contracting Parties in the above areas through capacity building and technical assistance.



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

REMPEC is administered by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in cooperation with UNEP. REMPEC's main objective is to contribute to preventing and reducing pollution from ships and combating pollution in case of emergency. REMPEC assists the Contracting Parties in meeting their obligations under the Barcelona Convention and the Prevention and Emergency Protocol as well as in implementing the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships, whose key objectives and targets are reflected in the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD). The Centre also assists the Contracting Parties which so request in mobilizing the regional and international

assistance in case of an emergency under the Offshore Protocol.

Main fields of action:

- strengthening the capacities of the coastal States in the region with a view to preventing pollution of the marine environment from ships and ensuring the effective implementation in the region of the rules that are generally recognized at the international level relating to the prevention of pollution from ships, and with a view to abating, combating and, to the fullest possible extent, eliminating pollution of the marine environment from shipping activities, including pleasure crafts;
- developing regional cooperation in the field of the prevention of pollution of the marine environment from ships, and facilitating cooperation among Mediterranean coastal States in order to respond to pollution incidents which result or may result in a discharge of oil or other hazardous and noxious substances and which require emergency actions or other immediate response;
- assisting coastal States of the Mediterranean region which so request in the development of their own national capabilities for response to pollution incidents which result or

may result in a discharge of oil or other hazardous and noxious substances and facilitating the exchange of information, technological cooperation and training;

- providing a framework for the exchange of information on operational, technical, scientific, legal and financial matters, and promoting dialogue aimed at conducting coordinated action at the national, regional and global levels for the implementation of the Prevention and Emergency Protocol; and
- assisting coastal States of the region, which in cases of emergency so request, either directly or by obtaining assistance from the other Parties, or when possibilities for assistance do not exist within the region, in obtaining international assistance from outside the region.



THE PLAN BLEU REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE (PB/RAC)

The Plan Bleu/RAC's main objective is to contribute to raising awareness of Mediterranean stakeholders and decision makers concerning environment and sustainable development issues in the region, by providing future scenarios to assist in decision-making. In this respect and through its dual functions as an observatory of the environment and sustainable development and a centre for systemic and prospective analysis, PB/RAC provides the Contracting Parties with assessments of the state of the environment and development of the Mediterranean and a solid basis of environmental and sustainable development data, statistics, and indicators to support their action and decision making process. PB/RAC's activities are consistent with the priority fields of action of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) and facilitate its implementation and follow-up.

Main fields of action:

- identifying, collecting and processing of environmental, economic and social data and statistics for the use of stakeholders and decision-makers;

- assessing the interaction between the environment and economic and social development, and the building of relevant indicators and tools to measure progress towards sustainable development;
- preparing analyses and prospective studies to assist in constructing visions of the future as an aid to decision-making;
- disseminating the findings of this work in appropriate forms and channels, including the regular publications of state of environment and development reports and environment and development outlook for the Mediterranean region; and
- assisting the Contracting Parties in assessing the implementation of the MSSD in their National Sustainable Development Strategies.



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

The specific objective of PAP/RAC is to contribute to sustainable development of coastal zones and sustainable use of their natural resources. PAP/RAC provides assistance to Mediterranean countries in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention, in meeting their obligations under the ICZM Protocol and in implementing the MSSD.

Main fields of action:

- assisting the Contracting Parties in formulating and implementing national strategies for action plans under the ICZM Protocol;
- assisting countries in the region in strengthening their capacities with a view of facilitating the sustainable development of coastal zones by ensuring that environment and landscapes are taken into account in harmony with economic, social and cultural development; preserving coastal zones and their integrity; ensuring the sustainable use of coastal natural resources; and achieving coherence between public and private initiatives and between all decisions by the public authorities at all levels that impact coastal zones;

- assisting countries in the implementation of demonstration/pilot coastal management projects (such as Coastal Area Management Programme - CAMP) in selected local Mediterranean coastal areas to demonstrate the application of ICZM as a major tool, with a view to implementing specifically the ICZM Protocol. CAMP projects have the goal to implement instruments and procedures for sustainable development in project areas; to identify and apply relevant methodologies and tools; to contribute to capacity building at the local, national and regional levels; and to secure the broad use of the results achieved;
- developing regional cooperation in the field of capacity building and awareness raising on the importance of the integrated management of coastal zones through the organization of training, education and awareness-raising activities, networking, publications and the dissemination of information; and
- developing ICZM methodologies and tools as well as addressing specific sectoral issues with a coastal focus in the framework of ICZM, such as urban development, natural resources management, sustainable tourism,

landscape and heritage protection, coastal and soil erosion, infrastructure and transport, pollution and waste, climate change, and specific coastal ecosystems.



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

The specific objective of SPA/RAC is to contribute to the protection and preservation and sustainable management of marine and coastal areas of particular natural and cultural value and threatened and endangered species of flora and fauna.

SPA/RAC provides assistance to the Contracting Parties in meeting their obligations under the Barcelona Convention, and under the Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity Protocol; and implementing the Strategic Action Programme for the

Conservation of Biological Biodiversity in the Mediterranean Region (SAP BIO) as well as the MSSD.

Main fields of action:

- facilitating and encouraging the development of research to complete the knowledge base and fill in knowledge gaps on marine and coastal biodiversity in the Mediterranean region;
- facilitating and contributing to inventorying, mapping and monitoring Mediterranean marine and coastal biodiversity and Specially Protected Areas;
- facilitating and contributing to the assessment and mitigation of the impact of threats on marine and coastal biodiversity, including from unsustainable fisheries practices;
- contributing to and assisting countries in the conservation of sensitive habitats, species and sites;
- promoting the establishment of Specially Protected Areas and Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) in the Mediterranean including areas beyond national jurisdiction in conformity with the international legal

framework, ensuring their networking and synergies with all relevant regional networks, particularly with Natura 2000 network, with the aim of preventing and reducing the loss of marine and coastal biodiversity; and

- contributing to capacity-building and technical support and assisting the countries to mobilize additional financial resources to implement the SPA and Biological Diversity Protocol. In this regard, taking fully into account the objectives identified by the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002), within the context of the principles and approaches identified in the introductory section covering all MAP components, particular emphasis is placed by SPA/RAC in its work on the responsible fisheries principle.



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

The objective of SCP/RAC is to contribute to pollution prevention and sustainable and efficient management of services, products and resources based on the Sustainable Consumption and Production integrated approach adopted by UNEP.

SCP/RAC provides assistance to the Contracting Parties in implementing the Barcelona Convention, the LBS Protocol, the Hazardous Waste Protocol, and the Offshore Protocol, in which sustainable production and consumption plays a crucial role, as well as the other Protocols in which the shift to sustainable consumption and production is key to attain their objectives. SCP/RAC also provides assistance to the Contracting Parties in promoting and using relevant mechanisms.

Main fields of action:

- contributing to creating knowledge for decision makers on the links between the patterns of consumption and production and the environmental degradation of the Mediterranean region;

- providing technical assistance to the public and private sector of Mediterranean countries for reducing land-based pollution, particularly harmful substances and hazardous waste;

- boosting green competitiveness as a tool through which managers and industrialists drive Mediterranean small and medium enterprises to succeed in the global market;

- fostering mechanisms through which sustainable criteria are progressively introduced within the whole consumption-production system of organizations and enterprises such as eco-labeling, sustainable procurement, sustainable management of industrial areas, and corporate social responsibility; and

- promoting sustainable lifestyles that really fit the specific cultural, natural, economic and social heritage of Mediterranean societies and contributing to create information and education for sustainable consumption.





THE REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE FOR INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION (INFO/RAC)

The objective of INFO/RAC is to contribute to collecting and sharing information, raising public awareness and participation and enhancing decision-making processes at the regional, national and local levels. In this context, the mission of INFO/RAC is to provide adequate information and communication services and infrastructure technologies to the Contracting Parties to implement the Barcelona Convention's Article 12 on public participation and Article 26 on reporting, as well as several articles related to reporting requirements under the different Protocols, thus strengthening MAP information management and communication capabilities. With a view to ensuring availability of coherent and scientifically

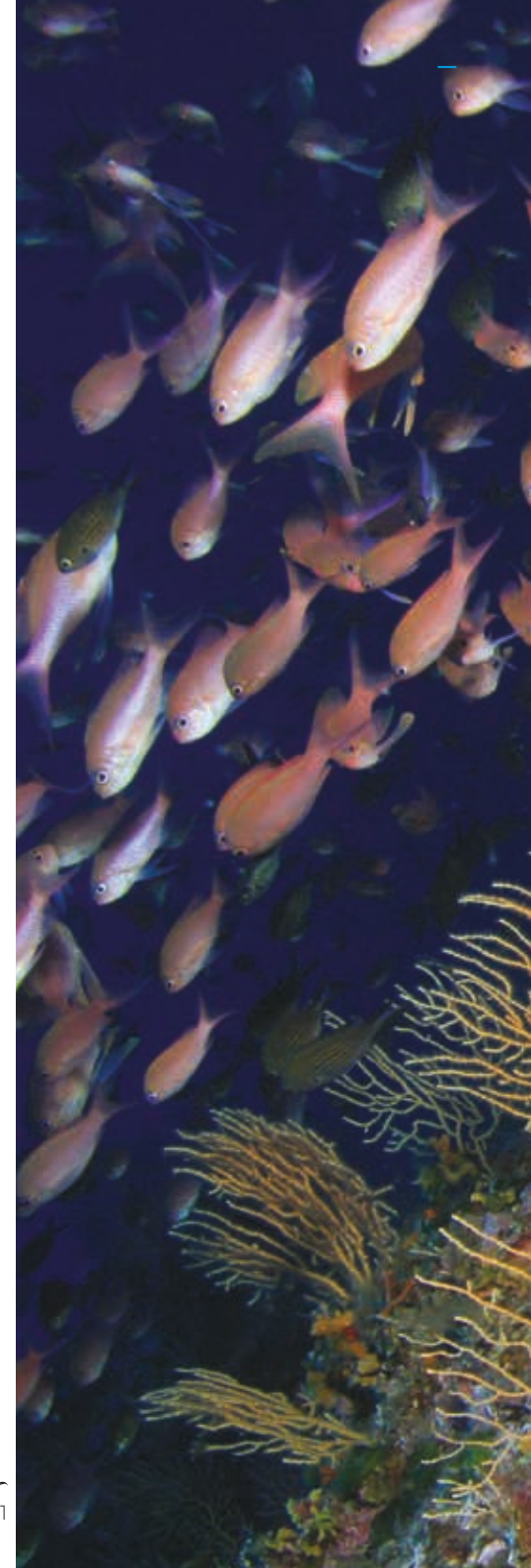
sound environmental knowledge, INFO/RAC strives for close cooperation with other key environment institutions and international bodies working on environmental data and information management, to progressively move towards a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS).

Main fields of action:

- designing and implementing a common environmental and spatial data infrastructure and network services (InfoMAP) for internal (UNEP/MAP) and external information among Mediterranean coastal States as a support to the Contracting Parties in carrying out coordinated activities at the national and regional levels, for the full implementation of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols and the MSSD;
- providing technical assistance to Contracting Parties in on-line reporting activities;
- improving the MAP corporate communication, promoting education initiatives and participation and ownership of Contracting Parties;
- promoting public participation and raising awareness on the activities of UNEP/MAP, of the Barcelona

Convention and of related programmes on the environmental and sustainable development policies of individual Contracting Parties;

- strengthening the knowledge base for bridging the gap between science, environmental monitoring and policy-making in the Mediterranean region, taking into account existing efforts at the Mediterranean level to focus on good practices relevant to the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and of the MSSD; and
- promoting the sharing of experiences and results stemming from environmental research and innovative technologies, including those resulting from earth observation initiatives relevant to the Mediterranean environment and sustainable development.





COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP

International Organizations

MAP cooperates with various UN entities and other Inter-Governmental organisations active in the field of Mediterranean environmental protection. It also recognizes the expertise of Mediterranean Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), supports their initiatives and encourages their participation in MAP activities.

Such partnerships provide support for capacity building and technical assistance for the development of measures and the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and Protocols.

Civil society

Since the inception of MAP, the Contracting Parties have recognized the value of public awareness and support from civil society in fulfilling their mission of protecting the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment and promoting sustainable development in the region. The Contracting Parties have developed fruitful working relations with civil society organizations by granting Observer and Partner status to Non-Governmental Organizations, thus encouraging their participation in MAP meetings, activities, and overall goals set up under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.

MAP Partners are international and regional NGOs, as well as national and local NGOs from Mediterranean riparian States. Many of the activities in MAP's Programme of Work have been carried out in cooperation with MAP Partners, several of which also hold membership in the MCSD on an equal footing with the Contracting Parties. MAP also provides assistance to Partners from developing Mediterranean countries with a view to further strengthening their capacities.



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