

MAPO Enhancing Research and Development Projects to find Solutions to Struggle against various Marine Pollutions

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Introduction: MAPO is a Specific Support Action (SSA) funded by the EU Commission within the 6th Framework Programme and has been proposed by a Consortium consisting of 13 partners from 11 different European countries specialized in various marine pollution relevant fields, like National Contact Points (NCPs), maritime agencies, research institutes and consultants. Main goal of the project is to stimulate European research on detection, treatment, warning and prevention of all types of marine pollutions by assisting SMEs to become integrated in ongoing or planned RTD projects, and by building new technological partnerships.

Methods: To reach these objectives, following measures are implemented, (i) the identification and establishment of **best practices**, e. g. by a continuous exchange and evaluation of practical and complementary ideas and experiences between companies that already participate in projects to tackle marine pollutions, and companies that wish to participate but did not succeed yet; (ii) the performance of **transregional workshops** in each MAPO country, including personal audits of target SMEs, to detect skills responding to identified needs/calls of FP6 or future FP7 projects; and (iii) offering **training** measures for SMEs, by organizing special workshops that do not only focus on how to integrate SMEs into RTD projects, but also give guidance on project management, consortium agreements, protection of IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) and other legal aspects.

Results: MAPO is developing a technologically driven European cartography of relevant SMEs skills in marine pollutions, to help innovative SMEs and project coordinators to identify and find right RTD or business partners and project proposals for co-operation. In addition, MAPO also organises specific **matchmaking events** to introduce European RTD programmes, to identify and launch first ideas that could lead to project proposals, and to bring together SMEs and coordinators from current and planned projects. These brokerage meetings consist of plenary sessions, company and project presentations, and

arranged bilateral meetings, and are organised in each MAPO partner's country (see Figure 1). In addition, a main European matchmaking conference will be organised when first calls for proposals of the 7th Framework Programme (2007-2013) are launched presumably at the beginning of 2007, to bring together relevant stakeholders in the field of marine pollutions.

To facilitate the matchmaking and networking process, but also to gain a wider audience, a project **homepage** (www.marine-pollutions.org) has been installed and coupled with a mailing list, to introduce relevant SMEs, publish new project ideas and partner requests, but also to inform about relevant news on marine pollution (e. g. last calls for proposals, state-of-the-art research, relevant events in this field).

MAPO wants to approach a **wider public** and so to impact and reach an audience far beyond science and industry. For this reason, the project is oriented towards all European citizens.

In this context, MAPO partners also hope that „environment defence organisations (NGOs)“ will join the project to take concerns and expectations of European citizens into account, and consequently help to provide, thanks to future European projects, an answer to most urgent requests. Consequently, MAPO tries to become an interesting tool to translate the demands of European citizens, particularly regarding marine pollutions and future consequences, into practical preventive and protective policies and measures. In line with this, MAPO fosters the overall networking and development of innovating solutions, which should have in turn positive economic impacts and social outcomes.

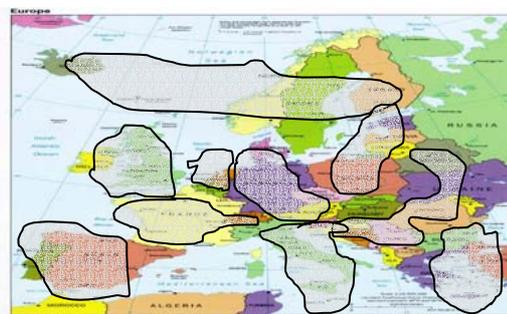


Fig. 1: MAPO influence areas and associated seas.

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