



MedGOOS

Mediterranean Global Ocean Observing System

03/06/02

Dear

As you are aware, in 1991 the assembly of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) created the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), a permanent, global system for the observation, modelling and analysis of marine and ocean data, to be planned and implemented regionally, for the support of operational ocean services worldwide. Agenda 21 specifically called for the development of the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) to strengthen the sustainable management of seas and oceans. This will be achieved by providing an accurate description of the present state of the oceans as well as forecasts of the future conditions of the sea, with an important contribution to forecasts of climate change. GOOS contributes to the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) as its ocean component and the Global Terrestrial Observing System (GTOS) as its marine coastal component. GOOS is sponsored by the IOC, the WMO, UNEP and ICSU. A European component of GOOS, EuroGOOS, was set up in 1994 by 14 European agencies (reaching 30 in 2001) and the Mediterranean was included among its regional task teams.

MedGOOS is an informal association set up by the IOC in 1997, to provide a concerted approach to the planning and implementation of the GOOS in the Mediterranean. Focusing on regional priorities, MedGOOS aims at the development of an operational ocean observing and forecasting system in the Mediterranean. It takes into account the economic and social implications in the region and provides for guidance and assistance to the riparian states to achieve a harmonized implementation of the GOOS. The involvement of all the Mediterranean countries in MedGOOS ensures that this venture will bring benefits and opportunities equally to all the riparian coastal peoples.

In 2001 the EU approved MAMA, the first MedGOOS project. MAMA, "The Mediterranean network to Assess and upgrade Monitoring and forecasting Activity in the region" is a first important step toward the implementation of MedGOOS, its actual build-up and tangible approach to the fulfilment of its objectives.

While a number of EU-funded RTD projects are establishing the scientific basis for the implementation of MedGOOS, such as MEDAR/MEDATLAS, MSFPP (the Mediterranean Forecasting System Pilot Project) and MFSTEP (Mediterranean Forecasting System Towards Environmental Protection), MAMA will establish the institutional links and the regional platform for implementation.

In close alignment with the objectives of MedGOOS, MAMA aims to build a basin-wide network for ocean monitoring and forecasting, linking all the Mediterranean countries. It intends to broaden and strengthen the existing network of national institutions; to identify the gaps in the monitoring systems in the region and in the capability to measure model and forecast the ecosystem; and to build-up the expertise in setting up and running observing platforms, in data management and in modelling and forecasting the ecosystem. MAMA will provide the initial forecasting system from a basin-scale down to the coastal zone.

The focus is on the sustainable use of the coastal zone. MAMA will initially design a scientifically sound and cost effective coastal observing and forecasting system to be fully integrated into the basin-wide system and will prepare the setting for its implementation.

MAMA will be integrating the knowledge base derived from national, regional and international resources. As UNEP/MAP is an active partner of MAMA, the MED POL Programme for monitoring the sources, levels and effects of contaminants in the Mediterranean comprises one such resource.

MED POL has been coordinated by the United Nations Environment Programme since 1975. It is implemented as the environmental assessment component of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), which was adopted in 1975 by the Mediterranean Coastal States and the EEC.

The Programme for the Assessment and Control of Pollution in the Mediterranean Region (1996-2005) known as MED POL Phase III, is designed, in terms of its assessment component, to provide appropriate data and information for the identification of sources and loads of pollution, the levels and trends of contaminants and the identification and the assessment of potential threats to the Mediterranean environment, particularly from land based sources. A regional network involving a large number of national institutions in most Mediterranean countries has been set up for this purpose.

The MAMA project will be able to profit from the existing regional network of institutes, scientists and national authorities and other stakeholders collaborating under the Mediterranean Action Plan and will have at its disposal the large amount of data available in the UNEP/MAP reports and databases. An integrated coastal/open sea monitoring/forecasting system with optimised temporal/spatial coverage is expected to contribute greatly to all the relevant environmental assessment programmes currently in operation in the region, providing, through complementary information and data, a better and more complete understanding of coastal interactions in the Mediterranean, thereby also contributing to an improved coastal management.

A strong collaboration among the neighbouring countries to share efforts and resources is essential. The participants, scientists and end-users are called upon to work together in the entire basin to raise awareness on the benefits of ocean forecasting and to disseminate the results and products of the project.

Your contribution to MAMA in this direction will be crucial in the implementation of MedGOOS and thus the promotion of GOOS on a national and regional basis.

Relying on your continued support of this effort,

Sincerely,

Aldo Drago
MedGOOS Exec. Sec
MAMA Ass. Co-Ordinator

f / Silvana Vallerga
MedGOOS Chair
MAMA Co-Ordinator

Chairperson

Silvana Vallerga
CNR & IMC
Localita' Sa Mardini 09072 Torre Grande – Oristano ITALY
Tel: +39 0783 22027 / 22136 / 22032
Fax: +39 0783 22002
e-mail: vallerga@nameserver.ge.cnr.it

Executive Secretary

Aldo Drago
IOI-Malta Operational Centre
University of Malta
c/o 36, Old Mint Street, Valletta VLT12
MALTA
Tel: +356 2123 2493
Fax: +356 2123 2493
e-mail: aldo.drago@um.edu.mt