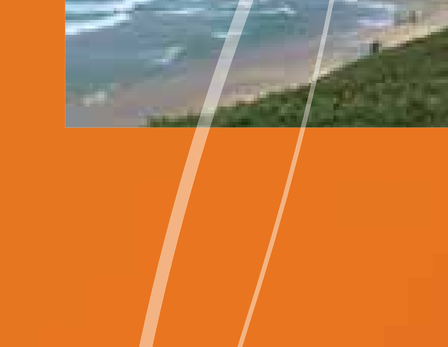

UNEP

MAP

A Strategic Action Plan to eliminate pollution from land-based sources in the Mediterranean

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Around 150 million people are concentrated on the 46,000 kms of Mediterranean coastline, with 110 million of them living in cities; some 200 million tourists arrive in the Mediterranean region every year; more than 200 petrochemical and energy installations, chemical industries and chlorine plants are located along the Mediterranean coast.

These figures represent the major challenge for the preservation of the environment to which editerranean countries have been devoting specific attention over the past decades, engaging themselves to prevent, halt, reduce and ultimately eliminate the main sources of pollution for the marine environment, 80% of which originate from human activities on land.

MAJOR SOURCES OF POLLUTION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN INCLUDE:

- disposal of untreated municipal waste water
- urban solid waste disposal
- activities contributing to air pollution from mobile sources
- release of harmful concentrations of nutrients into the marine environment
- storage, transportation and disposal of radioactive and hazardous waste
- activities contributing to the destruction of the coastline and coastal habitats

A BREAKTHROUGH IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POLLUTION

The preparation and adoption by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention of a Strategic Action Plan (SAP MED) of regional and national activities to address land-based pollution is one of the major breakthroughs in the Mediterranean countries' efforts to de-pollute the marine environment.

The Strategic Action Plan (SAP MED) is an action-oriented initiative of the MED POL Programme – the marine pollution assessment and control component of the Mediterranean Action Plan. It identifies priority target categories of polluting substances and activities to be eliminated or controlled by the Mediterranean countries through a planned timetable (up to the year 2025) for the implementation of specific pollution reduction measures and interventions.

The SAP MED is the basis for the implementation of the Land-based Sources Protocol by the Mediterranean countries over the next 25 years, as prompted by the signature of the revised LBS Protocol entitled "Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities". It is an action-oriented initiative translating the objectives of the 1995 Global Programme of Action (GPA) of UNEP into regional specific activities.

The reduction and phasing-out targets are formulated in accordance with related regional and international Conventions and programmes, such as the EU Directives, policies and strategies, and the Stockholm and Basel Conventions.

The key activities addressed in the SAP MED are linked to the urban environment and to industrial activities, targeting those responsible for the release of toxic, persistent and bioaccumulative substances into the marine environment, giving special attention to persistent organic pollutants (POPs).

The adoption of the SAP MED and the initiation of activities for its implementation, even before the entry into force of the amended LBS Protocol, is a clear indication of the determination of the countries in the Mediterranean to take concrete action to combat land-based pollution and at the same time contribute to maintaining and restoring marine biodiversity, safeguarding human health and promoting the sustainable use of marine living resources.

POPs

Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) are characterised by important toxic effects, including impacts on the functioning of the endocrine system. They are very resistant to natural breakdown processes and are therefore extremely stable and long-lasting.

All these properties combined translate into potential adverse effects on the environment, wildlife and human health. Plants and animals absorb POPs from water or food more efficiently than they can eliminate them, resulting in a steady increase in contamination over their lifetime.

Among POPs, 12 are organochlorines, recently identified as endocrine disruptors, and raise serious concerns about their high toxicity. Effects range from developmental abnormalities to reduced resistance to disease. POPs can travel long distances quickly, therefore they can be found all over the world regardless of where they are used or produced. They include dioxins and furans, which are produced as unwanted by-products of a number of industrial processes, PCBs and pesticides such as HCB (hexachlorobenzene), which have several industrial uses, and finally a number of first generation pesticides (DDT, chlordane, heptachlor, aldrin, dieldrin, endrin, toxaphene and mirex).

GEF SAP MED PROJECT

PARTNERSHIP FOR MEDITERRANEAN SUSTAINABILITY

After the adoption of the SAP MED, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) approved a Mediterranean Project for 2001 – 2005, contributing and mobilizing funds for the implementation of field activities. The injection of funds and political support made by the GEF Project into the MED POL initiative has produced major results. Countries have in fact prepared an inventory and have quantified all pollution sources on the coast (the Baseline Budget of emissions and releases) and have prepared National Diagnostic Analyses indicating priority issues. But the major contribution was the preparation of National Action Plans (NAPs) to address land-based pollution.
The Plans were formally endorsed by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in 2005.

National Action Plans describe the policy and actions that each country intends to undertake to reduce pollution, in line with SAP targets.

They incorporate mechanisms for information exchange, technology transfer, and promotion of cleaner technology, public participation and sustainable financing.

Their fundamental goal is to develop and implement concrete pollution reduction projects that:

- mobilise both stakeholders and resources
- become a cyclical process on which to build upon
- are mainstreamed into relevant institutional, budgetary and policy frameworks
- incorporate lessons learnt in the process.

The NAP implementation process is expected to greatly enhance economic, technological and social development at the local level, thus making a concrete contribution towards sustainable development.

For further information on MAP and the Strategic Action Plan to eliminate land-based pollution in the Mediterranean contact:

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The National Action Plans

The NAPs were prepared during 2004-2005 by all Mediterranean countries through a participatory approach. They consider the environmental and socio-economic issues, policy and legislative frame-works, and the management, institutional, and technical infrastructure available in the country. In the short-term, domestic financial resources are allocated to the actions from the annual budget; longer-term financial mechanisms are also identified, earmarked or developed, to ensure sustainability.

As key partner for sustainability, the private sector is specifically targeted and engaged in the development of the proposed actions as early as possible. However, the private sector is not approached merely as a potential source of financial resources, but as a partner that can benefit in terms, for example, of corporate image, or of operational savings in possible fines for non-compliance with environmental regulations.
In their formulation, NAPs:

1. Set Integrated Management Objectives
2. Establish an Institutional Framework
3. Formulate principles, approaches, measures, priority actions and deadlines for the implementation of SAP within the national framework
4. Prepare the resulting Investment Portfolio (IP)
   - *Definition of financial resource needs*
   - *Identification and mobilisation of partners*
   - *Development of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)*
5. Define the baselines and the priority activities for issues/actions of a trans boundary nature
6. Identify NGOs' and stakeholders' role in the process, and encourage Regional Cooperation
7. Elaborate monitoring and reporting system

THE LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION OF NAPS: WHAT PROSPECTS?

The NAPs preparation process succeeded in creating a momentum at local, national and regional levels, with a remarkable level of involvement and participation of all stakeholders. In each country, national and local authorities, the industrial sector and NGOs discussed priorities, possible actions and opportunities for investment thus making NAPs a realistic initiative.

Its success has already triggered potential donors to launch investments projects and initiatives, and has led to a new GEF **Strategic Partnership**, including the World Bank and a large number of international organisations, to support the long-term implementation of the NAPs. In addition, donor countries and other institutions such as the Fond Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM) have shown interest and willingness to join, contribute and assist individual countries in the implementation of their NAPs.

In addition to the above, the recent European initiative **"Horizon 2020"**, with very similar objectives and targets of reducing and eliminating land-based pollution by the year 2020, was formally launched in close cooperation with MAP. The expected joint implementation of the SAP MED and the Horizon 2020 will increase the political support of the pollution reduction process already initiated in the region and will succeed in mobilising more national and international funds.

Following the very successful preparation of the NAPs, the task is now to confront the challenge of implementation, through which to achieve concrete and lasting results. The issue of providing assistance to countries (technical, legal and institutional) throughout the years for the implementation of the pollution reduction projects is a central issue, as well as **ensuring a fair and equitable pollution elimination process and financial sustainability.** It is in that direction that MAP and the MED POL Programme are concentrating their efforts through capacity building programmes, the formulation of appropriate strategies and contacts with other international bodies and Organisations such as the GPA, the World Bank, the EIB, the European Commission as well as individual countries to pursue the very stimulating political momentum and finally witness a concrete reduction of pollution in the region in the years to come.

The Mediterranen Action Plan of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/MAP) *is an action-oriented cooperative effort involving 21 countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea as well as the European Community. All are Contracting Parties to the* ***Barcelona Convention****, the MAP legal framework that commits them to a dedicated course of action to meet the challenges of environmental degradation in the sea, coastal areas and inland, and to link sustainable resource management with development, in order to protect the Mediterranean region.*

The Convention is accompanied by six Protocols which are legally binding instruments addressing specific aspects of environmental protection. ***The MED POL Programme*** *(the marine pollution assessment and control component of MAP) is responsible for the follow-up work related to the implementation of the LBS Protocol,* ***the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities*** *(1980, as amended in 1996), and of the Dumping and Hazardous Wastes Protocols. MED POL assists Mediterranean countries in the formulation and implementation of pollution monitoring programmes, including pollution control measures and the drafting of action plans aiming to eliminate pollution from land-based sources.*

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