

The network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC)

Terms of Reference (ToR)

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PREAMBLE

These Terms of Reference (ToRs) cover the principles and functioning of the MedECC network and its governance. They describe the key roles of the MedECC Co-Coordinators, the Steering Committee, the Advisory Board and the functioning of the MedECC Secretariat.

The Steering Committee composition, membership conditions and work organisation are defined in the Steering Committee charter document¹. MedECC activities operate under a code of conduct² that applies to all participants.

These Terms of Reference have been adopted anonymously by the Steering Committee on 19 July 2024 and they are effective thereon.

¹ [GOV medecc SC charter document](#)

² [GOV medecc code of conduct](#)

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING MedECC WORK

Introduction

1. The network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC) was formed in 2015 as a voluntary, open and independent international scientific expert network. The MedECC objective is to provide information related to climate and environmental changes in the Mediterranean region to support decision-makers and the general public, on the basis of available scientific information and on-going research. Supported by multiple international institutions, it operated without formal terms of references until 2023.
2. The present document, adopted by the MedECC Steering Committee on 19 July 2024 defines both its agreed Role and the Terms of Reference of its components.

Role

3. The role of the MedECC is to assess, on a comprehensive, objective, open and transparent basis, the scientific, technical and socio-economic information relevant to understanding the scientific basis of risk of human-induced climate and environmental changes, its potential impacts, and options for adaptation and mitigation. MedECC reports should be neutral with respect to policy, they need to deal objectively with scientific, technical and socio-economic factors relevant to the application of particular policies.

Scope of Work

4. MedECC covers all major geographical sub-regions of the Mediterranean area, defined as the ensemble of countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, also including Jordan and Portugal. The assessments cover the Mediterranean Sea itself and the land and sea territories of the participating countries.
5. The MedECC thematic scope includes all regional aspects of the Rio conventions (climate change, desertification and biodiversity conservation), thereby embracing the domains of IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) and IPBES (Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services). These include the physical and chemical characteristics of the atmosphere and the ocean, all aspects of natural and human systems potentially impacted by the changing environment, and the economic and social options for adaptation and mitigation.

Expected Outcomes

6. To gather the scientific community working on climate and environmental changes in the whole Mediterranean Basin. This includes building a bridge between existing research structures and programs and facilitating data-sharing through existing or new fora and platforms.
 - To assess the best scientific knowledge about climate and environmental changes in the Mediterranean Basin and render it accessible to policymakers, key stakeholders and citizens.
 - To contribute to future IPCC, IPBES or related assessments in the Mediterranean Basin.

- To build a regional science-policy interface on climate and environmental change by bridging the gap between research and decision-making, contributing to the improvement of policies at national, regional, and local level by providing consolidated scientific assessments on particular issues related to climate and environmental changes and by responding to requests by decision-makers.
- To identify possible gaps in the current research on climate change and its impacts in the Mediterranean and interact with funding agencies for the development of new research programs to fill these gaps.
- To help build the capacity of scientists from Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Countries (SEMCs) at the international level and standards, encouraging training, research and development efforts of these countries.

Decision-making

7. In taking decisions, all best endeavours to reach consensus shall be made. If, exceptionally, consensus is not possible, a decision can be made through a vote, with a majority outcome. Differing views shall be explained and, upon request, recorded.

Definition and Approval of ToRs

8. The Terms of Reference are defined and approved by all the MedECC Steering Committee to be effective.

9. The MedECC Steering Committee may decide to modify the ToRs. The request should be agreed by a minimum of 50% of the MedECC Steering Committee members and the modification approved by two thirds of the Steering Committee members during a formal or extraordinary Steering Committee meeting.

GOVERNANCE

The MedECC governing entities are: 1) The Steering Committee, 2) The Advisory Board, 3) The Co-Coordiators. MedECC governance structure remains geographically and thematically balanced.

Steering Committee

10. The Steering Committee is the core of the governance of MedECC. The Steering Committee members are experts and scientists who represent all major scientific disciplines relevant to the goals of MedECC. They are committed to serving the MedECC scope, enhancing the work program, supporting and promoting the activities and initiatives of the network. The Steering Committee composition, membership conditions and work organisation are defined in the Steering Committee charter document³.

³ [GOV medecc SC charter document](#)

11. The Steering Committee is responsible for:
 - Nominating and assisting the Co-Coordinators.
 - Recommending the addition of a new stakeholder institution to the Advisory Board.
 - Monitoring the evolution of membership in the network on the basis of the updated list provided annually by the MedECC Secretariat and encouraging increased participation.
 - Providing guidance to the MedECC Secretariat on the scientific and technical aspects of its work.
 - Advising MedECC Co-Coordinators and Secretariat on management and strategic issues.
 - Appointing the Steering Committee members and experts for specific tasks (e.g., reports, topic-specific meetings and leading, supervising or supporting various actions) based on suggestions from the Co-Coordinators.
 - Approving the scope and outline of reports, Coordinating Lead Authors and Lead Authors, topic-specific meetings, as well as other outputs of MedECC in consultation with the Advisory Board.
 - Strengthening the science-policy dialogue and the connection with the socio-economic world and the general public.
 - Improving the visibility and credibility of the Mediterranean science-policy interface on climate and environmental change built by the MedECC.
 - Approving the annual financial report provided by the MedECC Secretariat.
12. The MedECC Co-Coordinators, supported by the MedECC Secretariat, will provide Steering Committee members with the complete and accurate information on the progress of the MedECC activities in a timely manner. They will be alerted about potential risks and issues that could impact the project, as soon as they arise.
13. Steering Committee members must declare any conflict of interest. In the event of a repeated or significant conflict of interest, the Steering Committee may review the continued membership of the concerned institution.

Advisory Board

14. The Advisory Board aims at facilitating the dialogue between the MedECC scientific community, and stakeholders and institutions within the Mediterranean region. The Advisory Board represents the institutions supporting MedECC. It has a limited membership of up to ten (10) members. UNEP/MAP, UfM Secretariat (UfMS) and Plan Bleu have a permanent seat in the Advisory Board. Based on self-nominations, supporting institutions can join the Board after approval by the Board and the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee may recommend new members of the Board. Mandate and core activities of supporting institutions represented in the Board should be aligned with those of MedECC. After the approval, each supporting institution will be invited to nominate its representative member in the Advisory Board.
15. The composition of the Advisory Board shall be reviewed every two (2) years by the Steering Committee and the Advisory Board jointly, to ensure continued relevance of representation.

16. The Advisory Board, in consultation with the MedECC Steering Committee, may decide to terminate the mandate of any member of the Board in case of non-compliance with the code of conduct⁴ or in case the mandate and core activities are no longer related with the missions of the MedECC. The request should be agreed by a minimum of 50% of the Board and the MedECC Steering Committee members and the termination approved by two thirds of the members during a formal or extraordinary joint Advisory Board and Steering Committee meeting.

17. Institutions that provide financial contributions to MedECC and hold a seat on the Advisory Board must declare any conflict of interest. In the event of a repeated or significant conflict of interest, the Advisory Board or the Steering Committee may review the continued membership of the concerned institution.

18. The Advisory Board is responsible for:

- Expressing needs in terms of scientific knowledge to support decision-making and awareness of the general public on environmental and sustainability issues.
- Providing their knowledge, advice, and analysis to help make strategic decisions.
- Providing their advice on the relevance of MedECC's products.
- Supporting outreach and communication, recognition of MedECC, and fundraising.
- Organising the approval of the Summaries for Policymakers (SPMs) of reports by the stakeholders.

19. The Advisory Board plays a consultative role only. The Advisory Board may issue recommendations and express positions, but these are not binding. Decisions within MedECC rest solely with the Steering Committee, in accordance with the decision-making principles set out in these Terms of Reference. In the event of a joint Advisory Board and Steering Committee meeting, voting rights are reserved exclusively to Steering Committee members.

20. The Advisory Board is responsible for initiating and organising their meetings as much as required with the support of the Secretariat. It may initiate a joint Advisory Board and Steering Committee meeting that will be organised upon acceptance by the Steering Committee.

Joint roles of the Advisory Board and the Steering Committee:

21. The Advisory Board and Steering Committee are both responsible for:

- Strengthening the science-policy dialogue and the connection with the socio-economic world and the general public.
- Improving the visibility and credibility of the Mediterranean science-policy interface on climate and environmental change.

The Co-Coordinators

22. All MedECC work is overseen and managed by the Co-Coordinators (up to three). Co-Coordinators are elected by the Steering Committee for an initial four (4) year period that can be

⁴ [GOV medecc code of conduct](#)

renewed only once for an additional two (2) years. Co-Coordinator must be scientists of proven experience in topics of high interest for MedECC and committed to the MedECC scope and activities. The selection should take into account the gender and geographical balance. The Co-Coordinator stand ex officio in the Advisory Board and in the Steering Committee.

23. The role of the Co-Coordinator is to:

- Propose new MedECC activities and/or reports for validation by the Steering Committee.
- Supervise and organise the MedECC activities, including report writing and transparent review process.
- Promote MedECC at the international science-policy interface and among scientific and expert communities, and any other relevant fora.
- Represent MedECC or nominate experts (members of MedECC) to represent MedECC in official occasions such as events, discussions, meetings, etc.
- Supervise the work of and advise the Secretariat.
- Plan the structure and thematics of the Steering Committee meetings, chair the Steering Committee meetings.
- Propose, for validation by the Steering Committee, scientific experts for specific purposes and assigned tasks.
- Organise and pursue political endorsement of MedECC outputs.

24. In all these tasks, the Co-Coordinator act in consultation and communicate with the Steering Committee, the Advisory Board and the Secretariat.

25. The Co-Coordinator may invite Steering Committee members, any other MedECC member or any other relevant expert to their meetings.

26. The Co-Coordinator must declare any conflict of interest. In the event of a repeated or significant conflict of interest, the Steering Committee may review the continued membership of the concerned institution.

27. The Steering Committee may decide to terminate the appointment of a Co-Coordinator in case he/she fails to perform his/her duties or does not respect the code of conduct. The request should be agreed by a minimum of 50% of the members and the termination approved by two thirds of the members during a formal or extraordinary Steering Committee meeting.

MedECC NETWORK

28. Participation in the MedECC network is open to scientific experts working on different aspects of climate and environmental changes in the Mediterranean from the natural sciences, social sciences and/or humanities perspective with relevant academic credentials, independent of their nationality, institutional affiliation and of their national government. The work of MedECC is fully oriented towards the highest scientific standards, with full participation of experts from all involved subregions of the Mediterranean and required scientific disciplines. MedECC participants provide their knowledge on a voluntary basis.

29. The MedECC network consists of the persons who participate actively to MedECC activities, namely, the MedECC Co-Coordination, members of MedECC Steering Committee, members of MedECC Advisory Board, MedECC Secretariat, Reports Coordinators, Coordinating Lead Authors, Lead Authors and Contributing Authors of MedECC reports and any other expert who applied for and whose candidature has been reviewed by the MedECC Steering Committee.

30. The conditions for membership and modalities are described in **the document “MedECC membership conditions”**.⁵

31. The list of members is regularly updated by the MedECC Secretariat and annually shared with the MedECC Steering Committee for validation.

32. The membership to MedECC may be cancelled because of the written resignation of a member, or through a decision pronounced by the Steering Committee based on valid reasons.

33. Members of MedECC are informed of the network activities through reception of the newsletter disseminated by the Secretariat. They also receive calls for applications for the role of Contributing or Lead Authors, and of Steering Committee members or may also be invited to contribute or participate to MedECC activities or events.

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT

The Secretariat

34. The Secretariat, hosted by Plan Bleu UNEP/MAP Regional Activity Center, includes the Programme Officer employed on an open-end position, proposed by the Co-Coordination and approved by the Steering Committee and the Advisory Board. Beside the Programme Officer the Secretariat also includes any relevant Project Officers, Communication experts, or Assistants.

35. The role of the Secretariat is to:

- Lead and perform the administrative, technical, scientific and logistic tasks to ensure the implementation of the MedECC work programme.
- Manage budget contributions, expenditures, audits and reporting and deal with legal and contractual issues, in consultation with MedECC Co-Coordination.
- Assist the Co-Coordination in all tasks related to the reports.
- Promote and support the coordination, communication and the exchange among the MedECC organs.
- Assure the continuous communication within the network and with the supporting institutions.
- Prepare and organise the meetings of the Steering Committee and the meetings of the Advisory Board as well as all the related documentation and act as Rapporteur of those meetings.

⁵ In preparation

- Represent MedECC, based on MedECC's Co-Coordinators proposition, in meetings organised by the funding institutions or stakeholders.
- Draft the technical and financial reports for the funding institutions and validate it with MedECC Co-Coordinators.
- Provide scientific, technical and organisational support to the task forces in the preparation of MedECC products.
- Develop guidelines and procedures for the main activities of the MedECC (procedures for the preparation, review, acceptance, adoption, approval and publication of MedECC Reports, etc.).
- Follow up on the implementation of the recommendations and decisions issued by MedECC's governing entities.
- Provide the website with up-to-date information.
- Prepare and disseminate a (quarterly) newsletter in consultation with and validation by the Co-Coordinators.

36. The MedECC Secretariat is currently, and since, 2018 officially hosted by Plan Bleu, a UNEP/MAP Regional Activity Centre, in Marseille, France. The role of the host institution is to:

- Physically host the Secretariat.
- Provide a work contract to the Secretariat staff whose position is directly funded (meaning, not seconded).
- Approve expenses on a daily basis, include them in its accounting system under separate budget lines.
- Raise funds or in-kind contributions and apply to projects, on behalf of MedECC, in collaboration with the Secretariat and in consultation with the Co-Coordinators.
- Manage and be responsible for conventions with donors of the host institution, from project submission to final reporting, in collaboration with the Secretariat and in full transparency with the Co-Coordinators, including about the support costs.

37. Expenses are authorised by the supporting institutions managing the funds. The MedECC Steering Committee approves an annual financial report prepared by the MedECC Secretariat in consultation with the Co-Coordinators and discusses the provisional budget by 31 March.

PREPARATION OF THE REPORTS

38. Guidelines and Procedures for the preparation, review, acceptance, adoption, approval and publication of MedECC Reports are described in the document "**Procedures of preparation and publication of the reports**" and direct to IPCC principles in the meantime.