Balanced and equitable participation and different modalities for engaging stakeholders

The UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention experience

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Thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international forums - Aarhus Convention WGP-27 (Geneva, 26–28 June 2023)
UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention

Regional governance framework gathering the 21 Mediterranean countries and EU.
• MAP is the First Regional Sea Programme under UNEP (1975)
• UN Treaty (since 1976) - Regional Multilateral Environmental Agreement
• Institutional, regulatory and implementation framework

Working together to fulfill the vision of a healthy Mediterranean Sea and Coast that underpin sustainable development in our region.
Institutional set-up

- **Coordinating Unit** under UNEP, based in Athens (Greece)

- **MAP components**: 6 Regional Activity Centres (RACs) and the Programme for the Assessment and Control of Marine Pollution in the Mediterranean (MED POL)
The MAP Data Management Policy

Decision IG. 25/10 of 2021 on "MAP Data Policy", *inter alia* refers to *Access to and Redistribution of Data*:

- The data made available by the UNEP/MAP platforms are accompanied by a data license.
- The data made available, as collected and coming from a third party may have agreements and licenses different from those defined and approved by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, with license conditions agreed by INFO/RAC with the producers in order to guarantee the access limits and how to make the data available to others.
- Possible reclassifications of the data to less detailed scales can be made by UNEP/MAP, through INFO/RAC, in agreement with the data provider or the Contracting Parties, in order to make the dataset open or free of limitations of use.
- Access to data covers both technical access and the policies that govern access.
- Products created by UNEP/MAP, INFO/RAC and other MAP Components are considered a public good and where possible, they will be made fully, freely and openly available for others to use.
- As a standard approach, all data held by UNEP/MAP shall be made available with minimum time delay and at no cost.
MAP Partners

Decision IG.19/6 of 2009 on "MAP/Civil society cooperation and partnership"

a) Sets criteria and a procedure for admission as MAP Partners of the international, civil society organisations/NGOs as well as national and local non governmental organisations

b) Defines the rights and responsibilities of MAP partners - Code of Conduct for MAP Partners

- Every 6 years, NGO observers ask the Secretariat to renew their accreditation; the request should show what contribution the NGO has made to MAP activities and projects as well as its attendance at meetings/events
- There are currently 63 accredited MAP Partners
- During the 94th Bureau meeting of the Contracting Parties (Izola, Slovenia, 20-21 June 2023), the Bureau requested the Secretariat to prepare a proposal in order to allow more flexibility in the accreditation of MAP Partners, so as to enlarge the scope to other stakeholders/non-profit organizations to become MAP Partners (such as scientific institutions/universities, private sector organizations, intergovernmental organizations)
MAP Partners

Indicative rights of MAP Partners:

- NGOs may formulate comments, constructively criticize or make proposals on the activities of MAP and the Contracting Parties;
- NGOs may make written presentations on topics relevant to the objectives of the Convention during meetings and conferences.
- NGOs have the right to be informed.
- NGOs have the right to access environmental information.
- NGOs are associated as closely as possible in the various phases of preparation and follow-up of MAP's programmes and actions;
- NGOs may submit in writing to the MAP Secretariat general or specific comments and suggestions on topics within their competence;
- NGOs are invited to participate in seminars, colloquia and conferences organized by the various MAP bodies;
- Agreements may be concluded between the Secretariat or MAP bodies and the NGOs considered the most directly concerned/competent.
The MCSD is an advisory body to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and a forum for debate and exchange of experiences on sustainable development issues that concern all interested parties in the Mediterranean region.

The Commission is composed of 40 members, consisting of 22 representatives designated by the competent bodies of the Contracting Parties, and 18 representatives of six stakeholder categories (3 representatives of each category):

- local authorities,
- NGOs,
- socio-economic stakeholders,
- scientific community,
- intergovernmental organizations working in the field of sustainable development,
- regional parliamentary associations

All members shall participate in the Commission on an equal footing.
Preparation of COP 23 of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (Portoroz, Slovenia, 4-8 December 2023)

In the course of the preparation of the draft Portoroz Ministerial Declaration, the involvement of stakeholders will be sought, with a focus on MAP Partners and MCSD members, through:

(a) the MAP Partners being invited to contribute to an online Working Group formed of the Contracting Parties for the preparation of the draft Ministerial Declaration; and/or

b) a meeting with the MAP Partners/stakeholders being organized for their contribution to the draft Ministerial Declaration.

Special emphasis will be also provided to the involvement of Youth, following the successful example of COP 21 and COP22 (youth event and participation of youth at the COP).

The Members of the MCSD also addressed during the 20th Meeting of the MCSD (Marseille France, 14-16 June 2023) issues of relevance to the Ministerial-level discussions of COP 23 and provided inputs on elements to be addressed in the draft Portoroz Ministerial Declaration. The Meeting also proposed a consultation process for further providing inputs of the MCSD to the Ministerial Declaration, lead by the MCSD Steering Committee and other interested MCSD members (open-ended group).
Global / Regional interactions on sustainable development

The Barcelona Convention system has a leading role in facilitating the coordinated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs and in ensuring the transition towards a green and blue economy in the Mediterranean.

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<tr>
<th>Global</th>
<th>Regional (Mediterranean)</th>
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<tr>
<td>• 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</td>
<td>• Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD)</td>
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<td>• High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)</td>
<td>• Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD)</td>
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<td>• Volunteer National Review (VNR)</td>
<td>• Simplified Peer Review Mechanism (SIMPEER)</td>
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<td>• SDG Index and Dashboards; UNEP World Environment Situation Room (WESR)</td>
<td>• Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard; Med-WESR</td>
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MSSD Flagship Initiative on Environmental Governance: 
Encourage the Accession to and Implementation of the Aarhus Convention

- **Target:** by 2025 two-thirds of Mediterranean countries have acceded to the Convention
- **Current status:** 12 Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention are Parties to the Aarhus Convention, i.e. 54.5%

- Desk study for the development of a Foundation Discussion Document (FDD) for the "Mediterranean Accession Agenda" to the Aarhus Convention
- **Undertaken by MEPIELAN Centre**
- Side event at the EfE9 Ministerial Conference (Cyprus, October 2022)
- Experts meeting to validate the FDD (2023)
- Dissemination and regional capacity building (2022-2024)

funded by:

- **EU LIFE Programme**
- **Water and Environment Support** in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood region
Thank you!