

Introduction and participants

1. The Fifth Meeting of the Inter-Agency Steering Committee was convened at the Headquarters of the Mediterranean Action Plan, Athens, Greece, on Monday 21 June 2004, to review the progress and implementation of the GEF Project "Determination of Priority Actions for further Elaboration and Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Mediterranean Sea".
2. The list of participants is attached as Annex I to this report.

Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting

3. In the absence of Mr Paul Mifsud (MAP Coordinator) and on his behalf, Mr Francesco-Saverio Civili (MED POL Programme Coordinator) opened the meeting at 10 a.m. and welcomed the participants. He noted that, as the GEF Project was nearing completion, the purpose of the meeting was to review the finalization of the project and its immediate follow-up.

4. Mr Ante Baric (GEF Project Manager) indicated that representatives of the Cleaner Production Regional Activity Centre (CP/RAC) and the Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC), which were undertaking important activities in relation to the GEF Project, regretted that they could not attend the meeting, although they would be present later in the week for the following meetings. He added that, although the FFEM had indicated that it would be represented at the meeting, no representative had arrived.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work

5. The meeting agreed to follow the provisional agenda contained in document UNEP(DEC)/MED/GEF WG.253/1 (attached as Annex II).

Agenda item 3: Progress report and discussion on the activities carried out since November 2003 and briefing and discussion on the activities planned until the end of the Project

6. Mr Baric, introducing the Progress Report (UNEP(DEC)/MED/GEF WG.253/2), attached as Annex III, noted that it covered the project activities carried out during the period between the last meeting of the Inter-Agency Steering Committee (IASC), held in November 2003, and May 2004, as well as outlining the activities planned and the work plan until the end of the Project.

Project coordination

7. Mr Baric drew attention to the many activities listed in the progress report which had been carried out since the last meeting of the IASC. As the GEF Project Manager, he had been in almost daily contact with all those responsible for undertaking these activities. With regard to the completion of the project, he recalled the recommendation of the last IASC, at which it had been agreed "that all would be done to avoid any further extension of the current GEF Project. If absolutely necessary it could be further prolonged, possibly by another six months, within the existing financial framework, but no decision would be taken until mid-2004, taking into account the latest state of preparation of the NAPs." The present meeting of the IASC would need to consider this recommendation in the light of the progress achieved. Turning to the issue of the donor meeting, he recalled that its purpose was

to attract potential donors and partners for follow-up activities to the GEF Project, namely investments to address pollution hot spots for which pre-investment studies had been completed. He added that the fourth meeting of the IASC had recommended that the donor meeting "should be held sometime in 2005, after the Project timeframe". In this context, he said that it was hoped that pre-investment studies would have been completed in at least seven countries by the end of the Project. He also pointed out that if the donor meeting were to be held after the end of the Project, there would be no Project funding for the meeting, even though USD 30,000 had been set aside in the Project budget for a donor meeting.

8. Mr Vladimir Mamaev (UNEP Division of GEF Coordination) indicated that one of the aspects of the strategy for the Mediterranean planned by his Division with the World Bank consisted of consultations with donors, using the Project Preparation and Development Facility (PPDF), with a view to the development by countries of full projects for implementation. If the present GEF Project were to be completed, as now planned, by the end of 2004, the funding currently earmarked for the donor meeting could be allocated to another important related activity, such as a stock-taking meeting for donors and stakeholders. A stock-taking meeting of this type would be designed to prepare the ground for the donor meeting by familiarizing donors and stakeholders with the work that was being carried out, and particularly the National Action Plans (NAPs) and pre-investment studies, with a view to building partnerships for the implementation of the planned activities. A full donor meeting could then take place in 2005, following the completion of the GEF Project, at which time the pre-investment studies would be completed and ready for presentation to donors and other partners. In such a scenario, it might be possible to finance the donor meeting from PPDF funds as part of the planned strategy to build partnerships and ownership of the activities to be carried out in the region.

9. Mr Civili added that the concept behind the donor meeting was of great importance. There were good reasons for holding it in 2005 after the completion of the present GEF Project as a means of involving donors and other partners in the action that was being developed. If this schedule were to be followed, it would be necessary to plan carefully any further activities, such as a stock-taking meeting, to ensure that they enhanced the involvement and ownership of potential partners. The holding of a donor meeting in 2005 might act as a bridging activity to a second phase of the GEF Project based on greater ownership and involvement of all the stakeholders, including donors.

10. Mr Fouad Abousamra (MAP Programme Officer) recalled that two donor meetings had originally been planned in the GEF Project, the first as a type of information meeting and the second to present realistic activities for implementation, based on the NAPs and pre-investment studies. He noted, citing his recent visit to the Syrian Arab Republic, where he had attended a meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Committee, that at the national level the ministries and bodies dealing with planning were not really aware of the action that was being planned and carried out on environmental issues. He therefore supported the proposal to hold an information meeting to raise awareness of the activities that were planned, thereby preparing the ground for the donor meeting.

11. Mr Jaafar Friaa (METAP/World Bank Consultant) expressed support for the organization of a donor meeting. However, he emphasized that up to now most of the GEF Project activities had been undertaken in collaboration with Ministries of Environment. It would henceforth be necessary to draw in other partners, with particular reference to Ministries of Finance and Planning, and to improve awareness of the planned activities at the national and regional levels.

Updating of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA)

12. Mr Civili welcomed the work carried out on the TDA, which he considered to be a very important document. He recalled that the GEF Secretariat had requested some further refinement of the final version of the updated TDA, which had been undertaken by a consultant. The resulting version of the TDA had been received by MAP very recently indeed and he had not had the time to review it in detail.

13. Mr Abousamra observed that, following the request by the GEF Secretariat for the further revision of the TDA, he had spent some time with the consultant reviewing the chapters for which changes were needed in a document which would undoubtedly play an important role in guiding interventions in future, including those of GEF. One issue that was still pending was the extent to which the TDA should include fisheries, which were normally considered to be outside the mandate of MED POL. He said that the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) in particular had emphasized the need for the inclusion of fisheries in the document.

14. Mr Andrea Merla (Programme Manager, International Waters, GEF) noted that the TDA was a science-based document intended to guide countries in the action that needed to be taken on environmental issues. He recalled that the mandate of GEF covered both fisheries and the quality of seawater and that he would expect the TDA to contain some information on fisheries as a major issue in the Mediterranean. He noted in this respect that, even though the SAP BIO contained targets which had been endorsed by the countries, it was not well integrated in the TDA. More attention should be paid to seeing what could be done to help countries achieve these targets.

15. Mr Civili said that several actors in the region were very well qualified to work on fisheries, including FAO and the European Union. It would therefore be necessary to involve them in the proper way. Mr Baric added that SPA/RAC had forwarded a number of scientific documents, including European Union policy documents, which showed that there had been a huge decline in fish stocks in the Mediterranean.

16. Mr Mamaev welcomed the new version of the TDA, which he found to be much more focussed and better presented, and a very useful instrument for the identification of the main problems in the region. He said that fisheries were a highly transboundary and problematic issue and that he had tried to involve the FAO more fully in the work carried out on this subject. He therefore welcomed the fact that an FAO representative would be attending the meeting later in the week. However, he noted that, while the TDA was intended to provide guidance for future action, it was a purely scientific document and did not constitute a programme of work for GEF. Any reference to GEF should therefore be removed.

17. Mr Merla agreed that the TDA was a science-based identification of the problems in the Mediterranean. The GEF Secretariat had requested its reformulation mainly for the purpose of increasing its clarity and crispness. He observed that it was not the function of the TDA to set out commitments, which had already been undertaken in the SAPs endorsed by the Contracting Parties.

18. Several speakers emphasized that, now that it was nearly finalized, it was important to ensure that the TDA was published and widely disseminated. Mr Civili recalled that the first TDA had been discussed by the Contracting Parties and widely disseminated. The information contained in the present TDA, which was an updated version of the first TDA, had been presented to the Meeting of the Contracting

Parties held in Catania in November 2003. It was agreed that the TDA should be given a high profile presentation at the planned stock-taking meeting. It was also agreed that any further comments on the most recent version of the TDA should be submitted to the GEF Project Manager by 10 July at the latest, so that the work of finalization, printing and dissemination could be carried out as rapidly as possible. Mr Merla indicated that the TDA still contained too much GEF jargon. For example, the title "TDA" would mean little to a more general public. It would therefore be appropriate to give the document a more general title, perhaps using the expression TDA as a subtitle.

Pollution hot spots and sensitive areas

19. Mr Baric, introducing the subject, updated the information contained in the progress report. A contract with the selected consultant had been signed by Egypt at the end of May 2004. An inception report had also been received from Albania and had been sent back for certain changes to be made. He added that, of the four countries covered by FFEM, requests for assistance had been made by two countries. A tender document had been prepared for the selected hot spots in Algeria. However, no requests for assistance had yet been made by either Lebanon or Tunisia. Referring to the Table on page 5 of the progress report on the preparation of pre-investment studies (UNEP(DEC)/MED/GEF WG. 253/2), he said that progress had been much slower than planned and he did not believe that all the countries concerned would meet the Project deadline for the completion of pre-investment studies, namely the end of 2004. While Albania would almost certainly meeting this deadline, and Turkey would very probably also do so, problems had arisen in other countries. The project leader had been changed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and more progress would probably be made now. The Syrian Arab Republic still had to submit its evaluation report and sign the contract for the consultant. In the case of Egypt, although progress had been signalled for some time, nothing had been received by the Secretariat. Moreover, the timetable for the countries covered by FFEM differed from that of the GEF Project, with the completion of project activities planned for the end of 2006.

20. Mr Gennaro Longo (Director, Area of Earth, Environmental and Marine Sciences and Technologies, ICS-UNIDO) expressed the belief that there was insufficient time for the pre-investment studies to be completed in most countries by the end of this year. In that case, if none or few of the countries met the deadline, should the Project be extended? Moreover, as there had been no reaction from the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, should that country be deleted from the Project?

21. Mr Abousamra, referring once again to his recent visit to the Syrian Arab Republic, recounted the progress made in that country, where a short list of six consultants had been established and the final choice would be made very soon in consultation with the Secretariat. He said that his experience of Syria and other countries showed how important it was to adapt the common approach for the completion of pre-investment studies to the conditions and rules in force in each country. Mr Baric added that the same lesson had been learned from the experience of Abukir Bay in Egypt, where the pollution situation was so bad that a single pre-investment study would be insufficient to outline a global solution to the problems involved.

22. Mr Merla indicated in response that it was important to set targets that were achievable, otherwise the planned activities would certainly fail. With regard to the countries covered by the FFEM Project, for which the deadline was 2006, he said that some solution would be needed to ensure that the activities carried out were

coordinated with those of the GEF Project. He also expressed the belief that any new phase of the GEF Project should be much more dynamic and aggressive in its interaction with countries so that there was no expectation that project activities would be extended continually.

23. Mr Mamaev said that it was important to complete all the GEF Project activities. These activities would be evaluated and a good evaluation would be required if there were to be any follow-up project. It would therefore be necessary to be aggressive with the countries so that they understood that there would be no further extension, while at the same time helping them as much as possible to complete the planned activities in a satisfactory manner. While the problems faced by the various governments were understandable, it should not be forgotten that they had assumed commitments and responsibilities when signing the project document.

24. Mr Friaa pointed out that the progress made by countries in completing their pre-investment studies would affect the final evaluation of the GEF Project and any decisions on how to proceed thereafter. In his view, there were three main categories of countries covered by the Project. The first category included four countries in which steady progress was being made towards the completion of the pre-investment studies. For these countries, there should be close follow-up and supervision to speed up the process and start marketing the projects. He and his World Bank colleagues would be willing to contact the respective task managers and provide assistance where necessary. A second category included the countries in which a certain period of time, which might be around 12 months, was still needed. For these countries, a decision would have to be made as to whether the activities would have to be cancelled if the delay became too long. Finally, there were the countries covered by the FFEM, of which two had not yet requested assistance. In the case of these countries, the FFEM should be contacted and requested to bring forward its proposed deadline.

Regional cooperative actions

25. Mr Baric reported that all the planned regional plans and guidelines had been prepared according to plan and had been submitted to the Contracting Parties at their meeting in November 2003. All the documents had been translated into French and the two regional plans had been translated into Arabic. A total of 23 documents had been or were in the process of being published in hard copy and/or CD/ROM.

Capacity building

26. Mr Abousamra recalled that MED POL was responsible for organizing training courses on river pollution monitoring, as indicated in the progress report. Most of the courses had already been carried out, although certain were planned by the end of the year. The approach adopted had consisted of the holding of one regional training course, which had been organized in France with the support of FFEM, and a series of sub-regional courses provided in the relevant languages with the training materials also being translated into the national languages. One additional training course, financed through savings on other activities, was planned for Albania, with the training materials being translated into Albanian. He added that one of the main problems with the quantification of pollutant releases from rivers was that some 90 per cent of all releases occurred during flood periods, although the proportion might even be higher in countries, such as those on the South of the Mediterranean, where almost all river water was used for irrigation outside flood periods. More capacity building would be required to achieve effective monitoring during flood periods. In response to a question by Mr Merla, he indicated that the methodology for river

pollution monitoring was well-established, but that there were as yet only three networks of monitoring stations that were well-established and that these were in France, Italy and Spain.

27. Mr Civili added that the scope of the amended LBS Protocol included pollution from rivers and, although all countries agreed upon the need for river mouth monitoring, there was still some opposition to monitoring further up river within the context of the Barcelona legal system. The approach adopted by MAP was that when the data showed that rivers were pollution hot spots, then monitoring should be carried out further up river to find the sources of the pollution. In this way, he was sure that full river monitoring would be achieved slowly throughout the region. While there were at present only a few basic networks, the situation could therefore be improved, as it had for seawater monitoring.

28. With reference to the countries of the East Adriatic, where the rivers tended to flow through several countries and therefore raised transboundary issues, Mr Baric said that some type of monitoring was already being undertaken. However, it would need to be improved and the countries involved were showing an interest in training courses for technicians.

29. Mr George Kamizoulis (WHO/EURO Scientist) reviewed the training activities carried out in the fields of pollution inspection, wastewater treatment and wastewater reclamation and use, as indicated in the progress report. The training materials had been translated into the languages of the countries for which national training courses had been held. He noted that, although these training activities had originally been planned with financial support from FFEM, this support had not been received and the courses had therefore been financed through savings from the funding originally earmarked for other activities. FFEM had now agreed to support a regional training course on wastewater reclamation and use, which was planned for November.

30. Mr Baric indicated that FFEM had declined to support national training activities, but was willing to support training courses at the regional level. He added that the financing for the FFEM Project consisted principally of 100,000 euros for three regional training courses, the same amount for the provision of assistance to countries for the preparation of National Action Plans (NAPs), 1 million euros for the preparation of pre-investment studies and 800,000 euros for capacity building activities in four countries, namely Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia.

31. Mr Merla, in response to a comment that cooperation with FFEM was very useful, but did not fit in with the timing of the GEF Project, said that the experience that had been gained would be valuable in any future phase of the Project. Greater emphasis would have to be placed on the coordination of donors.

32. Mr Civili, replying to a question as to which level of training was most effective, replied that the formula of training activities at the national, sub-regional and regional levels offered many advantages. Courses at the regional level provided an overall framework and were useful for the training of trainers. Courses at the sub-regional level brought together countries with similar problems, while those at the national level made it possible to reach more of the people involved, even in fairly remote areas. He added, in response to a question concerning the establishment of centres of excellence, that it was better to develop capacity in each country rather than to develop a centre of excellence in one particular country, which might give rise to jealousy in neighbouring countries.

33. Mr Kamizoulis also indicated that, although it was too early to be able to assess the results of the training activities, he was confident that they had produced added value. Not only had universities in a number of countries requested permission to use the training materials produced for the courses, but the participants had been very pleased to attend a meeting in their own language. National courses gave technicians an opportunity to get together and exchange experience concerning the problems that they faced.

34. With regard to the effectiveness of the training courses on river pollution monitoring, Mr Abousamra said that it was very difficult to make a valid evaluation of the effectiveness of training courses. On the subject of centres of excellence, he indicated that there were centres in nearly all countries, but that they were not necessarily focussed on land-based sources of pollution. With some assistance, they could be adapted to cover the needs of the Barcelona Convention and the LBS Protocol. He believed that, when support was provided, centres of excellence could be created, as illustrated by the fact that there were now cleaner production centres in 60 per cent of Mediterranean countries. He added, in reply to a question concerning the role of universities, that the sustainable implementation of the SAP required concerted efforts by universities, national institutions and stakeholders. He said that a number of the MAP Regional Activity Centres could be considered as centres of excellence in their specific fields.

35. Mr Friaa observed that METAP attached importance to the establishment of centres of expertise, such as the centre on impact assessment set up a few years ago, which was playing a valuable role in capacity building in that field. METAP was now thinking of developing a centre of expertise in the field of solid waste management, although it would be necessary to ensure that there was sufficient demand for the services of such a centre for it to be sustainable.

Sustainability of SAP MED

36. Mr Baric, introducing the subject in the absence of Mr Trumbic, Director of PAP/RAC, indicated that the Project activities on the development of economic instruments to address marine pollution from land-based sources were now in their final phase. Consultants had been hired, or were being hired, in seven countries to prepare proposals for economic instruments in the context of the NAPs. This meant that consultants were still needed for five GEF-eligible countries. In contrast, the results achieved through the pilot projects had not met expectations. Only one pilot project, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, had been completed, with all the others being blocked for one reason or another. Mr Civili added that the action planned on the sustainability of SAP MED had been very ambitious and it was not possible to change mentalities in such a short time. Nevertheless, he believed that the very fact that such activities had been carried out at all constituted a breakthrough in itself. He did not know whether it would be possible to include actions of this type in any extension of the Project. He recalled that the expected output from these activities was proposals at the national level, to be submitted before the end of the year.

37. Mr Merla emphasized that, by the end of the Project, it would be necessary to draw up a report on all the technical alternatives and options for economic instruments, focussing on the lessons learned. He therefore called for all the remaining activities to be completed as quickly as possible so that a high-level document on the experience acquired could be produced.

38. Mr Civili indicated that the output of the activities undertaken was not negative. Many documents had been prepared and a website on economic

instruments had been established. Mr Abousamra added that the training course held in March in Izmit, Turkey, to review the background document elaborated on the preparation of NAPs had discussed the development of economic instruments. It was therefore very important that the national experts hired to formulate NAPs should pay specific attention to the inclusion of economic instruments in the NAPs.

Public participation

39. Mr Baher Kamal (MAP Information Officer) recalled that, in accordance with the recommendation of the third meeting of the IASC, a concept paper had been prepared and disseminated to countries setting out a common methodology for the promotion of public participation in the implementation of the SAP MED. The paper explained why public participation was a necessary and integral component of the NAPs. Financial assistance had been offered to the GEF-eligible countries to promote public involvement in the process of the preparation, adoption and implementation of NAPs. An MoU had been sent to the countries so that they could receive support for public participation in this process. Four countries had so far signed the MoU.

National Action Plans to address pollution from land-based activities (NAPs)

40. Mr Civili explained that the development of National Action Plans (NAPs) by countries to address pollution from land-based activities was the focus of the whole GEF Project, and indeed of MED POL's work, and that much work had gone into the process leading up to the formulation of NAPs. The preparation of National Diagnostic Analyses (NDAs) and National Baseline Budgets (NBBs), which served to describe the present situation and would therefore be used to measure the progress made in combating pollution, had amounted to a real breakthrough. No one had previously succeeded in undertaking this exercise. The NDAs and NBBs formed the basis for the development of NAPs. An important training course had been held in Izmit, Turkey, in March 2004 to train the national experts nominated by the MED POL National Coordinators to prepare the NAPs. Several MoUs had now been signed for the preparation of NAPs and the related sectoral plans. However, the process of their preparation had been delayed by the difficulties experienced at the national level in finalizing the NDAs and NBBs. He added that the completion of NAPs with full political backing at the national level would mark another vital breakthrough for the MED POL programme as a whole. Mr Abousamra added that NDAs, NBBs and NAPs were also being prepared by non-GEF-eligible countries, although a number of the latter had encountered problems relating to the harmonization of the data required for the purposes of MAP's work with that of the European Union. Indeed, the recent meeting of the MAP Bureau had put back the deadline for the completion of NDAs from June to September 2004.

41. Mr Merla observed that, while resources had been provided through the GEF Project for the preparation of the NAPs, their implementation would necessitate a much higher level of funding, which would require both national resources and assistance from other donors. Another important point was the manner in which the NAPs were to be endorsed at the national level. He recalled in this respect that the project document called for the endorsement of the NAPs by the end of the GEF Project.

42. Mr Civili indicated that, as explained in the guidelines for their preparation, NAPs had to be approved by the inter-ministerial committees or similar bodies established in each country. Moreover, the process of the preparation of NAPs included participation and consultation with stakeholders. Finally, the NAPs would

also be endorsed by the meeting of the Contracting Parties in November 2005. This meant that during the course of 2005 there would be several levels of endorsement of NAPs which, he recalled, concerned not only national issues, but also transboundary problems.

Agenda item 4: Conclusions and recommendations

43. In a discussion of the programme and schedule for the completion of the GEF Project, Mr Baric recalled that the project activities in the fields of the preparation of the TDA, regional cooperative actions, capacity building and economic instruments for the sustainability of the SAP MED would be completed by the end of 2004. However, a further six months might be needed for the completion of all of the pre-investment studies and the NAPs.

44. The meeting then reviewed the progress made by the various countries in the preparation of pre-investment studies and the likely date of their completion. It was pointed out that Croatia, which had been supported by ICS-UNIDO, had been the first country to complete the process. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Slovenia were also on course for the completion of their pre-investment studies by the end of 2004. The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is promising, as the local stakeholders were very involved in the project and, with assistance from METAP, there was a strong likelihood that progress would be made in good time. Although Turkey could probably be included with these countries, there had been some delay due to a change in the implementing agency. However, both the consultant and the municipality responsible for the selected hot spot were enthusiastic and good progress could be expected. In complete contrast, there was almost no hope of any progress in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, which had never responded to the Project requirements in relation to pre-investment studies. This left two countries in which the process was delayed to varying extents, namely Egypt and the Syrian Arab Republic. In the case of the Syrian Arab Republic, the consultant was about to be selected with assistance from the Secretariat. A new Minister had taken office and appeared to be much more supportive of the project than the previous Minister. However, between ten and twelve months would be needed for the finalization of the pre-investment study. The process in Egypt had been marked by delays from the very beginning, despite the deadlines indicated by the Project Manager. Moreover, the hot spot selected was extremely complex and far-reaching action would be required to resolve the problems involved. The meeting agreed that there were three categories of countries in this respect: firstly, those for which the process of preparing pre-investment studies and NAPs would be completed by the end of 2004; secondly, those for which it was already evident that they would not meet this deadline, and might even not complete the process by the middle of 2005; and finally the countries covered by FFEM, which did not appear to enter into the philosophy of the GEF Project and were following a very different schedule.

45. The IASC noted that several countries were on schedule to complete the pre-investment studies by the end of 2004. It also welcomed the support mobilized within the context of the GEF Project from ICS-UNIDO and FFEM for the preparation of pre-investment studies. With regard to the countries covered by FFEM, it observed that they were fully involved in the GEF Project activities, but the timetable followed had been different from the countries for which financing was provided directly by GEF and by ICS-UNIDO. It therefore urged FFEM to complete the process of the finalization of pre-investment studies in these countries.

46. With regard to the NAPs, it was pointed out once again that their completion and endorsement was crucial to the GEF Project and that UNEP had undertaken to ensure that this occurred before the end of the GEF Project. Mr Abousamra noted that the process of the preparation of the NAPs had been commenced in all the countries, although in some cases the national authorities had not shown much willingness to work with NGOs and other stakeholders and the initial stakeholder meetings had not yet been held. As of September, the Secretariat would be making available two professional staff on an almost full-time basis to assist countries in the preparation of their NAPs. It was therefore reasonable to expect that NAPs would be completed in most of the GEF-eligible countries covered by the Project by mid-2005.

47. Mr Merla emphasized the need for closure of the GEF Project before any new phase of action could be planned. He added that, while the NAPs and the pre-investment studies were the forward-looking aspects of the GEF Project, and that financing had been provided through the Project for their preparation, it was not the intention of GEF to finance their implementation. Nevertheless, where pre-investment studies fulfilled the criteria set out by GEF, they might be eligible for funding in a second phase of action. This also applied to the countries covered by the FFEM, although the schedule followed by FFEM raised a number of problems. He added that, in the expectation of the GEF Project being completed by the end of the year, many measures had been put in place to start launching the follow-up. For example, many potential partners were aware that a stock-taking meeting would be held. A reasonable period, for example one year, would be required to prepare the next stage of the regional project, although this process could be commenced shortly before the completion of the present project. Nevertheless, closure and evaluation of the GEF Project was needed before any further disbursement was possible.

48. The IASC noted that all concerned were in agreement that a further six months would be needed to complete the GEF Project. It was therefore proposed to request UNEP to extend the GEF Project until June 2005 within the existing resources. Every effort should be made to ensure that all pre-investment studies and NAPs were completed by that date. The Project Manager should work with the financial officer to determine within ten days whether the remaining funds were sufficient for this extension, including the extension of the Project Manager for that period. The Project Manager should also produce an updated report on the status of the preparation of the NAPs. It was also agreed that a strong message should be sent out to the countries concerned that this would be the final extension of the GEF Project and that no further funding would be available after the June 2005 deadline. The Project Manager and/or MED POL staff would visit all the countries concerned in the near future with a view to accelerating the process of the preparation of pre-investment studies and NAPs. Another meeting of the IASC would be held towards the end of November 2004 to further review the progress achieved.

49. The IASC also agreed that a stock-taking meeting should be organized in September 2004 as an occasion for involving donors and other partners in the process of the preparation of NAPs and pre-investment studies. A sum of \$30,000 had been included in the budget of the GEF Project for a donor meeting and this sum could be used for the organization of the stock-taking meeting. The donor meeting could be held subsequently as part of the PPDF process. The IASC noted that the progress achieved by the GEF Project fully justified going ahead with the stock-taking meeting, which would be organized under the responsibility of the Project.

50. Mr Mamaev observed that a good deal of momentum was being built up in the expectation of such a meeting and that it was therefore essential that it be held in the near future. A range of donors had expressed interest and commitment to the

proposed activities. The meeting should feature the TDA and the SAP, as well as providing information on the NAPs and pre-investment studies. He noted that an invitation had been received to hold the meeting in Croatia. A broad range of donors would have to be invited. It should be made clear that it was a high-level meeting and that country participants should include not only representatives of the Ministry of the Environment, but also representatives of the finance and planning sectors. All the relevant documents should therefore be finalized as soon as possible and sent out one month prior to the meeting, including a final draft of the concept for a strategic partnership for the region elaborated by UNEP and the World Bank. The meeting should be at the level of the Barcelona Convention.

51. Mr Merla added that the stock-taking meeting would act as a type of endorsement of the whole process launched by MED POL with the support of the GEF Project. A minimum outcome of the meeting would be the initiation of dialogue with other donors. For this reason, the higher the level of the meeting the more effective it would be.

Agenda item 5: Other business

52. The IASC agreed that its next meeting would be held at the end of November 2004. It also agreed that the final evaluation of the GEF Project would be initiated in February or March 2005.

Agenda item 6: Closure of the meeting

53. The meeting was declared closed at 5 p.m. on 21 June 2004.

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Provisional Agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting
The MAP Coordinator will open the Meeting at 0930 hrs.
2. Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work
The MAP Coordinator will propose the Agenda and organization of work. It is proposed to hold the Meeting in an informal manner, with the Secretariat acting as moderator.
3. Progress report and discussion on the activities carried out since November 2003 and briefing and discussion on the activities planned until the end of the Project
The GEF Project Manager, the MED POL Coordinator, the WHO/EURO Representative and the RAC Representatives will review the activities carried out since the fourth meeting of the IACS (November 2003), and will introduce activities planned until the end of the Project. The participants may express their views on the reports and proposals.
4. Conclusions and recommendations
The Meeting will discuss and agree on a set of conclusions and recommendations related to the accomplishment of the project activities and the organization of a Donors meeting.
5. Other business
The Meeting will discuss any other business raised by the Secretariat or the participants.
6. Closure of the meeting
The MAP Coordinator will close the Meeting at 1700 hrs.

Annex III

Progress report for the period September 2003-May 2004 and activities planned until the end of the project

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INTRODUCTION

The Inter-Agency Steering Committee, at its fourth meeting, which was organized in Athens in November 2003 decided to organize a fifth meeting in order to evaluate the activities undertaken in the period November 2003 - June 2004 and to decide on the accomplishment of the remaining activities.

The main purpose of this report is to review the activities undertaken within the Umbrella Project and three sub-projects coordinated by WHO/EURO, PAP/RAC and CP/RAC, during the period September 2003 - May 2004, to point out the main obstacles in the implementation of the actions, to identify corrective measures which were taken, to present lessons learned, and to elaborate the programme of activities until the end of the Project.

The structure of this report follows the proposed Agenda of the Meeting. After this first introductory chapter, the second chapter presents the progress report for the period September 2003 - May 2004, as well as the programme, timetable and recommendations, where appropriate, for the activities planned until the end of the project. The third chapter contains the conclusions.

1. PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE PERIOD SEPTEMBER 2003 - MAY 2004 AND ACTIVITIES PLANNED UNTIL THE END OF THE PROJECT

1.1 Project Coordination

1.1.1 Coordination at the project level

The project is managed by the Coordinating Unit for the Mediterranean Action Plan, where a small Project Management team was established. The Project Manager reports directly to the MAP Coordinator and UNEP/DGEF. In his activity the Project Manager closely cooperates with the MED POL Coordinator, the MED POL/WHO/EURO Officer and the Directors of PAP/RAC, SPA/RAC and CP/RAC.

Apart from the daily coordination of all activities specified in the project document and the preparation of contracts with the consultants hired under the Umbrella Project and MoUs, the GEF Project Manager has done the following:

- Prepared a half-yearly progress report for the period July-December 2003;
- Prepared a self-evaluation report for 2003;
- Prepared a revision of the project document in 2003, and 2004;
- Prepared the background documents for the fourth and fifth meetings of the Inter-Agency Steering Committee;
- Organized fourth and fifth meetings of the Inter-Agency Steering Committee and the third meeting of the Coordination Committee;
- Prepared the reports of the fourth meeting of the Inter-Agency Steering Committee and the third meeting of the Coordination Committee;
- Organized, together with MED POL, and also attended two regional and one sub-regional training courses;
- Organized and coordinated activities for the printing of regional plans and guidelines (25 volumes);
- Organized and coordinated activities on the preparation of pre-investment studies;
- Organized the printing of regional plans and guidelines (25 volumes);
- Attended the First International Symposium on Environmental Management, Zagreb, Croatia, 1-3 October 2003, and presented a paper on the Project;
- Attended the Workshop on the project "Enhancing public/private partnership for new financial arrangements to eliminate land based pollution: promoting transfer of Best Available Techniques (BAT), Roma, 2-3 Feb. 2004;
- Attended the international CoastWetChange Conference organized by CORILA under the auspices of UNESCO on 26-28 April 2004, Venice, and presented a paper on activities undertaken within the Project on the protection of the biodiversity of the Mediterranean Sea;
- Participated in the preparation of the Concept Paper for a new GEF Mediterranean Strategic Partnership Project.

Inter-Agency Steering Committee

The fourth meeting of the Inter-Agency Steering Committee was held in Athens on 4 November 2003. The meeting reviewed activities implemented during 2003. It was

agreed that all efforts should be made to avoid any further extension of the current GEF Project. If absolutely necessary it could be further prolonged, possibly by another six months, within the existing financial framework, but no decision would be taken until mid-2004, taking into account the current state of the preparation of the NAPs.

Coordination Committee

The Committee met for the third time in Athens on 5 November 2003. The national GEF Coordinators were informed of the details of the planned activities, particularly on the process for the formulation of National Action Plans to address pollution from land-based activities, and the preparation of pre-investment studies. The meeting pointed out the establishment of the close cooperation between the countries and the implementing agencies for the success of the project. The report of the third meeting was prepared and disseminated to the members of the Committee and the participants of the meeting.

Donors meeting

From the conclusions of the fourth meeting of the IASC: "In a general discussion in which several participants took part, it was explained that the planned donors' meeting(s) had been postponed. The dates set had been over-ambitious and could not be met in view of the state of preparation of the NAPs. Timing and careful preparation, in which the Secretariat would have to play a proactive role, were essential. No rehearsal would be allowed and an unsuccessful meeting would prove disastrous. It was agreed that, in any case, the pre-investment studies would first have to be ready. An overall strategy should be presented to the international community and the results of the GEF Project should be publicized in a showcase meeting. The SAP would have to be operational and the NAPs and hot spots would need to be complete – the idea was that the donors would ensure that a bridge was built between the preparatory phase and the implementation of the Project's goals. That effectively meant that it should be held sometime in 2005, after the Project timeframe, but no later – though it was warned that donors would be "booked up" a long time ahead and some might have already prepared their schedules until 2006. The event might take the form of a conference while a special committee might be set up to ensure that the process was an ongoing one. A consultant should draw up a list of potential donors and begin working with them."

Preparatory activities for the organization of the meeting, such as the identification of addresses of institutions to be invited to attend the meeting and preliminary contacts with potential donors and partners were undertaken.

1.2 Updating of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA)

In March 2004 MED POL submitted the final version of the updated TDA. The GEF secretariat considered that it still needed some fine tuning in order to meet the standard GEF format; as a result, an international consultant, who possessed extensive experience through his involvement in the preparation of TDA in other regions, was hired to finalize the document. The final draft is expected to be ready before the meeting of the Inter-Agency Steering Committee.

1.3 Pollution hot spots and sensitive areas

During the reporting period, three more countries (Egypt, Turkey, and Slovenia) accomplished the procurement procedure for the selection of a consultant, which increased the number of the GEF eligible countries which selected consultants to 6. An MoU was signed between MAP and the relevant country's implementing agency. As a result, Slovenia and Turkey have already contracted the consultant. Syria issued the call for proposal in March, and the deadline for the submission of proposals was 13 May 2004. So far, Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted the first part of the report, but it was not approved, and amendments were required.

As stated in previous reports, ICS/UNIDO has directly supported the preparation of one pre-investment study in Croatia. The study was accomplished in September 2003.

As, reported previously, FFEM, as the main partner for this action, has decided that it would directly support the preparation of pre-investment studies in four countries (Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia) by applying the same procedure, which was applied to the other countries. The MAP provides technical assistance in preparing ToRs for a consultant, in selecting a consultant, and in the monitoring and evaluation of its activities. So far, a request for a country visit was received from Algeria and Morocco and relevant ToRs were prepared.

Up to now, only one GEF eligible country, Libya, is not participating in this activity.

The development of the process of preparing pre-investment studies is given in the following table:

	Date of mission	Mission report sent to country	Approval from country received	Letter of Agreement signed	Evaluation report sent by country	Contract signed for consultant
ALBANIA	3 July 2002	12 July 2002	July 2002	24 October 2002	3 July 2003	November 2003
BOSNIA	19 May 2002	4 June 2002	3 July 2002	15 July 2002	December 2002	29 April 2003
EGYPT	10 May 2002	4 June 2002	June 2002	10 July 2002	24 January 2004	-
SLOVENIA	10 May 2003	21 July 2003	25 July 2003	10 September 2003	20 January 2004	8 March 2004
SYRIA	6 September 2002	3 October 2002	April 2002	4 April 2003	-	-
TURKEY	22 May 2002	14 June 2002	10 November 2003	12 December 2003	March 2004	11 March 2004

As can be seen from the previous table, the process of preparing pre-investment studies was initiated mid-2002 (in Slovenia it was done one year later), by a country visit to re-validate the proposed pollution hot spots, to prepare ToRs, to assess the cost for the preparation of a pre-investment study, and to select an implementing agency. However, the further development of the process in all countries was much slower than planned and expected for different reasons, which were out of the control of the Project Manager. Below is a brief description for each country.

In Albania, the selection of the consultant was delayed due to changes personnel in the Ministry of Environment, which had been selected as the implementing agency. The Inception Report was prepared by the selected consultant in February 2004 and submitted to the Implementing Agency, but it was only forwarded for evaluation by the end of May.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the procurement procedure was done as agreed, but the selected consultant delivered the first report beyond the agreed deadline. In order to enhance the activities and to ensure that outputs would be in compliance with ToRs, the Project Manager visited the country and met the consultant and local officials. Despite this, the delivered output failed to meet requirements specified in the ToRs and the consultant was required to amend it.

In Egypt, all decisions concerning the procurement procedure were taken at Ministerial level, which caused unexpected delays.

In Slovenia, a call for proposals was issued twice, because following the first call only one proposal was received, which in accordance with national regulations, required renewal of the procedure.

In Syria, the initial activities in preparing the procurement procedure were slow, and in the course of the process the government was reshuffled and the Ministry of Housing and Utilities, which was selected as the implementing agency, was reorganized. The action was then undertaken by the new Ministry of Local Administration and the Environment, which finally initiated the procurement procedure. The call for proposals was advertised and the evaluation of the proposals received is underway.

In Turkey, the Iler Bank was initially selected as the implementing agency. After the expert mission was organized, the National GEF Coordinator left his post in the Ministry, and it took some time to get an approval for the draft TORs. A national election took place and a new government formed, which brought about changes in personnel in the Ministry of Environment and consequently all activities were delayed for some time. When new contacts were established, the local communities requested to take over the action from the Iler Bank. Finally, when the procurement process was accomplished, a new MoU for hiring the selected consultant was sent to the local authorities for signature. In the meantime, due to the results of a local election, the Mayor lost his position. After a short time, a new Mayor was elected, who was eligible to sign the MoU which had been re-sent.

The current status in all countries is within the deadline adopted by the fourth meeting of the IASC and which was approved when the project was last revised, except for Syria, as shown in the following table. However, the process to hire a consultant and to award a contract may be achieved by 15 July, which would leave five months to prepare the study.

In order to enhance the activities and ensure the accomplishment of the process by the end of 2004, as it was planned, contacts with the countries and the selected consultants will be intensified. In addition, the time planned for the evaluation and approval of draft reports would be shortened as much as possible, in order to leave more time to the consultants for their activities.

Deadline for relevant activities for the preparation of pre-investment studies

	Activity	Deadline
1.	Publication of a request for proposals	February 29
2.	Evaluation of technical and financial proposal	March 31
3.	Draft Evaluation Report	April 30
4.	Review of Evaluation Report	May 31
5.	Contract award	June 30
6.	Consultant mobilization	July 31
7.	Inception Report	August 31
8.	Progress Report	September 30
9.	Draft Final Report	November 30
10.	Final Report	December 31

1.4 Regional cooperative actions

All Regional Plans and Regional Guidelines, which have been prepared, were submitted to and approved by the meeting of the MAP Focal Points. In addition, two Regional Plans were submitted to and formally adopted by the meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

All documents were translated into French and all of them were printed or were prepared for printing within the MAP Technical Report Series (25 volumes). In addition, the two regional plans which were adopted by the CPs will be published in the Arabic language as well.

1.5 Capacity building

MED POL is in charge of organizing training courses on river pollution monitoring. During the reporting period a regional training course was organized in Orleans (France) from 18 to 19 December 2003. This training course was mainly supported by FFEM, and it was hosted by IFEN. Eighteen participants from 13 countries attended the training course, as well as 3 regional experts from France and Greece as lecturers.

The material for the training course, which had originally been prepared in English, was translated into Arabic, Croatian, French, and Turkish with the organization of other sub-regional/national training courses in local languages in mind.

A sub-regional training course in French for national experts from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia was organized on 25-26 March 2004 in Tunis (Tunisia), hosted by the Tunisian ANPE at the premises of CITET. Twenty-nine experts attended the training course.

MED POL is planning to organize four additional training courses before the end of this year (see the table): One sub-regional training course in Croatian for experts from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia is planned in Split (Croatia) on 3-4 June 2004. One sub-regional training course in Arabic for national experts from Egypt, Lebanon and Syria is planned in September 2004, while one national training course in Turkish is planned for October 2004. In addition, one more national training course in Albanian was added to the originally planned four national training courses in order to train national experts from all the GEF eligible countries that have larger rivers. The costs for the organization of this training course will be covered from savings from other training courses. A national expert was hired to translate the training material into Albanian.

As regards capacity building and particularly the national training courses implemented by WHO/MED POL, the following were conducted, utilizing the same background support training material that was translated to the respective languages of the countries, where the courses were held:

- Two national training courses on pollution inspection were held in Albania, from 6-8 October 2003, and from 9-11 October 2003. In view of the increased participation it was decided to hold two training courses in order to cover all the participants. A total of 48 trainees attended the courses.
- Three national training courses on pollution inspection were held during October and November in Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Slovenia. In total, 70 experts attended the courses held in their national language.
- A national training course on pollution inspection was held in Arabic in Tunis from 10-14 May. Thirty experts participated in the course.
- A national training course on municipal wastewater treatment plant operation and management was held in Algiers from 15-17 May 2004 with the assistance of an invited expert. Thirty participants attend the course which was conducted in Arabic.

It is anticipated that two national training courses on pollution inspection will be held in the second semester of 2004. Preliminary activities have already begun, and the training courses will take place in Damascus, Syria, and in Algiers, Algeria. Discussions are being held for one training course on wastewater treatment plant operation and management, to take place in Turkey.

In addition to the activities related to training courses under the responsibilities of WHO/MED POL, a regional training course on wastewater reclamation and use, which was not included in the signed sub-project document, will be held probably in November 2004, using the support material that is under preparation. This training course will be organized with the support of FFEM.

Timetable for the organization of training courses

Training Course	Implementation	Planned Date/Place
Sub-regional on river pollution monitoring for Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina	MED POL	3-4 June 2004, Split
Sub-regional on river pollution monitoring for Egypt, Syria and Lebanon	MED POL	September, Lebanon or Egypt
National on river pollution monitoring for Turkey	MED POL	September, Turkey
National on river pollution monitoring for Albania	MED POL	October, Albania
National training course on pollution inspection	WHO/MED POL	21-24 June, Damascus, Syria
National training course on pollution inspection	WHO/MED POL	23-25 May, Algiers, Algeria
National training course on wastewater treatment plant operation and management	WHO/MED POL	Turkey
Regional training course on wastewater reclamation and use	WHO/MED POL	November

1.6 Sustainability of SAP MED

ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED SINCE SEPTEMBER 2003 - MAY 2004

Since November 2003, countries have begun to sign the MoUs for the preparation of the "Proposals of economic instruments to address marine pollution from land-based activities for the NAPs". MoUs have been signed by Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Algeria, while a contract has been made in Croatia, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, and Turkey. Contracts are likely to be signed with Albania and Slovenia. Some replies have been received from Egypt and Tunisia, but the MoUs have not yet been signed.

During the reporting period, pilot projects were being carried out towards the implementation of the proposed economic instruments. The pilot project carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina implemented the new model of calculation of the wastewater charge, and surprisingly it showed that the cost is lower than the present charge. The project continues to propose solutions for the untreated wastewater, currently discharged into the river Neretva. Remaining projects made less progress in their implementation.

Simulation guidelines, which consist of the methodology for the simulation of the pilot project results, finalised in July 2003, were revised in order to meet the pilot project needs. The simulation is to be finished by July 1st. Simulation of the baseline pilot project will be finalised in May 2004.

Policy guidelines are in preparation. The deadline for submission is the end of June. The purpose of these guidelines is to assist relevant authorities in introducing/adapting economic instruments to combat marine pollution from land-based sources and activities.

In order to promote economic instruments for environmental protection developed in the framework of the GEF project, the project component "Development of economic instruments for sustainable implementation of SAP" was presented at the MedCoast Conference, held in Ravenna, Italy, in October 2003.

In February, the PAP/RAC Director, and the Project Coordinator participated at the meeting "Enhancing Public/Private Partnership for New Financial Arrangements to Eliminate Land-Based Pollution: Promoting Transfer of Best Available Techniques (BAT)" organised by CIRPS and UNEP/GPA that was held in Rome. The GEF project component "Sustainability of SAP" and the results achieved were presented, and the possibilities for co-operation discussed.

In March, the PAP/RAC Director, and the Project Co-ordinator participated at the training course for the preparation of Sectoral Plans and National Action Plans (NAPs) in the framework of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) in Izmit, Turkey. The GEF project component "Sustainability of SAP" results were presented. One of the outputs from this project component will be the "Proposals of economic instruments to address marine pollution from land-based activities for the NAPs". Proposals were given for establishing co-operation and collaboration between the experts preparing proposals of economic instruments and the teams working on the NAP preparation, as well as for the participation of the experts on economic instruments in the NAP preparation.

OBSTACLES FACED DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTIVITIES

The implementation of the baseline pilot project was stopped with the change of government in Croatia in January 2004 and the delayed change of the Law on Environment. Therefore, the project implementation was not possible until summer 2004. During the first 5 months of 2004, simulation of the introduction of the tourist eco-charge was carried out. The process lasted longer than foreseen.

Delay in the finalisation of the Implementation Report in Algeria was caused by the effects of the earthquake in the country, which delayed all activities of the Ministry of Environment.

The Implementation Report for the Kvarner pilot project has been prolonged because of the change in the Law on the Maritime Domain adopted in December 2003. In order to take into account the changes of the law, and the opinion of the Port Authorities on the pilot project issue, in line with the amended legislation, more time was needed for its elaboration.

No results were achieved from the Albanian pilot project during the reporting period. The reason is probably the lack of interest of the new authorities in economic instruments and in the project.

WHAT WAS DONE TO OVERCOME THE OBSTACLES?

The Law on Environment in Croatia should enter into force during the second half of 2004. The Major of Hvar, and the Town Council are not in favour of the introduction of the tourist eco-charge as a pilot project, but want this instrument to be introduced

in the law. Proposals for the change in the law will be sent again to the new government officials.

The report on implementation for the Kvarner pilot project has been sent back for revision. The new version is expected by the end of May.

Additional clarifications and discussions have been held in Algeria, in the framework of the PAP/RAC CAMP. However, no Report on Implementation has yet been achieved from the team working on the pilot project. A new member was included in the team in May 2004.

Permanent contacts are maintained with the Albanian EI NFP in order to find the solution to the problem.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED UNTIL THE END OF THE PROJECT

Activity	Timing	Output	Responsibility
Dissemination of the proposals for introducing new / adapting existing economic instruments	January - September 2004		PAP/RAC
Implementation of proposed measures in economic instruments' application at national and regional level, with special emphasis on making SAP MED programme sustainable	October 2002 – September 2004	Improvement of national legislation on economic instruments; sustainable implementation of SAP MED	National govt. institutions, NFPs
Preparation of the baseline pilot project	January 2002 – July 2004	Diagnostic Analysis Report on Procedure of and measures for development and implementation of EI Report on simulation	Countries - EI NFP PAP/RAC
Implementation of five additional pilot projects in selected countries	March 2002 – September 2004	Four Diagnostic Analyses Four Reports on Procedure of and measures for development and implementation of EI Four Reports on simulation	Countries - EI NFP PAP/RAC
Evaluation of newly introduced / adapted economic instruments at regional and national level	January - November 2004	Final evaluation paper on effects of the Project on introducing new / adapting existing economic instruments	National institutions and experts PAP/RAC

MEASURES TAKEN TO ENSURE THEIR SMOOTH IMPLEMENTATION

Initiative has been taken to ensure collaboration between the teams working on the NAP preparation, and the EI NFPs preparing "Proposals on economic instruments for NAPs". A special contract will be offered from the GEF project component on NAPs for involvement of the EI NFPs in the NAP preparation.

For each output, guidelines and the outline of the document have been provided, and methodology has been developed and sent to the teams working on the preparation of the outputs.

Policy guidelines for economic instruments are in preparation. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide assistance to the authorities that will introduce/adapt economic instruments to combat marine pollution from the land based sources and activities in future.

The teams and/or the experts in charge of the outputs who are late in their submission have been reminded constantly by phone and e-mail.

Transparency of the project is ensured by the maintenance of the "Development of the economic instruments" web site.

1.7 Public participation

The third meeting of the Inter-Agency Steering Committee decided to modify the action on public participation in such a way that a document on a common methodology, based on the Aarhus Convention principles, would be prepared and dispatched to the countries, together with the corresponding balance in the budget allocated to the countries for the inclusion of public participation strategy in their NAPs.

As a result, the common methodology report was prepared and distributed in December 2003/January 2004 to the countries. The balance in the budget was allocated to the countries for public involvement in the process of the preparation, adoption and implementation of NAPs, and a relevant MoU was submitted to the countries in December 2003/January 2004. So far, 4 Mediterranean countries have signed the MoU to receive support for public participation.

1.8 National Action Plans to address pollution from land based activities (NAPs)

Concerning the preparation of National Diagnostic Analysis (NDA) and National Baseline Budget (NBB), which are considered the corner stones for the formulation of National Action Plans to address pollution of the Mediterranean Sea from land-based sources and activities, the current status is shown in the following table:

Country	NDA	NBB
Albania	Yes	Yes
Algeria	Yes	Yes
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Yes	Yes
Cyprus	Yes	Yes
Croatia	Yes	Yes
Egypt	Yes	Yes
France	Ongoing	Ongoing
Greece	Yes	Yes
Israel	Yes	Expected May 2004
Italy	Ongoing	Ongoing
Lebanon	Yes	Yes
Libya	Yes	Ongoing
Malta	Yes	Yes
Monaco	Ongoing	Ongoing
Morocco	Yes	Yes
Serbia-Montenegro ^{x)}	Ongoing	Ongoing
Slovenia	Yes	Yes
Spain	Ongoing	Ongoing
Syria	Yes	Yes
Tunisia	Yes	Expected May 2004
Turkey	Yes	Yes
Palestinian Authority ^{x)}	Yes	Yes

^{x)} not participating in the Project

A regional expert was engaged to harmonize the information and data and to review the reports received.

The process of the preparation of the NAPs actually started in February 2004, even if a number of preparatory activities had been accomplished earlier. In fact, MED POL organized, with the assistance of GEF and FFEM, a training course on 4-7 March 2004 in Izmit, Turkey at the premises of the Turkish National Research Center (TUBITAK- Marmara Branch), to discuss and review the background document prepared for the preparation of NAPs, and to train national experts nominated by MED POL National Coordinators to perform the preparation of the Sectoral Plans (SPs) and NAPs.

Forty-five experts and representatives from 18 Mediterranean countries participated to the training course together with representatives from GPA, MEDU, CP/RAC and PAP/RAC and 3 regional independent experts. The following documents were reviewed and discussed in plenary sessions:

- Guidelines for the preparation of SPs and NAPs including Cleaner Production
- Guidelines for Public Participation for NAPs
- Guidelines for Economic Instrument for NAPs
- Guidelines for the preparation of Portfolio for NAPs
- Two CDs including 23 Guidelines and Regional Plans in English and French prepared by MED POL and adopted by the Contracting Parties in 2003, in addition to a set of technical documents that could be used during the preparation of SPs and NAPs.

The participants were organized into three working groups to prepare a virtual NAP for an imaginary case study prepared by MED POL. Each participant in the working

groups was to play the role of a national stakeholder that would participate in the process of the preparation of SPs and NAPs. The course was highly appreciated by the participants and reached its objectives successfully.

As a result of the training course, MED POL, with the assistance of GEF, started the process of contracting national experts for the preparation of SPs and NAPs with a deadline of December 2004, which was not considered realistic by the countries' representatives. As a result, MED POL set up a tentative timetable and phases to achieve the preparation of NAPs by June 2005.

It should be mentioned that the preparation of NAPs started with 6 months delay on the planned timetable, due to the difficulties encountered by national authorities and experts for the preparation of NDAs and NBBs. In fact, the lack of data and information needed for the preparation of these two reports led the national experts to urge the active involvement of MED POL and the regional expert to facilitate the task. Many experts spent a few days at the MAP premises, which ensured the transfer of data and information between experts from different Mediterranean countries.

It is planned to contract a regional expert who would assist MED POL in providing support, and to follow up during the period of the preparation of the SPs and NAPs. MED POL and/or the regional expert(s) would be present in most of the national stakeholders meetings which will be organized in the framework of the preparation of NAPs. The countries may receive financial support for the organization of these meetings. So far, 5 countries have signed a relevant MoU to receive this support.

3. CONCLUSIONS

From the information above, the following may be concluded:

All activities which were organized for the support of countries' activities, such as capacity building and regional cooperative actions have been, or will be accomplished as planned. In addition, two more training courses are scheduled, which will be financed either from the project savings from previous years or from the FFEM contribution.

The preparation of pre-investment studies and National Action Plans is based on a country driven approach. It is therefore up to the countries to manage these components of the project with support from the GEF Project Manager and MED POL.

The process of the preparation of pre-investment studies is rather more complex, addressing many technical, environmental and socio-economic issues, bringing a large number of stakeholders together, and requiring more time than assumed in the Project document. In addition, it is a country-specific process, in terms of political structures, constitution, level of economic development, culture and public awareness. Finally, the success of the action is not just the pre-investment study prepared. Political commitment and financial capability to undertake remedial actions are required. From the experience gained, it may be concluded that most probably three countries (Albania, Slovenia and Turkey) would accomplish the activities by the end of 2004. One country (Bosnia and Herzegovina) would need the assistance of a regional consultant, while for the two remaining countries (Egypt and Syria) it is difficult to make any prediction, because consultants are not mobilized yet.

The preparation of National Action Plans is a specific process for countries, which requires the full engagement of national experts and officials, as well as adequate assistance from outside. In order to further stimulate the implementation of the process, the countries should be provided with reasonable assistance as required. This will be done by establishing/strengthening the management structures related to the entire process in each country, and by the assistance of regional consultant(s). As mentioned above, a differentiated approach for each country should be applied. However, the process of the preparation and the adoption of NAPs would not be accomplished in all countries before 31 December 2004, as originally planned. MED POL considers that the preparation of Sectoral Plans and NAPs could be finalized not before June 2005, due to the accumulated delays during the preparation of NDAs, NBBs and the recruitment of national experts. However, MED POL believes that there is the need and the possibility to assist very closely the countries in the process to ensure successful conclusions.