

**GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Sea Large Marine Ecosystem
Communication Focal Points Meeting/Workshop
10-11 January 2011, ISPRA, Rome**

Version: 13 January 2011

Report

The MedPartnership's Communication Focal Points Meeting/Workshop that took place at ISPRA premises, Rome on 10-11 January 2011 focused on:

1. The first Draft Communication Strategy of the MedPartnership and work plan for 2011
2. The revised version of the MedPartnership's website
3. The Collaboration portal of the MedPartnership

The main outcomes of the discussions on each of these agenda items and the exercise dedicated to the collaboration portal are summarized below:

1. The first Draft Communication Strategy and the Work Plan for 2011

In general, it was agreed that the first Draft of the Communication Strategy (CS) is a well structured document, providing a good basis in terms of defining the overall vision of the MedPartnership's CS and the ways to operationalize it. However, there are a few points that should be taken into account and these include the following:

- Reference should be made to other major projects and processes that are linked to the MedPartnership at regional and country level. Relevant synergies should be set in terms of communication. In line with this, the web site and the newsletter should include information on key events, advances, results and impacts of these other processes and projects of relevance.
- The key messages (simple and straightforward) of each sub-component of the MedPartnership should be clearly identified by the partners, as well as their specific target groups, in order to have a more component-based CS.
- The links of the CS with the replication component should be described in more detail. Eventually an alignment of the communication and replication work plans should be made.
- The responsibilities and tasks of the PMU, the Communication Team and the Partners, including the Countries should be described in more detail and a minimum of effort should be ensured by the Partners.
- A harmonised and coherent visibility/communication framework should be applied by all Partners on the basis of specific guidelines (already developed) and the communication manual (soon to be developed by INFO/RAC).
- The Action Plan of the CS should be evaluated and revised accordingly on an annual basis, ensuring flexibility in capturing communication opportunities and better cooperation/coordination among the Partners.
- Two types of communication products should be developed: overall and component based.
- It may be considered if hiring a professional agency to assist with the communication activities is cost effective.

- Countries could help in terms of measuring the success and the impact of the communication strategy in country. In addition, they can assist in transmitting/disseminating and streamlining the MedPartnership's communication products.
- The Communication Team should strategically plan the media event (on the basis of resources and the time available) tentatively to take place back-to-back with the Steering Committee Meeting in Syria, March 2011 (to be confirmed).

2. The revised version of the website

The re-architected content and the revised aesthetic approach of the MedPartnership's website was approved by the Partners. Some suggestions for improvements were made and these include:

- A press room section should be added on the homepage;
- The calendar should be removed from the homepage;
- The Investment Component of the MedPartnership should be more prominent;
- In the "other relevant news section" information on advances, results, key events of other relevant Mediterranean processes and projects should be included;
- The website should also be translated into Arabic;
- Countries could contribute with translations of specific communication outputs, e.g. the press releases (should be available in more than the three official languages);
- Partner's contacts for press should be submitted to the Communication Team.

3. The Collaboration Portal

Partners were introduced to the main features of the Collaboration Portal which has been developed to:

- facilitate the internal communication within the structure the MedPartnership.
- ensure the website news & event section are up-to date via direct contribution of the partners.
- inter-connect partners and their collective knowledge with ease.
- help the partners to build collaborative knowledge by sharing and discussing various forms of digital content within a secure, unified application that is accessible using a web based interface or a desktop client.
- combine the capabilities of collaboration tools like wikis, blogs, file repositories, micro blogs, instant discussions and other social applications into one platform.
- keep users automatically updated and enable instant discussions within any document, file or content.

The many different uses, features and applications of the Collaboration Portal impressed the Partners. It was decided however to use it on an experimental basis over the next coming months, as a file repository (sharing documents and images) and as a space to jointly work on documents and lists (e.g. the Publications Plan, the work plan outputs, the list of other relevant events, etc.) The Communication Team will coordinate this process and when necessary will provide specific guidelines and support.