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**MATER: MASS Transfer and Ecosystem Response**

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Following a pilot phase (1993–1996), the second phase Mediterranean Targeted Project II-MATER (1996–1999) started as an overall project in the field of marine science in Europe. It represented, along with the other targeted projects on regional seas, an important instrument for the scientific cooperation promoted by the EC.

To date, MATER has generated a large volume of results; a relatively small proportion of them is reported in this volume. More detailed and comprehensive results can be found in the project's annual reports and the final project report (up to 1000 pages), as well as in numerous peer journals. More data are still under analysis and results will be available in the near future. In order to provide a better understanding of the spectrum of raw data collected during the project's life (corresponding to

approximately 1000 days at sea), a CD-Rom is included in this volume.

The major input of the MATER project was to provide a better understanding of the variability of the Mediterranean system and its sensitivity under climatological forcing. All main processes were considered from global to regional and local scales, from high frequency to interannual and long-term temporal scales, and from the ocean surface to its depth.

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