



Preliminary Notice of a Regional Workshop



ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN - BUILDING ON EXISTING EXPERIENCES -

Rome, 5-6 December 2007

BACKGROUND

During 2007 the SMAP Regional Management and Support Unit (RMSU) has focused on improving environmental stakeholders' access to updated information, capacity building and networking in the Mediterranean region. The tool SMAP-RMSU has developed for this purpose is the SMAP Clearing House, a web based information system developed in collaboration with European Environmental Agency and actors of the Mediterranean region. Based on the recommendations of the previous SMAP RMSU Regional Workshop on "Information and communication for improving environmental knowledge and reporting in the Mediterranean" held in Rome in October 2006, the activities have focused on:

- Reinforcing and enhancing the Network of national and regional organisations contributing and using the Clearing House;
- Mainstreaming the Clearing House thematically with the priority fields of the Euro-Mediterranean Horizon 2020 initiative, that aims to tackle the top sources of pollution by the year 2020;
- Improving technical functionalities of the Clearing House (building Arabic interface, improving search facilities, developing a portal toolkit enabling off-line use, setting up an expert Database, GeoMAP etc.);
- Working with EEA and other regional organisations in order to secure future maintenance and development of the SMAP Clearing House after SMAP-RMSU project completion in February 2008.

The coming workshop will present the outcomes of 2007 and provide a forum for discussion on a wide range of common challenges faced in improving the exchange of environmental knowledge in the region.

OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

- To summarize lessons learned of the SMAP Clearing House initiative at regional and national levels;

- To share recent experiences on exchange of environmental knowledge and information in Mediterranean region (information systems, technical challenges, data issues, interoperability, communication);
- To discuss and make a proposal of sustainable ways forward for the SMAP Clearing House.

AGENDA

The programme will consist of three key sessions and a plenary for conclusions:

1. SMAP Clearing House – progress and lessons learned to ensure its sustainability and continuity at national and regional levels (half a day)
2. EU and Mediterranean Programs experiences on Environmental Information Exchange (half a day)
3. Integrating Information Systems: main challenges (half a day)
4. Plenary and Conclusions

A more detailed agenda will be provided to you soon.

WORKSHOP VENUE

The workshop will be held in APAT (Italian Agency for Environmental Protection and Technical Services) in Rome at Via Curtatone 3.

LANGUAGE

English and French translations will be provided.

PARTICIPANTS

The workshop will assemble some 50 participants from the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries, regional organisations and projects, institutes dealing with environmental information and the EC. The idea is to continue the good dialog that was set in motion last year in Rome. The event of 2007 will gather again all the SMAP Clearing House Focal Points and Administrators together and involve also new actors in the dialog.

LOGISTICS

SMAP RMSU will cover travel and accommodations for the SMAP Clearing House focal points and administrators (or a second participant nominated by the Focal Points) of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries. In addition SMAP RMSU will provide support in arranging accommodation in Rome for all participants. More details on travel and other arrangements will be provided soon.

CORRESPONDENCE

All questions and correspondence regarding the workshop should be directed to:

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