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Plan Bleu's National Focal Points Meeting

By videoconference, 19-20 May 2021

Agenda Item 3: Overview of Plan Bleu activities - 01.01.2020 - 15.04.2021

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Introductory note

This information document presents an overview of Plan Bleu/RAC activities in the current biennium in the framework of the mandates received by Plan Bleu/RAC from Contracting Parties up to and during COP21, the up to date achievements of Plan Bleu/RAC to implement these mandates.

Activities related to large streams of work which are meant to be continued are detailed in other documents for the purpose of this meeting, including working documents 2 Observing the environment and the development, 3 Integrating Climate Change as a priority, 4 Blue Economy, 5 Living in harmony with Nature, 6 Socio-economic analysis and economic instruments, and 7 Building a regional vision and strategy based on participatory foresight.

Agenda for Plan Bleu's Focal Points meeting:

The Focal Points will be invited to provide comments and suggestions on the next steps during the current biennium up to the COP22; as well as on the proposed activities for the next biennium, in relation with the topic of adaptation to climate change. The Focal Points might agree on formalized recommendations on this topic as outcomes of the meeting.

1. Plan Bleu's mandates

1. The Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2016-2021 (Decision IG.22/1) reiterates the objective "to deliver knowledge-based assessments of the Mediterranean environment and scenario development for informed decision-making and stakeholder work", through Indicative Key Output 1.4.1 "Periodic assessments based on DPSIR approach and published addressing inter alia status quality of marine and coastal environment, interaction between environment and development as well as scenarios and prospective development analysis in the long run".

2. In Decision IG.23/14 Programme of Work and Budget for 2018-2019, the Contracting Parties have requested Plan Bleu/RAC to contribute, along with MedPol, Info/RAC and EEA, to the H2020 initiative for a Healthy Mediterranean, via the activity 1.4.1.2 *Prepare jointly with the EEA the Second report on the Implementation of H2020 initiative for a Healthy Mediterranean*.

3. In Decision IG.23/14 Programme of Work and Budget for 2018-2019, activity 1.4.1.1, the Contracting Parties have requested Plan Bleu/RAC to *Organise the preparation of the State of the Environment and Development Report 2019*. At the 85th meeting of the bureau of the Contracting Parties (Athens, Greece 18-19 April 2018), Plan Bleu/RAC was requested to *a) Enable Contracting Parties, through the Plan Bleu Focal Points, to designate experts for the review process of the 2019 SoED report; and b) Explore ways for Contracting Parties to participate in the Steering Committee of the process (for example through the participation of two Contracting Parties per sub-regional group, thus, six Contracting Parties in total)*. At the 2nd meeting of the therefore set up Steering Committee (Geneva, Switzerland 11 January 2019), the meeting agreed on the SoED elaboration calendar which included the submission of the summary for decision makers and key messages for approval subsequently to Plan Bleu Focal Points, MAP Focal Points and the COP21.

4. In Decision IG.24/4, the Contracting Parties *Approve the summary for decision makers and key messages of the 2019 Report on the State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean (Annexes I and II) as important input for the definition of the 2022-2027 United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) Medium-Term Strategy and other relevant policy and strategy developments of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system*. They also *Invite the*

Contracting Parties to take concrete steps to incorporate the concerns raised in Annexes I and II to the present Decision in their environmental policies with the support of the Secretariat; Encourage the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat to make all possible efforts to overcome the knowledge gaps that are identified in the 2019 Report on the State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean; and request the Secretariat to undertake an extensive dissemination and communication campaign for the 2019 State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean Report and communication on the development of the MED 2050 Foresight Study and the Mediterranean Expert Network on Climate and Environmental Changes in the Mediterranean (MedECC) in the context of relevant consultation.

5. The 89th meeting of the bureau of the Contracting Parties (web-based 22-23 April 2020) encourages the Secretariat to pursue its communication efforts on the assessment reports according to a system-wide approach, and to this end ensure the dissemination of the 2019 SoED at all levels, as a major product of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system. The Bureau encourages Contracting Parties to identify media and non-media multipliers to disseminate the 2019 SoED findings and conclusions at Contracting Party level; and requests the Secretariat to disseminate to MAP Focal Points the final version of the SoED Report, along with this conclusion, for checking any possible errors of a purely technical nature within a strict deadline of 10 days. The final decision and accountability on the technical accuracy of the SoED Report will continue to remain with Plan Bleu/RAC and the Secretariat.

6. The Contracting Parties included the following activities in the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-2021, adopted at COP21 under Decision IG.24/14:

- 1.1.4.1 *Implement and update the Resource Mobilization Strategy, including the expected deliverable c) Bilateral meetings with donors successfully convened and additional external resources secured;*
- 1.4.1.3 *Main activity Prepare thematic products building on the findings of the State of the Environment and Development Report 2019 for outreach / Expected deliverables 4 to 16 pages thematic briefs prepared and disseminated;*
- 1.4.5.1 *Main activity Further establish/extend educational activities and promote educational programmes in cooperation with academic institutions, focusing on marine and coastal issues, with the aim to promote education on sustainable development / Expected deliverables Agreements prepared and signed with relevant academic and knowledge management institutions;*
- 1.6.1.1 *Main activity Implement the operational Communication Strategy / First set of expected deliverables: SoED 2019 published and disseminated, through the following steps:*
 - (a) Executive Summary translated into ES, AR;*
 - (b) Editing and layout of full report in FR and EN;*
 - (c) SoED dedicated web site established and online;*
 - (d) Video(s) including sub-titles prepared and disseminated;*
 - (e) Infographics prepared and disseminated through very short (max 2 pages) documents;*
 - (f) SoED launching events organised in at least 2 Mediterranean countries.*
- The same main activity comprises a second set of expected deliverables, more generally pertaining to Plan Bleu / RAC communication activities:
 - a) Communication format modernized: Short publications, press releases, infographics and video(s) produced and disseminated;*
 - b) Communication media modernized: Plan Bleu Website modernized; utilization of social media strengthened;*

- c) Development of specific websites for SoED 2019 and MED2050;*
- d) CU and other Components communication activities and products disseminated through Plan Bleu's Website;*
- e) CU and other Components communication activities and products disseminated through Plan Bleu's newsletter;*
- f) CU and other Components communication activities and products disseminated through Plan Bleu's social medias (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn);*
- g) Communication on Plan Bleu and UN Environment/MAP activities and mandate in regional and international events.*

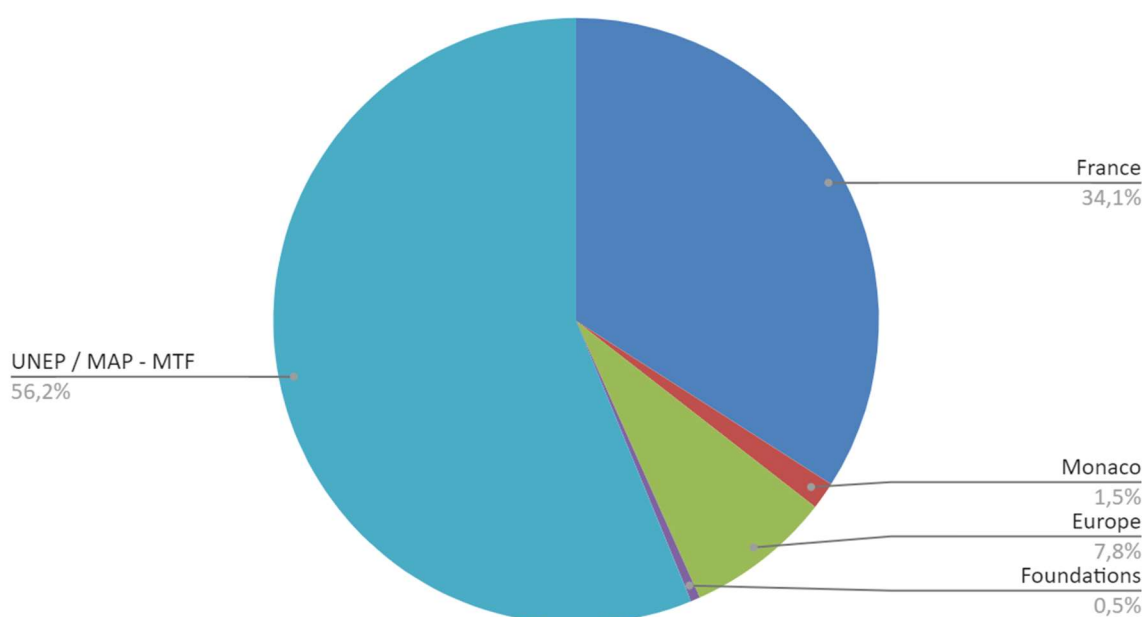
2. Main achievements in 2020-2021

2.1.Resource mobilization (Programme of Work 1.1.4.1), and Plan Bleu funding structure

7. Plan Bleu contributed to the MAP system Resource Mobilization Strategy by developing activities on a multi-donor basis whenever feasible (for example, by developing work on blue economy in the frame of European projects, complemented by seed funding from the MTF and / or from other supporting institutions).

8. Overall, the budget of Plan Bleu can be divided in five main sources: MAP system (Mediterranean Trust Fund and other sources managed through agreements between Plan Bleu / RAC and the Coordinating Unit), French public institutions, government of Monaco, European projects, and foundations. The total estimated for the biennium should amount to about 2 670 000 Euros, funded as follows:

Plan Bleu resources - 2020 / 2021



9. This does not include budgets which were made directly available to the MedECC network without being channeled through Plan Bleu, but which, for some of them, have been substantial. This is in particular the case for the budget contributed by the Swedish International Development Agency through the Union for the Mediterranean.

2.2. SoED (Programme of Work, activity 1.4.1.3)

10. Short thematic notes (4-16 pages) are elaborated on specific themes or issues addressed in the SoED 2020, aiming at either (a) further highlighting information contained in the SoED possibly further elaborating on the findings; or (b) responding to knowledge gaps identified in the SoED by completing or updating the information contained in the SoED. A first note on demographics in the Mediterranean has been published¹. A second one on contaminants of emerging concern is expected to be published by May 2021. Three additional notes, on offshore activities, on maritime transport and on desalination are under finalization and are planned to be published in the upcoming months.

11. The thematic maps produced and updated for the SoED 2020 are displayed in the Plan Bleu observatory map library (<https://www.obs.planbleu.org/cartes/>).

2.3. Agreements with relevant academic and knowledge management institutions (Programme of Work, activity 1.4.5.1), other partnerships and participation in expert groups

12. Plan Bleu has entered in two separate agreements with departments of Aix-Marseille University, resulting in the co-funding of one doctorate position and of one post-doctorate position. These two positions have been filled with terms of reference including direct work for the MED 2050 programme, as well as capitalization from MED 2050 to inform research on participatory foresight approaches.

13. Plan Bleu has partnered with the French Agency for Ecological Transition ADEME in the identification and promotion of best practices for adaptation to climate change in the Mediterranean since the inception of the “Trophées de l’Adaptation” programme. During this biennium, Plan Bleu followed up on the award of the second edition of this prize through its communication channels. Furthermore, on the basis of a summary note for decision makers, entitled “mission to capitalize on practices in terms of adaptation to climate change in the Mediterranean”, written by Acteon, TEC Ramboll and the Air association, Plan Bleu has drafted a shorter 4-page summary note (French version only), entitled “« Quelques pratiques et recommandations en matière d’adaptation aux impacts du changement climatique en Méditerranée », emphasizing the recommendations for the attention of Mediterranean decision-makers². The call for applications of the award’s third edition has been launched, with a closing date for applications on 15 April 2021. Plan Bleu will continue its involvement in the awards for this third edition.

14. Plan Bleu / RAC participates in several regional expert groups:

- Plan Bleu is representing the UNEP/MAP- Barcelona Convention system within the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), Working Group on Programmes of Measures – Economic and Social Analysis (WG POM ESA): As of 23 October 2020, Plan Bleu is co-chairing this working group;
- Plan Bleu participates in the Posidonia Anchoring Network, piloted by the French Office for Biodiversity *Office français de la biodiversité*;
- Plan Bleu is a member of the *Association Internationale des Forêts Méditerranéennes*;

¹ <https://planbleu.org/publications/note-38-tendances-perspectives-demographiques/>

² https://planbleu.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Note39_Notes_Adaptation-aux-impacts-du-changement-climatique.pdf

- Plan Bleu participates in the UNEP/MAP Communication Task Force;
- Plan Bleu participates in the UNEP/MAP Task Force for the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp).
- Plan Bleu is member of the UNEP Sustainable Blue Economy Coordination Group (created in June 2020 to foster knowledge sharing and analysis of trajectories towards a sustainable blue economy and their implementation);
- Plan Bleu participates in the UfM Working group on Blue Economy and the UfM Water expert group;
- Plan Bleu is member of the Mediterranean Blue Economy Stakeholder Platform;
- Plan Bleu participates in the EU4Ocean coalition (an initiative of the European Commission – DG MARE);
- Plan Bleu is Board Member of GWP-Med.

2.4. SoED dissemination and outreach (Programme of Work activity 1.6.1.1 second set of activities)

15. As per the Programme of Work, full editing and layout of the French and English versions of the full 340-page SoED report have been carried out. The SoED dedicated website, on which all SoED publications, full report, summary for Decision Makers, Key Messages, video and infographics are available, has been established and is online³.

16. Three SoED presentation events have been organized virtually.
- a. The English-speaking launch of SoED 2020 took place during a press conference organized by UNEP as part of the EU Green Week on 21 October 2020. About twenty international journalists were present, which resulted in about twenty media articles.
 - b. The report was also presented to the French media on 17 November 2020 at the MED 2020 conference during a dedicated session targeting scientists and decision-makers. A press conference brought together a dozen journalists, including Agence France-Presse (AFP), and generated strong media visibility.
 - c. The SoED was further presented during a dedicated event organized in Tunisia on 16 February 2021 with the kind support from the Tunisian Ministry of Local Affairs and Environment, the Regional Activity Center for Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA / RAC) and the French Energy efficiency agency ADEME. The event allowed to share the main conclusions and recommendations of the SoED 2020 with Tunisian stakeholders and to discuss how these apply specifically to the Tunisian national context, priorities and needs..

2.5. Operational Communication strategy (Programme of Work activity 1.6.1.1 second set of activities)

17. The communication efforts linked to the SoED 2020 represent a step towards a strengthened large-scale communication towards civil society and the general public. The release of the report made it possible to experiment new communication channels, more visual and more comprehensive for a wider audience. Infographics have been created, and a video dedicated to SoED 2020 was also produced and broadcast on social networks, allowing a better understanding of the issues and wider dissemination⁴. The use of videos as effective communication tools has been deepened in the communication of Plan Bleu, and in addition to the video dedicated to the SoED 2020, two series of

³ www.planbleu.org/soed

⁴ www.planbleu.org/soed

thematic video supports have been prepared: (a) on nature-based solutions for adaptation to climate change⁵; and (b) on the assessment of climate and environmental change in the Mediterranean⁶.

18. The recent communication efforts have enabled Plan Bleu to achieve unprecedented visibility since its creation: more than 70 media appearances in France and internationally since the publication of the SoED 2020 in October 2020. A 360° communication strategy has been put in place with direct involvement of the international press: the organization of a virtual international press conference on 21 October 2020 during the EU Green Week, a virtual press conference to the French media on 18 November 2020 during the MED2020 conference and a presentation of the SoED in Tunisia with media presence. These conferences brought together more than twenty journalists of international scope, allowing Plan Bleu to promote its actions in several media in Mediterranean countries. This strong mobilization was accompanied by active social networks: beyond the SoED 2020 website, the platforms Twitter and LinkedIn were privileged channels for communication. Opinion leaders and the general public relayed the various content created (infographics, tweets, video, but also a full report, summary for decision-makers and key messages). Plan Bleu has exceeded 1,300 LinkedIn subscribers and is approaching 1,000 Twitter subscribers; each post was relayed by members of the network, allowing messages to be disseminated on a large scale.

19. This reinforced communication strategy was accompanied by the redesign of the Plan Bleu website⁷, which is now more accessible, with a new design and with a more ergonomic search for information. All of these improvements have had a visible impact: site traffic has increased dramatically from 1,000 unique visitors in early 2020 to 7,000 unique visitors per month by the end of the year 2020.

20. Plan Bleu's presence on social media (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn) has also increased, as has the dissemination of its productions and news through the network of UNEP/MAP Regional Activity Centers. Plan Bleu counts a total of 3,500 subscribers on social networks today (950 on Facebook, 970 on Twitter and 1,400 on LinkedIn), with steady increases in subscriptions. A new design of the Plan Bleu newsletter was also developed at the end of 2020. A new, more attractive version making it possible to follow Plan Bleu news more regularly (monthly, versus quarterly until 2019).

21. The positive experience of a strong communication effort around the SoED 2020 brought about key learnings for the future rollout of targeted communication efforts, for example for the ongoing Foresight exercise MED 2050, for which Plan Bleu / RAC has developed a dedicated website⁸, or for Plan Bleu's observatory of environment and development, which also has a new website⁹.

22. In line with the UNEP/MAP Operational Communication Strategy, Plan Bleu has made strong efforts to communicate on Plan Bleu and UNEP/MAP activities and mandate in regional and international events:

- a. A Plan Bleu intervention during the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Mediterranean 2020 conference on November 3, 2020 allowed to present the SoED 2020 report during the "Promoting environmental cooperation" session¹⁰.

⁵ 10 interviews and a summary video: <https://planbleu.org/event/atelier-international-mise-en-oeuvre-de-solutions-basees-sur-la-nature-pour-fight-against-climate-change-focus-on-the-Mediterranean-region/>

⁶ Interviews with 11 MedECC researchers: <https://www.medecc.org/interviews-with-medecc-researchers/>

⁷ www.planbleu.org

⁸ www.med2050.org

⁹ <https://www.obs.planbleu.org/en/>

¹⁰ <https://www.osce.org/event/2020-osce-mediterranean-conference>

- b. From 16 to 18 November 2020, Plan Bleu / RAC co-organized the conference *MED 2020*¹¹, in cooperation with the research programme MISTRALS¹², and MedECC. The event brought together more than 280 participating scientists and decision makers. Inspired by the achievements of science-policy interfaces, this three-day conference for Mediterranean decision-makers was the opportunity to take stock of scientific knowledge and the challenges that the Mediterranean environment will face in the decades to come. The MED 2020 conference was an opportunity for the organizers to present the conclusions resulting from their respective work, including the SoED 2020 and the MedECC's first Mediterranean assessment report (MAR1).
- c. A webinar co-organized by UNEP/MAP and the Parliamentary Assembly for the Mediterranean on 14 December 2020, allowed Plan Bleu to reach decision-makers in all countries of the region. Plan Bleu presented the SoED to more than 70 participants, including representatives of national parliaments of Parties to the Barcelona Convention, the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association¹³.
- d. A Plan Bleu intervention on SoED 2020 findings and levers of action for transitions took place on 8 April 2021, during the virtual conference Making Peace With Nature and Delivering on the SDGs in the Mediterranean, organized by the Geneva Environment Network. It allowed to communicate more effectively with international organizations, country representations and other stakeholders based in Geneva¹⁴.

23. In May 2020, Plan Bleu / RAC has published two notes reflecting on the COVID 19 crisis in the Mediterranean, in French language only¹⁵.

24. In June 2020, a special edition of the magazine of the French Ministry of Ecological and Solidarity Transition and of the French Ministry for Territorial Cohesion and Relations with Territorial Authorities, was published in French language only. The special edition is dedicated to the outcomes of the international conference "Environment and Development in the Mediterranean, yesterday, today and tomorrow" which was organized at the occasion of Plan Bleu / RAC's 40th anniversary, celebrated in 2018¹⁶.

25. In summary, between January 2020 and 15 April 2021, Plan Bleu / RAC has produced: 16 publications (Annex), 11 infographics, 2 press releases, 1 digital campaign: 75 press appearances in the media in France and internationally, 29 news on the Plan Bleu website.

2.6. SEIS (Programme of Work 2018-2019, activity 1.4.1.2)

26. The joint report by the European Environment Agency (EEA) and United Nations Environment Programme's Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP), that resulted from this activity takes stock of

¹¹ <https://planbleu.org/en/event/plan-bleu-mistrals-and-medecc-organized-med-2020-an-ambitious-conference-on-climate-and-environmental-issues-in-the-mediterranean/>

¹² MISTRALS = Mediterranean Integrated Studies at Regional And Local Scales:

<https://www.insu.cnrs.fr/fr/cnrsinfo/mistrals-dix-ans-de-recherche-en-mediterranee>

¹³ <https://www.unenvironment.org/unepmap/news/news/science-policy-interface-action-mediterranean-lawmakers-examine-reports-climate> and <https://www.pam.int/default.asp?m=news&id=957&lang=en>

¹⁴ <https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/events/making-peace-with-nature-and-delivering-on-the-sdgs-in-the-mediterranean/>

¹⁵ https://planbleu.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/note_crise_sanitaire.pdf; https://planbleu.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/note_-_les_3_temps_de_la_crise.pdf

¹⁶ <https://planbleu.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Environnement-et-d%C3%A9veloppement-en-M%C3%A9diterran%C3%A9e-les-quarante-ans-du-Plan-Bleu.pdf>

the progress achieved and challenges ahead in the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Horizon 2020 initiative for a cleaner Mediterranean (H2020). It has been developed in close coordination with the report on the State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean 2020, and has been published in September 2020 (synthesis¹⁷) and March 2021 (full report¹⁸).

¹⁷ <https://planbleu.org/en/publications/summary-of-technical-assessment-progress-towards-a-cleaner-mediterranean/>

¹⁸ <https://planbleu.org/publications/rapport-technique-vers-une-meditteranee-plus-propre/>

Annex 1 – List of Plan Bleu publications (January 2020 – April 2021)

- [FLYER BLUE ECONOMY, A new frontier for growth and a healthy Mediterranean](#) (English)
- [The Covid 19 crisis in the Mediterranean: a new major risk or an opportunity for reconstruction?](#) (French)
- [Covid 19 in the Mediterranean, the 3 steps of the crisis](#) (French)
- [Environment and development in the Mediterranean: 40 years of Plan Bleu](#) (French)
- [Plan Bleu Cahier #19 BLUE ECONOMY - Case studies, lessons and perspectives](#) (English)
- [Plan Bleu Cahier #20 Report SIMPEER: Simplified Peer Review Mechanism of Sustainable Development Strategies in Mediterranean Countries](#) (English, French)
- [Plan Bleu Cahier #21 Demographic trends and outlook in the Mediterranean](#) (French)
- [Plan Bleu Note #38 Demographic trends and outlook in the Mediterranean](#) (English, French)
- [Development of indicators to evaluate and monitor climate change impacts on socio-economic trends linked to biodiversity and natural resources in Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance \(SPAMIs\)](#) (English)
- [Report on the State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean – SoED 2020](#) (English, French)
- [Key Messages of the SoED 2020](#) (English, French)
- [Summary for Decision Makers of the SoED 2020](#) (English, French, Arabic upcoming and Spanish upcoming)
- [Plan Bleu Note #39 Adaptation to impacts of climate change](#) (French)
- [BLUEMED – Short foresight report : cruising, yachting and recreational boating in the Mediterranean](#) (English, French, Italian, Spanish)
- [Technical Report: Towards a cleaner Mediterranean: a decade of progress](#) (English)
- [Synthesis report: Towards a cleaner Mediterranean: a decade of progress](#) (Arabic, English, French)

Publications under finalization, planned to be published prior to Plan Bleu's national focal points meeting 2021:

- [Mapping of Mediterranean observatories and monitoring programmes for the environment and for marine and coastal activities](#) (English, French)
- [Synthesis report: mapping of Mediterranean observatories and monitoring programmes for the environment and for marine and coastal activities](#) (English, French)
- SoED thematic brief: contaminants of emerging concern (English, French)
- Technical report: Comparative study of projections of indicators pertaining to environment and development made in Plan Bleu's 2005 foresight report and the current state of environment and development (French)