



# THE MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN (MAP)

COMMITTED TO SECURING A HEALTHIER MEDITERRANEAN ENVIRONMENT

## WHAT IS THE MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN?

The Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP or MAP) is an action-oriented cooperative effort involving 20 countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea as well as the European Union. Their common objective is the creation of a healthier Mediterranean environment, resting on the principle of sustainable development. MAP is part of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and was its first Regional Seas Programme. Set up in 1975, MAP's remit was officially widened in 1995 to reflect the heightened contemporary understanding of the close links between conservation and development. Entering a new phase, MAP Phase II, it was renamed the Action Plan for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Sustainable Development of the Coastal Areas of the Mediterranean.

## HOW IS MAP STRUCTURED?

MAP is run by an Athens-based **Coordinating Unit (MEDU)** and comprises a **Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD)**, a **MED POL Programme for the Assessment and Control of Pollution**, six **Regional Activity Centres (RACs)** and a **Programme for the Protection of Coastal Historic Sites**.

## WHAT SORT OF LEGAL FRAMEWORK DOES MAP HAVE?

Twenty Mediterranean Countries and the European Union are Contracting Parties to the **Barcelona Convention**, the MAP legal framework that commits them to a dedicated environmental course of action for the Mediterranean. This Convention is accompanied by six Protocols that are binding legal instruments addressing specific aspects of environmental protection.

## THE SIX PROTOCOLS OF THE BARCELONA CONVENTION

- Dumping Protocol** (1976, amended in 1995)
- Emergency Protocol** (1976)
- Land-Based Sources Protocol** (1980, amended in 1996)
- Specially Protected Areas and Biodiversity Protocol** (1995, replacing the 1982 SPA Protocol)
- Offshore Protocol** (1994)
- Hazardous Wastes Protocol** (1996)

## WHO GOVERNS MAP?

MAP Contracting Parties jointly decide on MAP strategies, budget and programme in pursuit of MAP's goal of an improved Mediterranean environment in the context of sustainable development.

## HOW IS MAP FUNDED?

MAP activities are primarily financed by the Mediterranean Trust Fund to which all MAP Contracting Parties and UNEP contribute. Other sources include voluntary and ad hoc contributions. MAP also receives project support from the European Union and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

## WHAT ARE THE KEY MAP COMPONENTS?

The **MAP Coordinating Unit (MEDU)** is the nerve centre of MAP activities. Responsible for the Action Plan's coordination, monitoring and implementation, MEDU performs legal, political and communications roles as well as secretariat duties.

Set up as an advisory body to MAP in 1996, the **Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD)** is a think-tank on policies for promoting sustainable development in the Mediterranean Basin.

The **Programme for the Assessment and Control of Pollution in the Mediterranean Region (MED POL)** assists Mediterranean countries formulate and implement pollution monitoring and control programmes to reduce and ultimately eliminate pollution from land-based sources.

The **Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC)** helps Mediterranean coastal states build up their national response capabilities to be prepared for major marine pollution incidents.

The **Blue Plan Regional Activity Centre (BP/RAC)** adopts a systemic and prospective approach to Mediterranean environmental and developmental issues using observation and evaluation tools.

The **Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC)** concerns itself with integrated coastal area management to alleviate developmental problems in built up coastal areas.

The **Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC)** focuses on biodiversity and is involved in the protection of Mediterranean species, their habitats and ecosystems.

The **Environment Remote Sensing Regional Activity Centre (ERS/RAC)** supports planning and decision-making processes related to marine and coastal areas, through the utilisation of satellite technology.

The **Cleaner Production Regional Activity Centre (CP/RAC)** promotes the reduction of industrial waste at source to the Mediterranean industrial sector and disseminates tried-and-tested cleaner production techniques.

The **Programme for the Protection of Coastal Historic Sites (100 HS)** helps protect threatened Mediterranean sites of historical interest.



## WHAT ARE MAP'S PRIORITIES?

Securing a healthier quality of life for Mediterranean people.

Bringing about a major reduction in pollution from land-based sources; protecting the most important marine and coastal habitats; making maritime activities safer and more conscious of the Mediterranean marine environment and intensifying the integrated planning of coastal areas.

Fusing environmental and developmental concerns in the quest for the sustainable development of the region so that Mediterranean countries can tackle environmental degradation in the process of developing their economies.

Bolstering the environmental management capacities of Mediterranean countries through the sourcing of technical resources, skilled personnel and financial aid.

Boosting the commitment of Mediterranean people and the millions of visitors to their environment through an ambitious communications and public-awareness strategy.

Encouraging the growth of national policies and legal instruments, environmental infrastructure investments and stronger partnerships to push environmental measures and sustainability higher up the list of national priorities.

Strengthening solidarity among Mediterranean coastal states in managing their common heritage and resources for the benefit of present and future generations.



As well as a multilingual quarterly magazine, *MedWaves*, *RAC Reports* and *MAP Technical Reports* focusing on legal, scientific and socio-economic issues, *MAP* regularly publishes *State of the Mediterranean Environment reports* providing a snapshot of the region's marine and coastal environment. A brochure outlining *MAP's* work in more detail is available on request.

## MAP'S FOUR KEY ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

### CURBING POLLUTION

Since MAP Contracting Parties got together in 1975 to clean up the Mediterranean environment, individual countries and the region as a whole have made considerable progress in the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against chronic or accidental pollution. The coastal regions, however, remain under considerable stress as a result of human activity. For instance, between 30-45 million tons of municipal solid waste is generated by Mediterranean coastal areas each year, with plastic debris comprising 75% of the Mediterranean coastal litter that ends up floating on the water surface or sinking to the seabed. Overall, current pollution threats include organic and micro-biological pollution, heavy metals and oil spills.

MAP employs a multifaceted approach to launch a strong offensive on these complex pollution problems. Through five of the Protocols of the Barcelona Convention, MAP countries have dedicated themselves to tackling pollution on several fronts. The Strategic Action Programme, meanwhile, has a timetabled approach to eliminating pollution from land-based sources by facilitating the implementation of national environmental goals. It works towards the phasing out of inputs of substances into the Mediterranean Sea that are toxic, persistent and liable to bioaccumulate, targeting the region's 109 identified pollution hot spots.

### SAFEGUARDING NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Mediterranean region is rich in flora, fauna and landscapes as well as historic sites that are the legacy of world-influencing civilisations. This natural and cultural heritage, however, is under intense pressure from human activity including tourism, urbanisation, coastal zone overcrowding and transport. The protection of endangered species in the Mediterranean is crucial. The Mediterranean Monk Seal, for instance, is on the World Conservation Union's list of the 12 world species most threatened with



extinction. Approximately one third of UNESCO World Heritage List sites are located in the Mediterranean region.

As Mediterranean countries vary greatly in their ability to participate in the environmental initiatives needed to protect and manage their heritage, MAP sets out to boost competencies and technical resources so bolstering national conservation policies. The Specially Protected Areas and Biodiversity Protocol aims to establish sheltered zones in MAP countries to help conserve marine and coastal ecosystems as well as sites of cultural interest.

### MANAGING COASTAL AREAS

In recent decades, Mediterranean coastal areas including those of the region's many islands, have borne the brunt of rapid development. Problems of overcrowding and pollution are fanned by urbanisation and industrialisation. Today, around 145 million people make up the permanent population of the relatively

### INTEGRATING THE ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

narrow Mediterranean coastal areas. The region's burgeoning tourism industry only intensifies the coastal competition for space and natural resources including water.

Integrated Coastal Area Management (ICAM) is a holistic environmental approach that sets out to deal with the web of coastal area problems collectively on the understanding that they are interlinked. It relies on the involvement of a range of sectors, stakeholders and administrative levels. Through ICAM, MAP is working to reverse the negative coastal trends, so often the result of a short-sighted focus on immediate eco-

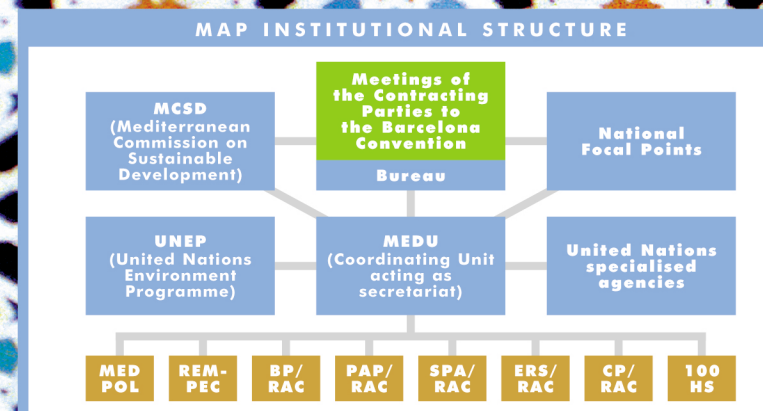
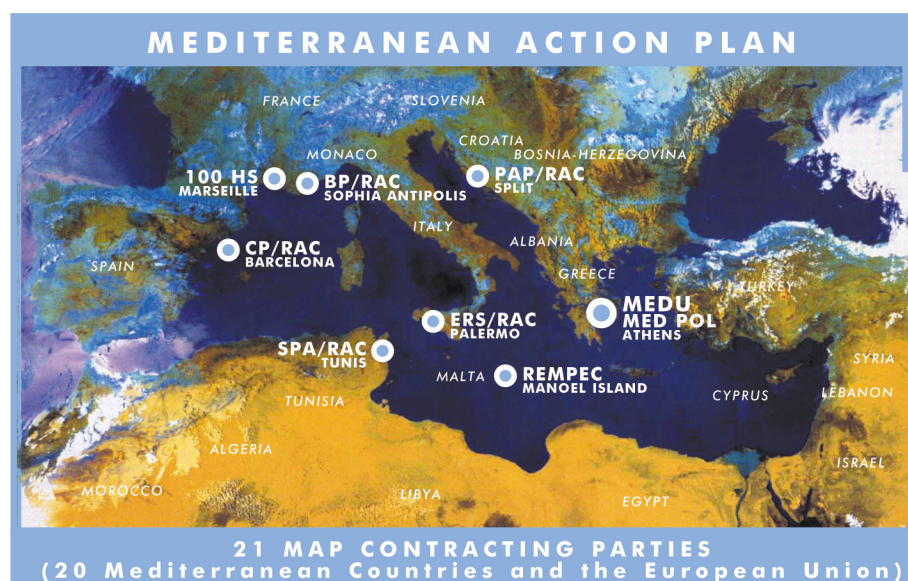
nomie advantage. By anticipating and preventing the irreversible destruction of resources and by instigating pilot coastal area management programmes in worst affected coastal areas, MAP is moving to integrate sustainable management into planning and development activities. Coastal Area Management Programmes (CAMPs) are practical MAP initiatives lasting an average of 3-4 years. They aim to introduce ICAM at national and local levels and to facilitate capacity-building in an effort to rehabilitate areas with the heaviest load of environmental problems. Since 1989, 13 CAMP projects have been implemented or are ongoing in various parts of the Mediterranean region.

## INTEGRATING THE ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

MAP is prioritising the need to integrate environmental considerations into all aspects of Mediterranean development. It studies, for example, present and future environmental and developmental interactions in the Mediterranean Basin on the basis of several hypotheses related to growth in areas such as population, urbanisation, trade and energy use, while considering their related impacts on natural resources. MAP has also instigated the Mediterranean Environment and Development Observatory (MEDO) to enhance the regional understanding of these links.



The existence of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) demonstrates the commitment of MAP's Contracting Parties to integrating the environment and development in the entire Mediterranean region. The MCSD is unique globally due to its pioneering structure putting key local development decision-makers such as business people, NGOs and local authorities on a par with state representatives. It has already come up with proposals for action on: water demand management; the sustainable management of coastal areas; indicators; tourism and public participation and awareness-raising. The MCSD has also zoomed in on industry, free trade and urban development while other themes are under consideration.



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