



## For a Sound Coastal Zone Management



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This leaflet focuses on the situation, trends and perspectives of Mediterranean coastal regions. In so doing, it briefly describes the concerns, achievements and future action of the Mediterranean Action Plan to safeguard the quality of coastal areas and secure their sustainable development through **Integrated Coastal Area Management (ICAM)**.

#### ISSUES AT STAKE:

##### PRESSURES FROM SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

The state of the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal areas has deteriorated as Mediterranean coastal zones have been subjected to significant pressures from a range of socio-economic activities:

- > intensive coastal **urbanization** is reducing the space for natural ecosystems and their biodiversity, causing atmospheric pollution, increasing demand for domestic water and creating problems in relation to the treatment and disposal of solid waste and effluents;
- > mass **tourism** is resulting in extensive occupation of land surfaces, increased pressure on water resources, greater pollution and waste, leading to the loss of habitats for many wildlife species, the abandonment of traditional activities such as fishing and agriculture, and a deterioration in cultural values;
- > **pollution "hot spots"** in coastal areas, typically located in semi-enclosed gulfs and bays near key harbours, big cities and industrial areas, constitute the major environmental problem in the Mediterranean Sea;
- > land occupation and the pollution of the sea are negatively affecting the distribution, diversity and **survival of flora and fauna**, and of natural ecosystems in general: in heavily disturbed or polluted areas, benthic communities are disappearing to a large extent;
- > the potential impacts of **climate change** in the Mediterranean include drought, floods, changes in soil erosion and desertification, storms, coastal erosion, changes in seawater temperature and salinity, a rise in the sea level and a reduction of biodiversity.



#### MAJOR SHORTCOMINGS

Integrated Coastal Area Management in the Mediterranean is being carried out within the context of MAP, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and other regional and national endeavours. In overall terms, the Mediterranean scheme for cooperation in this field is in many respects a world leader, especially in its scope and sustainability. However, a number of issues remain:

- > the absence of a strategic view of Mediterranean coastal areas;
- > Coastal Area Management remains mainly a national-level concern;
- > weak administrative structures and enforcement, a lack of modernization and policy integration, and a shortage of resources;
- > a crisis of confidence in government planning systems;
- > the absence of a solid private sector and partners in civil society who could assist states in the management of coastal areas;
- > weak integration of environmental concerns in development planning by many Mediterranean partners;
- > the administrative and planning levels have not yet been satisfactorily integrated.



#### THE RESPONSE:

##### INTEGRATED COASTAL AREA MANAGEMENT

MAP, established within the framework of the Barcelona Convention in 1975, was the first Regional Seas programme of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). While MAP promotes all aspects of sustainable development in the Mediterranean Basin, its Regional Activity Centre for the Priority Actions Programme (PAP/RAC), located in Split, Croatia, focuses on coastal areas and regions and the promotion of integrated management as a major tool for their sustainable development.



In the follow-up to the Rio Conference, a number of regional events have been held with a view to identifying and bolstering Integrated Coastal Area Management (ICAM). Mediterranean States have met on several occasions to express their interest in ICAM. However, a major shift in regional efforts for better coastal management occurred with the advent of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSDD) in 1996. The MCSDD identified sustainable coastal management as one of its priority issues.

In this field, MAP and its PAP/RAC have concentrated their efforts on the following:

- > the promotion of a practical approach to ICAM, including the adaptation and simplification of tools and techniques to make them more accessible to all Mediterranean States, including developing countries, as well as the development of an approach to integrate coastal area and river basin management;
- > the preparation of a wide range of publications, including methodological documents and guidelines, to help national and local stakeholders promote sustainable development and implement projects;
- > the development of Coastal Area Management Programmes (CAMPs), as a special contribution by MAP to the integrated management of coastal areas: CAMPs are oriented towards the successful completion of practical coastal management projects in selected Mediterranean countries and, since 1989, 13 CAMPs have been completed, are being implemented or are planned in the near future.
- > the analysis in greater detail of specific coastal issues, such as urbanization, mass tourism, the impact of climate change and the rise in the sea level, coastal erosion, the increased demand for water resources, renewable energy sources, solid and liquid waste management, historic settlements and coastal legislation, leading to the development of policy and technical recommendations.

#### NEW MEDITERRANEAN COASTAL CHALLENGES: THE WAY AHEAD

Some of the main threats to the sustainable development of the region in future include: the ageing of the population (which is likely to herald a decline in the economic growth rate); poverty and social exclusion; transport congestion; the loss of biodiversity; the growth of waste volumes; the loss and declining fertility of soil; and emissions of greenhouse gases from human activity.



Addressing these challenges will require: urgent action by all regional stakeholders; committed and far-sighted leadership; a new approach to policy-making; widespread participation; increased international responsibility; improved policy coherence; investing in science and technology for the future; improving communication and mobilizing citizens and business; and taking the global dimension into account.

To a large extent, the Mediterranean region is its coastal areas and islands. They contain some of the most important natural ecosystems, while providing space and resources for Mediterranean communities. Coastal areas therefore have to be considered a common natural and cultural heritage that needs to be managed carefully for the sake of present and future generations.

To this end, it is necessary to take action at the national, local and regional levels. The **White Paper on Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean**, recently prepared by PAP/RAC, proposes a number of preliminary steps that will have to be taken to achieve the desired goals and objectives:

- > launching a common regional policy framework;
- > building political support;
- > establishing national policies and enforcement;
- > supporting local action; and
- > encouraging partners.



For further information, a detailed publication on  
Sound Coastal Zone Management is available at PAP/RAC.



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