The set of guidelines covers such areas as co-operation in the development of internationally agreed rules, criteria, standards and recommended practices and procedures; scientific and technological co-operation; monitoring and data management; the establishment of specially protected areas; and notification, information exchange and consultation. It also provides in the form of an annex, which the Department of Environment helped prepare, a detailed description of alternative strategies that states may utilize in preventing, reducing and controlling pollution of the marine environment from land-based sources.

The set of guidelines will be referred to UNFP'S Governing Council for adoption at its 13th Session in May 1985.