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Action Plan**
Barcelona
Convention

20 October 2025
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24th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the
Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment
and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

Agenda Item 3: Thematic Decisions

Agenda Item 5: Ministerial Session

**Report of the Fifth Meeting of the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG) Sub-Group on
Environmental Impact (Malta, 19-20 February 2025)**

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2025

Note by the Secretariat

This document provides a summary of the discussions held during the Fifth Meeting of the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG) Sub-Group on Environmental Impact, on 19-20 February 2025, the adopted conclusions and recommendations of the Meeting, as well as the approved Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan 2026-2035, and approved Regional Offshore Standards and Guidelines on the Removal/Decommissioning of Installations and the related financial aspects.

Introduction

1 The Fifth Meeting of the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG) Sub-Group on Environmental Impact, hereinafter referred to as “the Meeting”, has been convened in Lija, Malta from 19 to 20 February 2025, pursuant to the Programme of Work and Budget for 2024-2025 of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), also referred to as UNEP/MAP, adopted by decision IG.26/14 of the Twenty-third Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (“the Barcelona Convention”) and its Protocols, (COP 23), held in Portoroz, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023.

2 The Meeting was organised by the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), in close cooperation with UNEP/MAP.

3 The principal objectives of the Meeting were to:

- .1 review and provide further guidance on the key outcomes that have been prepared or updated in the current biennium in relation to the implementation of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil (Offshore Protocol);
- .2 review and approve for consideration by the 24th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (Egypt, December 2025), the:
 - .1 Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan within the framework of the Offshore Protocol for the period 2026-2035; and
 - .2 Regional offshore standards and guidelines on the removal (decommissioning) of installations and the related financial aspects.
- .3 inform on the progress on the ratification of the Offshore Protocol and of the implementation of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan (MOAP) 2016-2024; and
- .4 share best practices and lessons learnt among the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, and other relevant international organizations, MAP partners and the private sector regarding offshore activities.

Opening of the Meeting

4 The Meeting was opened on Wednesday, 19 February 2025 at 0900 hours by Mr Ivan Sammut, Head of Office (HoO) of REMPEC.

5 The HoO welcomed the delegates and the representative of UNEP/MAP. In his opening remarks, the HoO highlighted the collective efforts made to implement the Offshore Protocol and its related guidelines. He emphasized the importance and relevance of the Offshore Protocol, while the Mediterranean region experienced two incidents involving offshore activities early this year, and moreover with the opened questions as the energy transition progresses towards the use of green energy (e.g wind farms, wave energy etc.), which will inevitably impact offshore activities and how the Mediterranean Seabed is exploited. He brought to the attention of the Meeting that clarity will have to be sought, in the future, on what offshore activities fall within the competence of the Offshore Protocol for it to remain fit for purpose and remain current. The HoO then referred to the Agenda and the main

objectives of the Meeting. Finally, the HoO wished all the delegates a very productive meeting, emphasizing the spirit of cooperation needed to reach decisions that could be accepted by all.

Rules of Procedure

6 The Meeting agreed to apply, mutatis mutandis, the Rules of procedure for Meetings and Conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and its related Protocols (UNEP/IG.43/6, Annex XI) to its deliberations.

Election of Officers

7 Following informal consultations held with the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, the HoO proposed Bosnia and Herzegovina as Chair, Libya as Vice-Chair and Malta as Rapporteur. The Meeting unanimously agreed to elect the following officers of the Meeting:

Ms. Senida Dzajic-Rghei (Bosnia and Herzegovina)	Chairperson
Mr. Ali Tantosh (Libya)	Vice-Chairperson
Ms. Andrea Carolina Perez Pardo (Malta)	Rapporteur:

8 In accepting her nomination, the Chairperson welcomed the delegates and thanked them for her appointment and encouraged the delegates to work together to ensure a fruitful outcome.

8 The Meeting was attended in person by representatives from: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Italy, Libya, Malta, Slovenia, and Tunisia. Representatives of a MAP Partner, the International Association of Oil and Gas Producers (IOGP), also attended the Meeting. The UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat was represented by the MAP Coordinating Unit and REMPEC. The list of delegates is set out at **Annex I**.

Agenda Item 1

Adoption of the Agenda

REMPEC/WG.60/1/Rev.1, REMPEC/WG.60/1/1

9 The Chairperson referred to the timetable of the Meeting, as outlined in document REMPEC/WG.60/1/1, and provided a brief overview of the Meeting's objectives and organisation. This information was supplemented by additional logistical information given by the Secretariat.

10 In introducing the Agenda, the Chairperson requested any delegation who wanted to intervene under Agenda Item 7 – Any Other Business, to inform the Secretariat with a view that the necessary logistics arrangements would be in place for their intervention. The IOGP informed the Secretariat that they would like to deliver two presentations, one providing an overview of the Decommissioning context and the other on the Environmental Committee of IOGP and its publications.

11 The Agenda, and timetable as proposed in document REMPEC/WG.60/1/Rev.1 and annotated in document REMPEC/WG.60/1/1, were adopted and is set out at **Annex II**.

Agenda Item 2

Progress on the implementation of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan 2016-2024

REMPEC/WG.60/2, REMPEC/WG.60/INF.3, REMPEC/WG.60/INF.4

12 The Secretariat introduced document REMPEC/WG.60/2 "Report on the implementation of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan (MOAP 2016-2024) and other related activities since the Fourth Meeting of the OFOG Sub-Group on Environmental Impacts". The Meeting was provided with an

update on the status of implementation of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan (MOAP 2016-2024) since the Fourth Meeting (Malta, May 2023).

13 During the introduction, emphasis was put on the importance of the reporting by the Contracting Parties (CPs) to allow the development of clear regional picture. Particular reference was made to the table set out at Annex I of document REMPEC/WG.60/2. One delegation informed the Meeting of a change regarding their number of gas fields which should be one instead of four.

14 The UNEP/MAP Coordination Unit representative, provided the Meeting with an update regarding the ongoing process for revising the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Criteria (IMAP), as well as the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Policy for the Mediterranean. The Meeting was informed that a first proposal was transmitted for review during the 11th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group Meeting (Videoconference, 2 October 2024), and the final proposal will be submitted the 12th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group Meeting (Athens, Greece, September 2025), for further review and onward transmission to COP 24 (Cairo, Egypt, December 2025).

15 The Chairperson invited delegations to give an update on the possible barriers to ratification of the Protocol. In particular, the Meeting highlighting the following :

- .1 the process is complicated by changes of governments;
- .2 the process is long and needs coordination between Ministries (e.g. at minima Ministry of Justice, Environment, and Energy); and
- .3 one delegation commented that the respective CP is following the Protocol despite not having yet ratified it.

16 The Secretariat thanked the Meeting for informing on the status of ratification and extended REMPEC commitment to support the processes of ratification, when requested by the CPs. The Secretariat also took the opportunity to discuss the question on future thoughts on whether offshore renewable energy in the Mediterranean should be included under the Offshore Protocol in the future.

17 The IOGP delegation, informed the Meeting that the same question is presently being discussed at the Oslo-Paris Convention (OSPAR) on either to include them under their Offshore Protocol or developing a new Protocol.

18 The Meeting agreed to:

- .1 stress the importance of increasing the number of ratifications of the Offshore Protocol;
- .2 urge the Mediterranean coastal States, which had not already done so, to ratify the Offshore Protocol, at the earliest opportunity;
- .3 take note of the main challenges expressed by Contracting Parties (CPs) that have not yet ratified the Offshore Protocol, including some already expressed at the 4th Meeting of the OFOG; and
- .4 ask the Secretariat to continue to provide technical assistance and capacity building to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which so request, to ratify the Offshore Protocol.

Agenda Item 3

Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan, 2026-2035

REMPEC/WG.60/3, REMPEC/WG.60/INF.5, REMPEC/WG.60/INF.6

19 The Secretariat introduced document REMPEC/WG.60/3 “Draft Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan 2026-2035 within the framework of the Offshore Protocol”, summarizing the process undertaken, since the 4th Meeting of the OFOG, leading to the development of an updated Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan (MOAP) for the 2026-2035 decade.

20 The Secretariat emphasized that the MOAP 2026-2035 was a continuation of the previous MOAP; its objectives and partially achieved outcomes. It was recalled that there were a number of identified gaps for the implementation of the MOAP and highlighted the importance of the Resource Mobilization Framework, set out at appendix 2 of the updated MOAP, to overcome the limited financial and human resources.

21 One delegation made several comments leading to further clarifications from the Secretariat, related to Monitoring. The Secretariat specified that in relation to offshore activities, the approach is different from other marine environment monitoring, as in the majority of cases monitoring is undertaken by the operator. Another comment related to a topic from Appendix 3 of the updated MOAP in relation to use of dispersants. The Secretariat emphasized that Appendix 3 contains an indicative list of research topics and that it is subject to evolution as the implementation of the MOAP progresses. The Secretariat took also the opportunity to mention two documents to be presented at the forthcoming REMPEC Focal Points meeting in May 2025: one in relation to oil spill response readiness in the Mediterranean concerning new fuels and the revision of the use of dispersant guidelines.

22 The Secretariat underlined the need of securing a dedicated staff post and securing funding for a realistic and constructive implementation of the updated MOAP. The CPs were urged to liaise with their respective MAP Focal Points to highlight the importance of securing the necessary financial and administrative resources related to offshore activities when the PoW for the upcoming biennium is being discussed at the forthcoming MAP Focal points Meeting to be held in September 2025.

23 The Meeting acknowledged the consultative approach followed by the Secretariat for the development of a revised MOAP and approved its text as set out at Annex I of the document REMPEC/WG.60/3. The Meeting also reiterated the views expressed since the 3rd Meeting of the OFOG, that to ensure effective implementation of the MOAP, there is a need for a fixed-term staff position on the Offshore Protocol within the Secretariat to organize and support the coordination of the defined activities in the Plan and requested the Secretariat to bring the matter to the attention of the MAP Focal Points Meeting and the 24th Meeting of the Contracting Parties’ (COP 24).

24 The approved text of the updated MOAP for the period 2026-2035 is set out at **Annex III** to the present report.

Agenda Item 4

Regional offshore standards and guidelines

REMPEC/WG.60/4

25 The Secretariat introduced document REMPEC/WG.60/4 “draft Regional Offshore Standards and Guidelines on the Removal (Decommissioning) of Installations and the Related Financial Aspects”, recalling the steps which led to the draft contained in Appendix II of the document, since the initial draft originating from the national legislation of a CP to the Barcelona Convention.

26 Following various discussions, the Meeting agreed on the official title for the guidelines which should be: “Regional Offshore Standards and Guidelines on the Removal/Decommissioning of Installations and the Related Financial Aspects”.

27 The IOGP delegation, submitted several proposals to the Meeting leading to exchange of views and amendments to paragraphs of the draft contained in Appendix II of the Meeting document. Paragraphs 7, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, the figure in Annex 1, and the fourth bullet point of paragraph 2 of Annex 3 were amended. Paragraph 24 was subject to an extensive discussion and dedicated time was allocated for further exchanges and, for some CPs, also exchanges with their respective competent national authorities.

28 While discussing paragraph 7 of the draft, the Secretariat clarified that the standards and guidelines adopted by decision of the COP are binding to CPs that have ratified the relevant protocol. However, even if a CP hasn't ratified a specific Protocol, they are still obligated to follow the general principles outlined in the Barcelona Convention and accordingly its protocols.

29 One delegation commented on the difficulties of waste management associated with the decommissioning of installations and the issue of having adequate in-country facilities to treat some of them. The Secretariat made reference to relevant international conventions for addressing the matter.

30 IOGP provided an overview of the Decommissioning context, which was followed by exchange of views. One delegation commented and questioned the aspect related to who is paying for the decommissioning. In the ensuing discussions it was emphasized that it is not a simple question as within the lifetime of an installation there might be several operators, including national oil companies, with evolving production sharing agreements, change of controls from large companies to smaller ones, as well as tax rebates. It emphasized the importance for a regulator to anticipate and maintain a process for adequate funding and security to cover decommissioning costs, which includes indirectly the question on identifying at which stage of the lifetime of an installation the process should be engaged.

31 The Meeting approved the revised version of the Regional Offshore Standards and Guidelines on the Removal /Decommissioning of Installations and the Related Financial Aspects, taking into account the changes introduced during the meeting. The Meeting requested the Secretariat to proceed with final editorial adjustments, and submission to the MAP Focal Points Meeting for its consideration and approval.

32 The approved text of the Regional Offshore Standards and Guidelines on the Removal/Decommissioning of Installations and the Related Financial Aspects is set out at **Annex IV** to the present report.

Agenda Item 5

Data Sharing, Monitoring Programme, and Reporting *REMPEC/WG.60/5, REMPEC/WG.60/INF.4.*

33 The Secretariat introduced document REMPEC/WG.60/5, on the outcome of the Regional Workshop on Reporting, Monitoring, and Data Sharing (MEDEXPOL 2024) related to Offshore Activities. The MEDEXPOL 2024 Report was available as document REMPEC/WG.60/INF.4. The importance of reporting, was emphasised, taking as an example data regarding the numbers of oil and gas fields in each CPs. Reference was also made to the general experience of a lack of reporting with the UNEP/MAP institutions.

34 One delegation, referring to paragraph 5 of the meeting document, questioned the type of information to be reported and also the importance of standards and guidelines for monitoring. In the ensuing discussions, the Secretariat agreed on the need to have a debate on the type of information to be reported and, while specifying the distinction between data sharing and reporting, recalled the existence of approved Data Standards/Data Dictionaries (DS/DD).

35 The UNEP/MAP representative further emphasised that for all ecological objectives, of the Common Indicators, there is the development of guidance factsheet supported by DS/DD, all of them available on the Info IMAP system.

36 The Meeting concluded with re-emphasising the importance of reporting under the Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS) and encouraging all CPs to strengthen their national implementation reporting through the BCRS, as this is crucial for identifying needs and challenges and for supporting the effective implementation of the Offshore Protocol. The Meeting also acknowledged the consultative approach of the Secretariat for an agreement on the utilization of the “To-do-lists” set-out at Annexes I and II of document REMPEC/WG.60/5.

Agenda Item 6 **Offshore Programme of Work for the biennium 2026-2027**
REMPEC/WG.60/6

37 The Secretariat introduced document REMPEC/WG.60/6 related to the proposed Programme of Work (PoW) for the biennium 2026-2027, based on the updated Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan for the 2026-2035 period.

38 It was emphasized that the priorities for biennium 2026-2027 were set around making the transition between the initial MOAP (2016-2024) and the updated MOAP (2026-2035). It involved a training on standards and guidelines which are already (or will be) developed, as well as the establishment of an Intersessional Correspondence Group (ICG) to develop standards and guidelines on the Use and discharge of harmful or noxious substances and material, following a dedicated training held in November 2023. It was also recalled that the Fourth Meeting of the OFOG concurred with a suggestion made by a delegation on the inclusion of radionuclides (naturally-occurring radioactive materials, NORM), as well as technologically enhanced naturally-occurring radioactive material (TENORM), in the guidelines, to be explored.

39 As expressed under agenda item 3, the Secretariat further recalled that the implementation of the proposed Programme of Work was conditionnal on having secured continuity in dedicated financial and human resources.

40 A delegation introduced a list of possible trainings that might be considered for the updated MOAP, namely: Protection of the Marine Environment from climate change, best practices in pollution prevention, periodic inspections on all sources of risks, identification of all environmental aspects associated with offshore oil and gas installations, communication between the organizations about the lessons learnt on oil spill incidents, and management of sewage from offshore manned facilities and of contaminated wastes of all offshore facilities maintenance.

41 The Meeting concurred with the proposed Programme of Work as contained in document REMPEC/WG.60/6.

Agenda Item 7 **Any Other Business**

42 The IOGP delegation delivered two presentations, one on an overview of the Decommissioning context and the other one on the Environmental Committee of IOGP and its publications.

Agenda Item 8 **Conclusions and recommendations**

43 The Meeting reviewed, commented and approved the Conclusions and Recommendations, as set out at **Annex V** to the present report.

Closure of the Meeting

44 In his closing remarks, the HoO of REMPEC thanked the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson, the Rapporteur and the delegations for their collaborative and constructive contributions to the Meeting. He also thanked the interpreters and the technician, the two contracted consultants, the Secretariat /

REMPEC staff with a special word of thanks to the Programme Officer (OPRC), Mr Malek Smaoui, due to retire at the end of the third trimester.

45 After the expression of her courtesies, the Chairperson of the Meeting declared the Meeting closed at 14.00 hours on 20 February 2025.

Annex I

List of Delegations

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA / *BOSNIE & HERZÉGOVINE*

Ms Senida DŽAJIĆ-RGHEI

Researcher

HEIS

CYPRUS / *CHYPRE*

Mr Marios KYPRIANOU

Environment Officer

Department of Environment

Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment

EGYPT / *EGYPTE*

Mrs Hala IBAHIM MOHAMED

General Director of Crisis Management

Ministry of Environment

ISRAEL / *ISRAËL*

Mrs Danit LEVI NIZRI

Head of Marine Energy Resources

Ministry of Environmental Protection

ITALY / *ITALIE*

Mr Roberto GIANGRECO

Deputy Head of Unit

Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security

LIBYA / *LIBYE*

Mr Ali TANTOSH

Head of the Documentation and Information Unit

Ministry of Environment

MALTA / *MALTE*

Mr Charles GALEA

Chief Scientific Officer

Continental Shelf Department

Mrs Andrea Carolina PEREZ PARDO
Environment Protection Officer
Environment & Resources Authority – ERA

SLOVENIA / *SLOVÉNIE*

Mr Aleš GOMBAČ
Coastal Sea Guard
Slovenian Maritime Administration

TUNISIA / *TUNISIE*

Mr Mourad BEN MOUSSA
Expert Contrôleur Chef
Agence Nationale de Protection de l'Environnement

UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS / *ORGANISATIONS DES NATIONS-UNIES*

**UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONNEMENT PROGRAMME/MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN
(UNEP/MAP) / *PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT / PLAN
D'ACTION POUR LA MEDITERRANEE (PNUE / PAM)***

Mr Christos IOAKEIMIDIS
QSR Programme Management Officer

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS /ORGANISATIONS PARTENAIRES

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF OIL & GAS PRODUCERS (IOGP)

Mr Harvey JOHNSTONE
Director, Environment

Mr Ezzaini RAMLI
Environment Manager

Ms Ping TEO
Senior Manager- Decommissioning and APAC

SECRETARIAT / SECRÉTARIAT

**REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE FOR THE
MEDITERRANEAN SEA (REMPEC) / *CENTRE REGIONAL MEDITERRANEEN POUR
L'INTERVENTION D'URGENCE CONTRE LA POLLUTION MARINE ACCIDENTELLE
(REMPEC)***

Mr Ivan SAMMUT

Head of Office

Mr Malek SMAOUI

Programme Officer (OPRC)

Mr Luke TABONE

Junior Programme Officer

Mr Chris SACCO

Finance / Administrative Assistant

Ms Mary Grace PISANI

Senior Administrative Assistant

Mr Gérard BONA-FONOLL

Administrative Assistant

CONSULTANT / CONSEILLER

Mr Benjamin COUZIGOU

Consultant in Oil Spill Preparedness and Response

CONFERENCE INTERPRETERS / INTERPRETES DE LA CONFERENCE

SONOVISION

Mrs Hanem ATTIA

Mrs Najet MCHALA

Annex II

Agenda and timetable of the Meeting

Opening of the Meeting

1. Adoption of the Agenda
2. Progress on the implementation of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan
3. Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan, 2026-2035
4. Regional offshore standards and guidelines
5. Data Sharing, Monitoring Programme, and Reporting
6. Offshore Programme of Work for biennium 2026-2027
7. Any other business
8. Conclusions and recommendations

Closure of the Meeting

Day 1 – Wednesday, 19 February 2025		
08:30 – 09:00	<i>Registration of participants</i>	
09:00 – 09:30	Opening of the Meeting	
09:30 – 09:45	Agenda Item 1	Adoption of the Agenda
09:45 – 10:30	Agenda Item 2	Progress on the implementation of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan
10:30 – 11:00	<i>Coffee break</i>	
11:00 – 12:30	Agenda Item 3	Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan, 2026-2035
12:30 – 14:00	<i>Lunch break</i>	
14:00 – 15:00	Agenda Item 3 (cont.)	Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan, 2026-2035
15:00 – 15:30	<i>Coffee break</i>	
15:30 – 17:00	Agenda Item 5	Data Sharing, Monitoring Programme, and Reporting

Day 2 – Thursday, 20 February 2025		
09:00 -10:30	Agenda Item 4	Regional offshore standards and guidelines
10:30 – 11:00	<i>Coffee break</i>	
11:00 – 11:30	Agenda Item 4 (cont.)	Regional offshore standards and guidelines
11:30 – 12:15	Agenda Item 6	Offshore Programme of Work for the biennium 2026-2027
12:15 – 12:30	Agenda Item 7	Other business
12:30 – 14:00	<i>Lunch break</i>	
14:00 – 15:00	Agenda Item 8	Conclusions and recommendations
15:00 – 15:30	<i>Coffee break</i>	
15:30 – 16:45	Agenda Item 8 (cont.)	Conclusions and recommendations
16:45 – 17:00		Closure of the Meeting

Annex III

Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan 2026-2035 in the framework of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil

**MEDITERRANEAN OFFSHORE ACTION PLAN IN THE FRAMEWORK OF
THE PROTOCOL FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA AGAINST
POLLUTION RESULTING
FROM EXPLORATION AND EXPLOITATION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF AND
THE SEABED AND ITS SUBSOIL (OFFSHORE PROTOCOL)**

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- I.2 Geographical coverage
- I.3 Preservation of rights
- I.4 Principles
- I.5 Definitions
- I.6 Timeframe
- I.7 Appendices

PART II – OBJECTIVES

II.1. General Objectives

II.2. Specific Objectives

II.2.1 GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

- Specific objective 1:** To ratify the Offshore Protocol
- Specific objective 2:** To designate Contracting Parties' Representatives to participate in the BARCO OFOG and its Sub-Groups
- Specific objective 3:** To establish a technical cooperation and capacity building programme
- Specific objective 4:** To promote access to information and public participation in decision-making
- Specific objective 5:** To enhance the regional transfer of technology

II.2.2 REGIONAL OFFSHORE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

- Specific objective 6:** To develop and adopt regional offshore standards
- Specific objective 7:** To develop and adopt regional offshore guidelines

II.2.3 REGIONAL OFFSHORE MONITORING PROGRAMME

- Specific objective 8:** To establish regional offshore monitoring procedures and programmes

PART III – IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN

III.1. Resource Mobilization

- Specific objective 9:** To mobilise resources for the implementation of the Action Plan

III.2. Reporting

Specific objective 10: To report on the implementation of the Action Plan

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 –Technical cooperation and capacity building programme

Appendix 2 - Resource Mobilization Framework, indicative road map and estimated budget

Appendix 3 – Indicative potential research and development topics

Appendix 4 – Development of Regional offshore standards and guidelines

Appendix 5 – Links between outputs and articles of the offshore protocol

PART I – INTRODUCTION

I.1 Secretariat, MAP Components and Partners

Considering the range of expertise required for the implementation of the Action Plan in the framework of the protocol for the protection of the mediterranean sea against pollution resulting from exploration and exploitation of the continental shelf and the seabed and its subsoil (hereinafter referred as the “Action Plan”), the Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention represented by the United Nations Environment Programme – Mediterranean Action Plan Secretariat (UNEP/MAP) (hereafter referred to as the “**Secretariat**”) will coordinate the technical support.

The role of the Secretariat, MAP Components and partners will be primarily one of assisting the Contracting Parties to enhance their national capacities and in facilitating the means for regional or sub-regional cooperation.

It is envisaged that there may be several areas of activity within the Specific Objectives of the Action Plan which will require synergy among these entities.

I.2 Geographical coverage

The area to which the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan in the framework of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil (**the Action Plan**) applies is the area defined in Article 2 of the Offshore Protocol.

I.3 Preservation of rights

The provisions of this Action Plan shall be without prejudice to stricter provisions regulating the management of offshore activities contained in other existing or future national, regional or international instruments or programmes, when considering existing best practices for the development of standards for the Mediterranean region.

I.4 Principles

In implementing the Action Plan, the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention, (hereinafter referred as the “Contracting Parties”), shall be guided by the following principles:

- (a) *Integration Principle* by virtue of which offshore activities management under the Offshore Protocol shall be an integral part of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, the Ecosystem Approach (the **EcAp**), other relevant strategies including regional strategies of the Mediterranean Action Plan and shall not conflict with applicable domestic regulations;
- (b) *Prevention principle* by virtue of which any offshore activities management measure should aim at addressing the prevention of any form of pollution resulting from offshore activities;
- (c) *Precautionary principle* by virtue of which where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost effective measures to prevent environmental degradation;
- (d) *Polluter-pays principle* by virtue of which the costs of pollution prevention, control and reduction measures are to be borne by the polluter, with due regard to the public interest;

- (e) *Ecosystem-based approach* by virtue of which the cumulative effects of offshore activities on air, marine and coastal ecosystem services, habitats and species with other contaminants and substances that are present in the environment should be fully taken into account;
- (f) *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* in particular SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life below water) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals). and
- (g) *The principle of public participation and stakeholder involvement.*

1.5 Definitions

For the purpose of this Action Plan, the following definitions will apply:

- .1 “Output”: an item to be delivered over the timeframe of the Action Plan unless otherwise specified; and
- .2 “Performance indicator”: which is cumulative unless otherwise specified, and which is a measure of the achievements against an individual Specific Objective.

1.6 Timeframe

The implementation timeframe for this Action Plan is the [1 January 2026].to [31 December 2035]

1.7 Appendices

The Action Plan is supported by a number of Appendices, integral to the Plan, as follows:

- 1. **Appendix 1** outlines the technical cooperation and capacity building programme;
- 2. **Appendix 2** defines the Resource Mobilization Framework with an indicative road map and an estimated budget to support the achievement of the objectives of the Action Plan;
- 3. **Appendix 3** lists potential research and development topics;
- 4. **Appendix 4** lists the Regional offshore standards and guidelines to be developed and adopted; and
- 5. **Appendix 5** provides information on the linkage between the objectives of the Action Plan and the various Articles of Annexes to the Offshore Protocol.

PART II – OBJECTIVES

II.1. General Objectives

The General Objectives of the Action Plan is to provide a uniform basis for the application of the Offshore Protocol by defining measures which, if applied at regional level and by each Contracting Party, within their jurisdiction, will ensure the safety of offshore activities and reduce their potential impact on the marine environment and its ecosystem.

These measures, at regional level focus on:

- Setting-up a **governance framework** to support the implementation of the Action Plan and the adoption, enforcement and monitoring of regional standards, procedures and rules;
- Defining commonly agreed **regional offshore standards and guidelines** to be integrated and used at national level;
- Developing in conformity with EcAp and the relevant indicators of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean (IMAP) a regional commonly agreed **monitoring programme** for the Action Plan; and
- Developing a format to facilitate the **reporting** on the implementation of the Action Plan.

II.2. Specific Objectives

The Specific Objectives are described in Part 11.2 below. The Specific Objectives of the Action Plan, if achieved, will meet the general objectives as set out above. The Action Plan is built around **Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties** and to **the Secretariat and its MAP Components**, as well as to **relevant MAP Partners**.

For each Specific Objective, expected outputs are proposed, which will serve as basis to develop performance indicators, as appropriate, for measuring the progress (or otherwise) against the specific objectives of the Action Plan.

II.2.1 GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Specific objective 1: To ratify the Offshore Protocol

In order that there is a comprehensive legal basis for the exploration and exploitation of the continental shelf and the seabed and its subsoil in the Mediterranean Sea, it is important that Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention take the necessary action to ensure that the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil (the **Offshore Protocol**) is ratified and implemented nationally.

<u>Specific objective 1:</u> To ratify the Offshore Protocol		
Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties	Outputs relating to the Secretariat and MAP Components, depending on the availability of resources	Outputs relating to the MAP Partners
a) Ratification by all Contracting Parties of the Offshore Protocol, transposition of the Offshore Protocol into national law, and cooperation through the Secretariat to ensure compliance with its provisions*.	a) Provision of advice and technical assistance to Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which so request.	a) Advocacy to promote ratification of the Offshore Protocol
<u>Performance indicator (s):</u> ☐ Number of Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention that have ratified the Offshore Protocol including those yet to enter into force.		

Specific objective 2: To designate Contracting Parties' Representatives to participate in the BARCO OFOG and its Sub-Groups

At the 18th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, Contracting Parties approved the establishment of the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group

* Mediterranean coastal States shall consider the ratification of the Offshore Protocol and the transposition of its provisions into national law in accordance with domestic relevant practices and legislation.

(BARCO OFOG) and adopted its terms of reference (Decision IG.21/8). It also agreed to refer to it as the OFOG Group.

Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, with the support of the relevant UNEP/MAP Components will *inter alia* provide, through the OFOG Group and its Sub-Groups, technical support and guidance as detailed in section II.2.2 and make recommendations to the Meetings of the Parties to the Offshore Protocol to accomplish its functions as stipulated in Article 30.2 of the Offshore Protocol, and further detailed in Decision IG.21/8.

The OFOG Group is primarily composed of representatives of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention who are designated by the MAP Focal Point as National Offshore Focal Points. In view of the range of expertise required for the various topics covered by the Protocol, from environmental impact to health and safety, Contracting Parties through their National Offshore Focal Points may designate, as required, their representatives as contact points for any OFOG Sub-Group established.

These Sub-Groups would focus on technical and practical aspects of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan, in particular the development of the standards and guidelines referred in Specific objectives 6, 7, and those related to the proposed Technical cooperation and Capacity Building Programme set out at **Appendix 1**.

For the effective implementation of the Action Plan, the Contracting Parties shall ensure appropriate involvement of various stakeholders involving national competent authorities, civil society, private sector, operators, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders as appropriate to implement the measures provided for in the Action Plan and other measures as appropriate.

Specific objective 2: <i>To designate Contracting Parties' Representatives to participate in the BARCO OFOG and its Sub-Groups</i>		
Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties	Outputs relating to the Secretariat and MAP Components, depending on the availability of resources	Outputs relating to the MAP Partners
a) Designation of the National Offshore Focal Point designated by all MAP Focal Points to coordinate at national level activities carried out in the framework of the Action Plan and actively participate in the OFOG Group; b) Designation, upon request by the Secretariat, through their National Offshore Focal Point, of the appropriate national entities and/or officials as contact points for each OFOG Sub-Group; and c) Leadership, on a voluntary basis, of the	a) Promote the participation of representatives from relevant IGOs, NGOs and industry as observers to the OFOG Group and Sub-Groups; b) Enhancement of public awareness through the contribution of IGOs and NGOs with a relevant mandate to the topics discussed in the OFOG Group and Sub-Groups, through their participation as observers, ensuring an open and transparent process through public consultations; c) Establishment of institutional cooperation with various relevant regional and global institutions, initiatives and agreements and, at an	a) Participation of representatives from relevant IGOs, NGOs and industry as observers to the OFOG Group and Sub-Groups.

established Sub-Groups to coordinate with the support of the Secretariat the work assigned to the Sub-Groups.	operational level, establish synergies with these entities on ongoing activities of common interest; d) Publication and update of the composition of the OFOG Group and any Sub-Groups on a dedicated page of the relevant website of one of the UNEP/MAP Components; e) Updated list of the National Offshore Focal Points and OFOG Group Focal Points; f) Definition, in consultation with MAP Focal Points, of the roles and responsibilities of UNEP/MAP Components to facilitate the implementation of the Action Plan; and g) Identification of the required means including human resources to ensure the implementation of the Action Plan and the support of the relevant UNEP/MAP Components. A Resource Mobilization Framework is set out at Appendix 2.	
<u>Performance indicator (s):</u> ☐ Number of Contracting Parties with designated National Offshore Focal Points; ☐ Number of Meetings of the OFOG Group organized; ☐ Number of OFOG Sub-Groups established; and ☐ Number of representatives from different Ministries of Contracting Parties, IGOs, NGOs and industry involved and or attending the OFOG Group and OFOG Sub-Group Meetings.		

Specific objective 3: To establish a technical cooperation and capacity building programme

According to Article 24 of the Offshore Protocol the Parties shall, directly or with the assistance of competent regional or other international organisations, cooperate with a view to formulating and, as far as possible, implementing programmes of assistance to developing countries.

<u>Specific objective 3:</u> To establish a technical cooperation and capacity building programme		
Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties	Outputs relating to the Secretariat and MAP Components, depending on the availability of resources	Outputs relating to the MAP Partners
a) Technical cooperation and capacity building	a) Integration of the technical cooperation and capacity	a) Provision of support (financial and /or in-

programme endorsed as set in Appendix 1 ; and b) Consideration of the possible application of the MOAP beyond oil and gas activities.	building programme in the six year programme of activities of UNEP/MAP and its relevant Components and in their biennium programme of work; b) Preparation of the corresponding budget for consideration by the Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention; and c) Identification of donors to secure funds required for the implementation of the technical cooperation and capacity building programme. d) Coordination of a Meeting to discuss the impacts on and mitigating measures for the exploitation of the continental shelf, its seabed and its subsoil beyond oil and gas activities.	kind) for the implementation of the technical cooperation and capacity building programme.
<i>Performance indicator (s):</i> ☐ Number of technical and capacity building activities, including major projects requested by Contracting Parties, developed and implemented on a biennium basis; and ☐ Number of people trained.		

Specific objective 4: To promote access to information and public participation in decision-making

According to Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, “Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided. Furthermore, a critical element for an effective implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is creating an enabling environment for public participation and its contribution to decision-making. Clearly expressed in SDG 16 and 17 is the call for this environment to promote public participation.

<u>Specific objective 4:</u> To promote access to information and public participation in decision-making		
Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties	Outputs relating to the Secretariat and MAP Components, depending on the availability of resources	Outputs relating to the MAP Partners
a) On-line template for public information submitted in line with	a) Support the preparation of the on-line template for public information in line with existing	a) Provision of relevant information to complement the

national and regional rules on access to information; b) Report to the Secretariat every two years relevant information on the offshore installations within their jurisdiction including, when appropriate, information on their disposal for inclusion in the inventory to be maintained by the Secretariat; and c) Report to the Secretariat every two years, under the BCRS, discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas installations data in accordance with the monitoring programme to be defined by the OFOG Group in support of Specific Objective 8.	Decisions of the Contracting Parties addressing public access to information and with UNEP's Access to Information Policy; b) Development of an online regional system to be maintained for the purpose of public information sharing; c) Publication every two years, on a dedicated page of the relevant website of one of the UNEP/MAP Components, of the inventory of installations as well as the discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas installations data submitted by the Contracting Parties; and d) Consolidated report every two years on the discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas installations data submitted by the Contracting Parties.	reports listed in Outputs b) and c) related to the Contracting Parties.
<i>Performance indicator (s):</i> ☐ A functional and updated dedicated portal set-up as an information dissemination tool for the Action Plan; ☐ Number of national reports submitted every two years to the Secretariat by Contracting Parties containing relevant information on offshore installations within their jurisdiction including, when appropriate, information on their disposal; and ☐ Number of national reports submitted every two years to the Secretariat by Contracting Parties containing relevant information on discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas installations in accordance with the monitoring programme.		

Specific objective 5: To enhance the regional transfer of technology

The Offshore Protocol emphasises the need for cooperation and exchange of information concerning research and development (R&D) of new technologies. In order to make the results of R&D activities undertaken in the Mediterranean region better known, the Secretariat shall endeavor to encourage the participation of regional research institutions, scientific project leaders and industry in relevant events. The Secretariat shall also facilitate, through the network of its National Offshore Focal Points, the exchange of these results amongst the Contracting Parties. In addition, the Secretariat might indicate to its National Offshore Focal Points the potential fields that call for further R&D in order to encourage more active participation and contribution of the relevant Mediterranean institutions in global efforts in this field. In this regard, a list of potential research topics is presented in **Appendix 3** to this document.

Specific objective 5: To enhance the regional transfer of technology		
Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties	Outputs relating to the Secretariat and MAP Components, depending on the availability of resources	Outputs relating to the MAP Partners
a) Active participation of the respective scientific and technical institutions, as well as the industry, in R&D activities and programmes related to prevention, response and monitoring of pollution from offshore activities; b) Presentation of the results of R&D activities and programmes by their respective national institutions and industry in international fora; and c) Information on ongoing R&D activities and research needs provided to the Secretariat.	a) Support in the identification of fields of research in which there is a need for enhancement of the state-of-the-art of offshore pollution prevention, response and monitoring technologies and techniques; b) Dissemination and exchange of results of national R&D activities and programmes within and outside the Mediterranean region; and c) Participation of national and regional research institutions and industry in the relevant international fora facilitated with a view to making better known the results of R&D activities undertaken in the Mediterranean region.	a) Provision of relevant information to complement the reports listed in Outputs b) and c) related to the Contracting Parties
<u>Performance indicator (s):</u> ☐ Number of R & D activities and programmes reported.		

II.2.2 REGIONAL OFFSHORE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

In accordance with the Specific objective 3 and Article 23 of the Offshore Protocol, as the core substance of the Offshore Protocol aims at establishing common standards and guidelines to harmonise regional practices in the Mediterranean region, Contracting Parties will consider relevant existing standards and guidelines in this field, in line with overarching ecosystem-based ecological objectives, EcAp Roadmap and in particular with the IMAP of UNEP/MAP.

Specific objective 6: **To develop and adopt regional offshore standards**

<u>Specific objective 6:</u> <i>To develop and adopt regional offshore standards</i>		
Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties	Outputs relating to the Secretariat and MAP Components, depending on the availability of resources	Outputs relating to the MAP Partners
a) Development and adoption of regional offshore standards as set out in Appendix 4 .	a) Support the OFOG Group and specific OFOG Sub-Groups, to be established as appropriate, for the development of the common standards.	a) Provision of expertise to the OFOG Group and specific Sub-Groups for the development of the common standards.
<u>Performance indicator (s):</u> ☐ Number of common standards developed and adopted.		

Specific objective 7: **To develop and adopt regional offshore guidelines**

<u>Specific objective 7:</u> <i>To develop and adopt regional offshore guidelines</i>		
Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties	Outputs relating to the Secretariat and MAP Components, depending on the availability of resources	Outputs relating to the MAP Partners
a) Development and adoption of regional offshore guidelines as set out in Appendix 4 .	a) Support the OFOG Group and specific OFOG Sub-Groups, to be established as appropriate, for the development of the common guidelines.	a) Provision of expertise to the OFOG Group and specific Sub-Groups for the development of the common guidelines.
<u>Performance indicator (s):</u> ☐ Number of common guidelines developed and adopted.		

II.2.3 REGIONAL OFFSHORE MONITORING PROGRAMME

Specific objective 8: **To establish regional offshore monitoring procedures and programmes**

The EcAp is the overarching principle of the Barcelona Convention, aiming to achieve good environmental status (GES) of the Mediterranean and ensuring adequate monitoring and assessment of the status on a cyclical basis.

The Offshore monitoring programme will be developed in line with the EcAp Roadmap and in particular with the IMAP.

According to Decision IG 20/4 “Implementing the MAP ecosystem approach roadmap: Mediterranean Ecological and Operational Objectives, Indicators and Timetable for implementing the ecosystem approach roadmap adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention” (COP17, 2012), and according to Decision 21/3 on the EcAp including adopting definitions of GES and Targets, for the purposes of this Action Plan, in compliance with the monitoring obligations under Article 12 of the Barcelona Convention and Article 19 of the Offshore Protocol, the expected outputs under this specific objective are:

Specific objective 8: To establish regional offshore monitoring procedures and programmes		
Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties	Outputs relating to the Secretariat and MAP Components, depending on the availability of resources	Outputs relating to the MAP Partners
a) A regional monitoring programme for offshore activities building, <i>inter alia</i> , on the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme; and b) Results of the national offshore monitoring programme and the related agreed data are reported to the Secretariat every two years.	a) The development/adoption of Mediterranean Monitoring Procedures and Programmes for the above, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, building on the relevant work undertaken in the Monitoring Correspondence Groups in the EcAp process in line with Decision 21/3; b) Development of the Mediterranean Offshore Reporting and Monitoring System (e.g. Regional Data Bank on Offshore activities through the Barcelona Convention Reporting System or other systems defined by the Contracting Parties); and c) Provision of relevant information for the State of Environment Report regarding the impacts of the offshore oil and gas industry.	a) Provision of guidance on the regional monitoring programme.
<u>Performance indicator (s):</u> ☐ Section on the impacts of the offshore oil and gas activities on the Mediterranean Sea published in the State of Environment Report presented; ☐ The number of monitoring and assessments of the marine environment using IMAP Common Indicators: 1, 2, 15, 17, and 18; ☐ The number of monitoring and assessments of the marine environment using IMAP Common Indicator 19.		

PART III – IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN

III.1. Resource Mobilization

Specific objective 9: To mobilise resources for the implementation of the Action Plan

The 18th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in 2013 decided that the BARCO OFOG should be financed through extra budgetary resources and requested the Secretariat to identify international bodies that might provide specific sources of financing to assist Mediterranean coastal States in carrying out the obligations arising from the Offshore Protocol. The Meeting further invited the relevant oil and gas offshore industry to assist the BARCO OFOG, through technical support and financial contributions for the implementation of the program of work that may result from the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan. Nevertheless, the experience gained, and lessons learned from the implementation of MOAP 2016-2024 has shown serious limitations in achieving its objectives should there be a complete reliance on extra budgetary resources. For this purpose, a more appropriate approach has been explored and a resource mobilization framework has been developed which also considers minimum funding through the MTF.

<u>Specific objective 9:</u> To mobilise resources for the implementation of the Action Plan		
Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties	Outputs relating to the Secretariat and its Components, depending on the availability of resources	Outputs relating to the MAP Partners
a) Financial and human resources mobilised to support the implementation of the Action Plan, in particular its provisions related to the OFOG Group and its Sub-Groups, technical cooperation, capacity building and monitoring activities.	a) Identification of donors to secure non-voluntary contributions for the implementation of the Action Plan. A Resource Mobilization Framework is set out at Appendix 2; b) Identification of opportunities to secure a dedicated coordinator, including through secondments, for the implementation of the Action Plan, facilitating the identification of additional non-voluntary contributions.	a) Secondment of personnel to the Secretariat to assist in the implementation of the Action Plan.
<u>Performance indicator (s):</u> ☐ Non-voluntary contributions from donors secured for the implementation of the Action Plan.		

III.2. Reporting

Specific objective 10: To report on the implementation of the Action Plan

<u>Specific objective 10:</u> <i>To report on the implementation of the Action Plan</i>		
Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties	Outputs relating to the Secretariat and MAP Components, depending on the availability of resources	Outputs relating to the MAP Partners
a) Input to the biennial review of the implementation of the Action Plan under the BCRS.	a) Preparation of a template within the framework of the BCRS to report on the implementation of the Action Plan; b) Meetings of the OFOG Group; and c) Consolidated report on the implementation of the Action Plan every two years for its submission to the Meetings of the OFOG Group and the Meetings of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.	a) Provision of information, as appropriate, to the Consolidated Report on the Implementation report of the Action Plan prepared by the Secretariat.
<u>Performance indicator (s):</u> ☐ Consolidated report on the implementation of the Action Plan using the performance indicators as a basis.		

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Technical cooperation and capacity building programme

Appendix 2 – Resource Mobilization Framework, indicative road map and estimated budget

Appendix 3 – Indicative potential research and development topics

Appendix 4 – Development of Regional offshore standards and guidelines

Appendix 5 – Links between outputs and articles of the offshore protocol

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d) Appendix 1: TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

<i>Specific Objective 3: To establish a technical cooperation and capacity building programme</i>	Key stages	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Standards and Guidelines:											
Monitoring	Within the framework of IMAP's monitoring requirements five (5) Common Indicators (CI 1, 2, 15, 17, and 18) have been agreed to be monitored for offshore activities. A training activity to facilitate their use should be organised.	X									
Use and discharge of harmful or noxious substances and material	A Training Course on “<i>Common Standards and Guidance on the Disposal of Oil and Oily Mixtures, the Use and Disposal of Drilling Fluids and Cuttings, and on Guidelines related to the Use and Discharge of Harmful or Noxious Substances and Materials, including Chemical use plan for Offshore operations</i>” was held on the 7 - 8th November 2023. An Intersessional Correspondence Group (ICG) on the Use and discharge of harmful or noxious substances and material should be established in 2026 for the development of related standards and guidelines. Following adoption of these standards and guidelines an online activity should be organized to facilitate their implementation.		#	#	X						
Offshore Preparedness and Response & Contingency Plan	While preparedness for, and response to, offshore pollution incidents in general, as well as contingency planning, should be addressed within the framework of the Prevention and Emergency Protocol (Article 16 and Annex VII of the Offshore protocol refers), it is also an element for consideration when granting authorizations by a competent authority.			X							

[illegible]

Overview of the associated capacity building trainings:																
Training A: Indicative length: 2.5 days • Introduction to the Offshore Protocol and to the MOAP 2026-2035; • Special Restrictions or Conditions for Specially Protected Areas (SPA); • Guidelines for the Conduct of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA); • Monitoring; • Removal of installations.	X															
Training B: Indicative length: 1.5 days • Offshore platform Preparedness and Response & Contingency Plan assessment. <i>Focus on elements to be assessed in an Offshore OSCP within the framework of a permit application</i>			X													
Training C: Indicative length: 1.5 days • Safety measures including health and safety requirements and fire fighting; • Minimum standards of qualifications for professionals and crews; <i>Focus on key elements to enforce for the safety of offshore operations</i>					X											
Training D: Indicative length: 2 days • Introduction on the adopted standards and guidelines developed under the MOAP 2016-2024 and the MOAP 2026-2035; • Granting of authorizations ; • Inspection/sanctions (Installation/Discharge/Competent manning) ; <i>Training course building on the adopted standards and guidelines as well as on the previous trainings held</i>								X								
Training E: <i>To be specified at the mid-term review of the MOAP</i> Potential topics for 2034-2035 biennium: • /													X			

X / Blue, anticipated structuring training or meeting - # / Green, anticipated implementation period.

The letters "A,B, C, D, E" associated with the Trainings, reflect the order in which they would be organized.

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e) Appendix 2: RESOURCE MOBILIZATION FRAMEWORK, INDICATIVE ROAD MAP AND ESTIMATED BUDGET

Part I: Resource Mobilization Framework.

Overview of primary funding sources

1 Core funding for the implementation of the Offshore Protocol and its Action Plan is provided by the Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF) which is replenished on a biennial basis through contributions of the Contracting Parties. Contributions to the MTF are encouraged from Member States, industry, organizations and private individuals. In addition, organizations provide financial and in-kind support for specific capacity building activities.

Strategic Objective

2 To ensure the continued financial viability through core funding and leveraging of external financial and in-kind support.

Actions

- .1 Ensure the MTF as a core fund to support the delivery of the primary activities and as a means to leverage financial support from external donors;
- .2 Mobilize external financial and in-kind support through partnerships with Contracting Parties, organizations e.g. E. U. and industry;
- .3 Involve Contracting Parties and MAP partners (NGOs and industry) in the resource mobilization process; and
- .4 Maximize the cost-effectiveness of the technical co-operation mechanism as part of the implementation of the Action Plan.

Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF)

3 Allocate no less than the amount reflected in part III of this same Appendix.

A Multi-donor trust fund (MDTF)

4 A specific revolving MDTF is established to encourage contributions targeted on the implementation of the Action Plan or on specific issues of the Action Plan (thematic funding) and are also used to support specific technical co-operation programmes which address these issues.

Partners in Resource Mobilization

5 **Contracting Parties are urged:**

- .1 to consider providing financial contributions to the MTF and the MDTF established by Secretariat established for this purpose;
- .2 to enter into bilateral partnership arrangements with the Secretariat, providing financial and in-kind support for the implementation of the Action Plan;

- .3 to draw the attention of their relevant government authorities, including in particular those responsible for ODA (official development assistance), to the linkage between the relevant components of the technical capacity building programme defined in the Action plan and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals;
- .4 to co-operate with the Secretariat in the development and execution of resource mobilization campaigns and to facilitate consideration by the aforementioned authorities; and
- .5 to draw the attention of relevant international and regional organizations in which they participate, to the importance of the offshore sector to sustainable development and the role of the UNEP/MAP system in implementing the Offshore Protocol legal framework for the sustainability of the Mediterranean Sea.

6 Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) as MAP partners are urged:

- .1 to draw the attention of their respective memberships to the central importance of the Secretariat and its Components to enhance the capacity of Contracting Parties to implement the Offshore Protocol and its Action Plan in a uniform manner; and
- .2 to assist in the mobilization of the resources and expertise of their members to contribute to the implementation of the Action Plan.

7 Oil and gas offshore industry as MAP partners is urged:

- .1 to enter into partnership arrangements with the Secretariat, providing in-kind expertise support, through the secondment of experts, for implementation of the Action Plan; and
- .2 to provide in-kind expertise, at no cost or no fee, to support the technical capacity building programme of the Action Plan.

8 The Secretariat is requested:

- .1 to continue to engage with the United Nations, international and regional organizations in the development and execution of a capacity building programme which addresses the objectives of the Action Plan;
- .2 to engage interested bilateral and multilateral donors to provide funding support for the realization of the objectives of the Action Plan.

9 Cost effective delivery

- .1 request the Secretariat to continue to keep under review the cost of delivering technical assistance and introduce cost reduction measures as appropriate without lowering the quality of the services provided;
- .2 urge Contracting Parties to consider making available qualified experts to provide technical advisory services at no fee or no cost to the UNEP/MAP system for the implementation of the Action Plan; and
- .3 urge Contracting Parties to consider, when requesting technical advisory assistance and training, to undertake to share the costs associated with providing the assistance.

Part II: Provisional road map

	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
<i>Anticipated Meetings of the UNEP/MAP</i>										
- Meetings of the Barcelona Convention Contracting Parties (COP)				x						x
- Meetings of the Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG)			x							xh
- Meeting of the OFOG with mid-term review of the MOAP										
<i>Anticipated Activities under the MOAP</i>										
- Capacity building Trainings (A, B, C, D and E)	A				B					
- Intersessional Correspondence Groups (ICG) to develop standards and guidelines	#	#	#		#	#	#		#	#
- Online Familiarization activity of adopted standards and guidelines				x						

X / Blue, anticipated structuring meeting or training - # / Green, anticipated implementation period.

The letters "A,B, C, D, E" associated with the Trainings, reflect the order in which they would be organized.

Part III: Projected budget for a basic implementation of the Action Plan

	Lead Component	Expected support	Indicative implementation period	Indicative type of means required	Indicative estimated budget (Euro)
Expected Activities per biennium					
Meetings of the Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG)	Secretariat	-UNEP/MAP Components	2 nd year 2 nd trimester	- <i>CPs time</i> - <i>Secretariat staff time</i>	60,000
Capacity building Training	Secretariat	-UNEP/MAP Components -In-kind support from MAP Partners	1 st year 2 nd trimester	- <i>CPs time</i> - <i>Secretariat staff time</i>	60,000
Intersessional Correspondence Groups (ICG) to develop standards and guidelines	Secretariat	-UNEP/MAP Components	1 st year 3 rd trimester to 2 nd year, 2 nd trimester	- <i>CPs time</i> - <i>Secretariat staff time</i> - Consultancy funds	25,000
Online introduction of adopted standards and guidelines	Secretariat	-UNEP/MAP Components -In-kind support from MAP Partners	1 st year 1 st trimester	- <i>CPs time</i> - <i>Secretariat staff time</i>	/
Expected IT technical support					
Adapted development of the website of the relevant UNEP/MAP Component for a dedicated portal and publications	Secretariat	-UNEP/MAP Components	<i>Continuous</i>	- <i>Secretariat staff time</i> - Website developer	20,000
Estimated amount per biennium:					165,000
Estimated budget for a mid-term review workshop:					60,000
TOTAL:					885,000 ²

² Total for five biennium

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Appendix 3: INDICATIVE POTENTIAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT TOPICS

Offshore Energy Development

- Innovations in extraction technologies, economic impact assessments and risk management strategies for drilling

Environnemental Impact of Offshore Activities

- Impact of offshore activities such as the generation of noise on marine ecosystems
- Short-term and long-term impact of oil and gas exploration and exploitation on Mediterranean fisheries including migration patterns and marine protected areas

Offshore Engineering and Technology with an emphasis on prevention

- Innovations in underwater technologies such as ROVs and AUVs applicable to the Mediterranean context

Legal and Regulatory Aspects of Offshore

- Challenges faced in the compliance and enforcement of international law for offshore industries by Mediterranean countries and ways to overcome them

Preparedness for and Response to accidental marine pollution

- Environmental Impact Assessment of extended use of dispersants on major oil spills from offshore platforms in the Mediterranean Region
- Challenges in Offshore source-control response planning in the Mediterranean region and ways to improve

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Appendix 4: DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL OFFSHORE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Regional offshore standards
Common standards, on the use and discharge of harmful or noxious substances and material, in line with relevant international standards and conventions defining <i>inter alia</i> limits and prohibitions at regional level
Identification of the required modifications of Annex I, II and III and definition of which chemicals should be covered and not covered by such standards and under which conditions
Procedures for contingency planning, notification of accidental spills and transboundary pollution established in accordance with the Protocol concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea
Common criteria, rules and procedures for the removal of installations and the related financial aspects
Common criteria, rules and procedures for safety measures including health and safety requirements
Common minimum standards of qualification for professionals and crews
<i>Any other standards that may be proposed by OFOG</i>
Regional offshore guidelines
Regional Guidelines on the use and discharge of harmful or noxious substances and material
Regional Guidelines on removal of installations and the related financial aspects
Regional Guidelines on installation safety measures including health and safety requirements
Regional Guidelines on minimum standards of qualification for professionals and crews

Regional Guidelines on authorisation requirements based on the above-mentioned Standards
Report assessing national, regional and international rules, procedures and practices regarding liability and compensation for loss and damage resulting from the activities dealt with in the Offshore Protocol
<i>Any other guidelines that may be proposed by OFOG</i>

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Appendix 5: LINKS BETWEEN OUTPUTS AND ARTICLES OF THE OFFSHORE PROTOCOL

f)

A) Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties

Specific Objective	Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties (CPs)	Link to the Protocol [‡]	Means required for the implementation of the action plan <i>for indicative purposes only</i>
1. To ratify the Offshore Protocol	a) Ratification by all Contracting Parties of the Offshore Protocol, transposition of the Offshore Protocol into national law, and cooperation through the Secretariat to ensure compliance with its provisions	Art.32	Contracting Parties time
2. To designate Contracting Parties' Representatives to participate in the BARCO OFOG and its Sub-Groups	a) Designation of the National Offshore Focal Point designated by all MAP Focal Points to coordinate at national level activities carried out in the framework of the Action Plan and actively participate in the OFOG Group	Art.28 Decision IG.21/8	Nomination Contracting Parties time
	b) Designation, upon request by the Secretariat, through their National Offshore Focal Point, of the appropriate national entities and/or officials as contact points for each OFOG Sub-Group	Art.28 Decision IG.21/8	Nomination
	c) Leadership, on a voluntary basis, of the established Sub-Groups to coordinate with the support of the Secretariat the work assigned to the Sub-Groups	Art.28 Decision IG.21/8	Volunteering

[‡] Linkage between the objectives of the Action Plan and the Articles of and Annexes to the Offshore Protocol considering that the Article 1 on Definitions, Article 2 on Geographical coverage and Article 3 on General undertakings apply to all Specific Objectives, that Article 29 on Transition measures is no longer applicable and that the discharge and disposal of machinery oil, the treatment and discharge of sewage (Article 11), the disposal and discharge of garbage (Article 12), the reception facilities (Article 13) and the ship storage shall be regulated according to the requirements listed under the relevant Annexes of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL).

Specific Objective	Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties	Link to the Protocol ²	Means required
3. To establish a technical cooperation and capacity building programme	a) Technical cooperation and capacity building programme endorsed as set in Appendix 1	Art.24	
	Technical Cooperation for the development of Standards and Guidelines		
	• Monitoring		Consultancy funds
	• Use and discharge of harmful or noxious substances and material		Consultancy funds
	• Offshore platform Preparedness and Response & Contingency Plan Assessment		Consultancy funds
	• Removal of installations and the related financial aspects		Consultancy funds
	• Safety measures including health and safety requirements and fire fighting		Consultancy funds
	• Minimum standards of qualification for professionals and crews		Consultancy funds
	• Granting of authorisations		Consultancy funds
	• Inspection/sanctions (Installation/Discharge/Competent manning)		Consultancy funds
	Capacity building training		
	• Training A as set in Appendix 1		Training funds
	• Training B as set in Appendix 1		Training funds
	• Training C as set in Appendix 1		Training funds
	• Training D as set in Appendix 1		Training funds
	• Training E as set in Appendix 1		Training funds
	b) Consideration of the possible application of the MOAP beyond oil and gas activities	Art.30	Contracting Parties time, and participation to the Meetings of the Parties to the Offshore Protocol

Specific Objective	Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties (CPs)	Link to the Protocol ²	Means required for the implementation of the action plan <i>for indicative purposes only</i>
4. To promote access to information and public participation in decision-making	a) On-line template for public information submitted in line with national and regional rules on access to information	Art.23, 25 & 26	Contracting Parties time and participation to the Meetings of the Parties to the Offshore Protocol
	b) Report to the Secretariat every two years relevant information on the offshore installations within their jurisdiction including, when appropriate, information on their disposal for inclusion in the inventory to be maintained by the Secretariat	Art 6 & Art 17	Contracting Parties time
	c) Report to the Secretariat every two years, under the BCRS, discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas installations data in accordance with the monitoring programme to be defined by the OFOG Group in support of Specific Objective 8.	Art 17	Contracting Parties time
5. To enhance the regional transfer of technology	a) Active participation of the respective scientific and technical institutions, as well as the industry, in R&D activities and programmes related to prevention, response and monitoring of pollution from offshore activities	Art.22	Contracting Parties time
	b) Presentation of the results of R&D activities and programmes by their respective national institutions and industry in international fora	Art.22	Contracting Parties time
	c) Information on ongoing R&D activities and research needs provided to the Secretariat	Art.22	Contracting Parties time
6. To develop and adopt regional offshore standards	a) Common standards, on the use and discharge of harmful or noxious substances and material, in line with relevant international standards and conventions defining <i>inter alia</i> limits and prohibitions at regional level formulated and adopted	Art.5,6,7,8,9,14 & 23 Annexes I, II & III	Contracting Parties time, technical support as set in specific objective 3 and participation to the Meetings of the Parties to the Offshore Protocol
	b) Identification of the required modifications of Annex I, II and III and definition of which chemicals should be covered and not covered by such standards and under which conditions	Art.5,6,7,8,9 & 23 Annexes I, II & III	

Specific Objective	Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties (CPs)	Link to the Protocol ²	Means required for the implementation of the action plan <i>for indicative purposes only</i>
	c) Procedures for contingency planning, notification of accidental spills and transboundary pollution established in accordance with the Protocol concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea	Art.5,6,7,8,16,17,18,26 & 23 Annex VII	
	d) Common criteria, rules and procedures for the removal of installations and the related financial aspects adopted	Art.5,6,7, 8,20 & 23	
	e) Common criteria, rules and procedures for safety measures including health and safety requirements adopted	Art.5,6,7,8,15 & 23 Annex VI	
	f) Common minimum standards of qualification for professionals and crews adopted	Art.5,6,7,8,15 & 23 Annex VI	
7. To develop and adopt regional offshore guidelines	a) Regional Guidelines on the use and discharge of harmful or noxious substances and material	Art.5,6,7,8,9,14 & 23 Annexes I, II & III	Contracting Parties time, technical support as set in Specific Objective 3 and participation to the Meetings of the Parties to the Offshore Protocol
	b) Regional Guidelines on removal of installations and the related financial aspects	Art.5,6,7, 8,20 & 23	
	c) Regional Guidelines on installation safety measures including health and safety requirements	Art.5,6,7,8,15 & 23 Annex VI	
	d) Regional Guidelines on minimum standards of qualification for professionals and crews	Art.5,6,7, 8,15 & 23	
	e) Regional Guidelines on authorisation requirements based on the above-mentioned Standards.	Art.4,5,6,7,8,14 & 23	
	f) A report assessing national, regional and international, rules, procedures and practices regarding liability and compensation for loss and damage resulting from the activities dealt with in the Offshore Protocol. The report is to be presented to the Contracting Parties at CoP 20 to form the basis of a proposal to facilitate implementing Article 27 of that Protocol.	Art.5,6,7, 8, 17, 23 & 27	

Specific Objective	Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties	Link to the Protocol ²	Means required for the implementation of the Action Plan <i>for indicative purposes only</i>
8. To establish regional offshore monitoring procedures and programme	a) A regional monitoring programme for offshore activities building, <i>inter alia</i> , on the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme	Art.5 & 10	Contracting Parties time, technical support as set in specific objective 3 and participation to the Meetings of the Parties to the Offshore Protocol
	b) Results of the national offshore monitoring programme and the related agreed data are reported to the Secretariat every two years	Art. 5 & 19	Contracting Parties time
9. To mobilise resources for the implementation of the Action Plan	a) Financial and human resources mobilised to support the implementation of the Action Plan, in particular its provisions related to the OFOG Group and its Sub-Groups, technical cooperation, capacity building and monitoring activities	Art.31	Contracting Parties time and participation to the Meetings of the Parties to the Offshore Protocol
10. To report on the implementation of the Action Plan	a) Input to the biennial review of the implementation of the Action Plan under the BCRS	Art. 25 & 30	Contracting Parties time

B) Outputs relating to the Secretariat and MAP Components

Specific Objective	Outputs relating to the Secretariat and MAP Components	Link to the Protocol	Means required for the implementation of the Action Plan <i>for indicative purposes only</i>
1. To ratify the Offshore Protocol	a) Provision of advice and technical assistance to Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which so request	Art.32	Technical Support and Secretariat staff time
2. To designate Contracting Parties representatives to participate in the BARCO OFOG and its Sub-Groups	a) Promote the participation of representatives from relevant IGOs, NGOs and industry as observers to the OFOG Group and Sub-Groups	Art.28 Decision IG.21/8	Secretariat staff time and travels
	b) Enhancement of public awareness through the contribution of IGOs and NGOs with a relevant mandate to the topics discussed in the OFOG Group and Sub-Group, through their participation as observers, ensuring an open and transparent process through public consultations	Art.28 Decision IG.21/8	Secretariat staff time
	c) Establishment of institutional cooperation with various relevant regional and global institutions, initiatives and agreements and, at an operational level, establish synergies with these entities on ongoing activities of common interest	Art.28 Decision IG.21/8	Secretariat staff time and travels
	d) Publication and update of the composition of the OFOG Group and any Sub-Groups on a dedicated page of the relevant website of one of the UNEP/MAP Components	Art.28 Decision IG.21/8	Website developer
	e) Updated list of the National Offshore Focal Points and OFOG Sub-Group Focal Points	Decision IG.21/8	Secretariat staff time
	f) Definition, in consultation with MAP Focal Points, of the roles and responsibilities of UNEP/MAP Components to facilitate the implementation of the Action Plan	Art.28 Decision IG.21/8	Secretariat staff time
	g) Identification of the required means including human resources to ensure the implementation of the Action Plan and the support of the relevant UNEP/MAP Components. A Resource Mobilization Framework is set out at Appendix 2.	Art.28 Decision IG.21/8	Secretariat staff time

Specific Objective	Outputs relating to the Secretariat and MAP Components	Link to the Protocol	Means required for the implementation of the Action Plan <i>for indicative purposes only</i>
3. To establish a technical cooperation and capacity building programme	a) Integration of the technical cooperation and capacity building programme in the six-year programme of activities of UNEP/MAP and its relevant Components and in their biennium programme of work	Art.24	Secretariat staff time
	b) Preparation of the corresponding budget for consideration by the Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	Art.24	Secretariat staff time
	c) Identification of donors to secure funds required for the implementation of the technical cooperation and capacity building programme	Art.24	Secretariat staff time
	d) Coordination of a Meeting to discuss the impacts on and mitigating measures for the exploitation of the continental shelf, its seabed and its subsoil beyond oil and gas activities	Art.30	- Secretariat staff time - Travel/DSA
4. To promote access to information, public participation in decision making	a) Support the preparation of on-line template for public information in line with existing Decisions of the Contracting Parties addressing public access to information and with UNEP's Access to Information Policy	Art.23, 25 & 26	Consultancy funds
	b) Development of an online regional system and to be maintained for the purpose of public information sharing	Art.23, 25 & 26	Online regional system
	c) Publication every two years, on a dedicated page of the relevant website of one of the UNEP/MAP Components, of the inventory of installations as well as the discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas installations data submitted by the Contracting Parties	Art 6 & Art 17	Secretariat staff time
	d) Consolidated report every two years on the discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas installations data submitted by the Contracting Parties.	Art 17	Secretariat staff time

Specific Objective	Outputs relating to the Secretariat and MAP Components	Link to the Protocol	Means required for the implementation of the Action Plan <i>for indicative purposes only</i>
5. To enhance the participation of the regional transfer of technology	a) Support in the identification of fields of research in which there is a need for enhancement of the state-of-the-art of offshore pollution prevention, response and monitoring technologies and techniques	Art.22	Secretariat staff time
	b) Dissemination and exchange of results of national R&D activities and programmes within and outside the Mediterranean region	Art.22	Secretariat staff time
	c) Participation of national and regional research institutions and industry in the relevant international fora facilitated with a view to making better known the results of R&D activities undertaken in the Mediterranean region	Art.22	Travels
6. To develop and adopt regional offshore standards	a) Support the OFOG Group and specific OFOG Sub-Groups, to be established as appropriate, for the development of the common standards	Art.23	Secretariat staff time
7. To develop and adopt regional offshore guidelines	a) Support the OFOG Group and specific OFOG Sub-Groups, to be established as appropriate, for the development of the common guidelines	Art.23	Secretariat staff time
8. To establish regional offshore monitoring procedures and programme	a) The development/adoption of Mediterranean Monitoring Procedures and Programmes for the above, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, building on the relevant work undertaken in the Monitoring Correspondence Groups in the EcAp process in line with Decision 21/3	Art.19	Secretariat staff time
	b) Development of the Mediterranean Offshore Reporting and Monitoring System (e.g. Regional Data Bank on Offshore activities through the Barcelona Convention Reporting System or other systems defined by the Contracting Parties)	Art.19	Mediterranean Offshore Reporting and Monitoring System
	c) Provision of relevant information for the State of Environment Report regarding the impacts of the offshore oil and gas industry	Art.17 & 19	Secretariat staff time, publication and dissemination

Specific Objective	Outputs relating to the Secretariat and MAP Components	Link to the Protocol	Means required for the implementation of the Action Plan <i>for indicative purposes only</i>
9. To mobilise resources for the implementation of the Action Plan	a) Identification of additional donors to secure non-voluntary contributions for the implementation of the Action Plan. A Resource Mobilization Framework is set out at Appendix 2;	Art.31	Secretariat staff time
	b) Identification of opportunities to secure a dedicated coordinator, including through secondments, for the implementation of the Action Plan, facilitating the identification of additional non-voluntary contributions	Art.31	Secretariat staff time
10.To report on the implementation of the Action Plan	a) Preparation of a template within the framework of the BCRS to report on the implementation of the Action Plan	Art.25& 30	Secretariat staff time
	b) Meetings of the OFOG Group	Art.30	Travel/DSA
	c) Consolidated report on the implementation of the Action Plan every two years for its submission to the Meetings of the OFOG Group and the Meetings of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	Art 30	Secretariat staff time

Annex IV

**Regional Offshore Standards and Guidelines on the Removal/Decommissioning of Installations
and the Related Financial Aspects**

Regional Offshore Standards and Guidelines on the Removal/Decommissioning of Installations and the Related Financial Aspects

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Bibliography

List of Abbreviations / Acronyms

DECC	Department of Energy & Climate Change
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GESAMP	Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOGP	International Association of Oil and Gas Producers
NOPSEMA	National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority
OSPAR	Oslo Paris Convention - Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-east Atlantic
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
well P&A	Well Plugging & Abandonment

g) **Regional Standards and Guidelines on Removal/Decommissioning of Installations and the Related Financial Aspects**

1. Introduction

1. These Regional Standards and Guidelines on the Removal/Decommissioning of Installations, and the Related Financial Aspects; hereinafter referred to as Guidelines or Guidance document, are developed within the framework of the Offshore Protocol, which is aiming at the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution resulting from exploration and exploitation of the continental shelf, seabed and subsoil. They specifically focus on offshore installations related to oil and gas activities.
2. Along with the experience gained, the time passed, and the urgent need for actions to face the environmental changes occurring in the Mediterranean Sea, it is perceived that older hydrocarbon fields and related installations may become less or at all productive and a possible source of marine pollution, as defined by the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAM¹).
3. Consecutively these guidelines intend to provide guidance to support establishing sound environmentally concerned procedures in the Mediterranean Region that would appropriately apply to existing offshore installations and related installations producing, compressing, giving transit, and servicing hydrocarbon fields (decommissioning of depleted hydrocarbon fields).
4. The guidelines include options for reuse, repurpose and removal of these installations with the objectives to protect the marine and coastal environments under a common regulatory framework, based on sustainability and safety principles, possibly fitting in the different national legislations of the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention.

1.1 *Legislative background*

5. This guidance document has been derived from the national legislation of a Contracting Party to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention), with complements from international best practices as outlined by organizations and institutions such as, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the Secretariat of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-east Atlantic (OSPAR), and the International Association of Oil and Gas Producers (IOGP), as well as from countries with mature oil and gas industry with well-developed regulatory frameworks such as Italy, the Netherlands, UK and Norway.
6. It is to recall that the decommissioning of redundant offshore oil and gas drilling and production facilities is regulated by host Contracting Party license requirements or local regulations.

¹ IMO/FAO/UNESCO-IOC/WMO/WHO/IAEA/UN/UNEP Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP): "... direct or indirect introduction by humans of substances or energy into the marine environment (including estuaries), resulting in harm to living resources, hazards to human health, hindrances to marine activities including fishing, impairment of the quality of sea water and reduction of amenities".

International law may also be applicable if the host Contracting Party is party to relevant global or regional conventions such as the London Convention 1972 and the 1996 protocol to the London Convention or conventions and other instruments agreed by the IMO.

7. All countries around the Mediterranean Sea have signed up to the Barcelona Convention. As such, the Barcelona Convention and its supporting Protocol on the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil (Offshore Protocol), provide the legal framework underpinning this guidance document.
8. Article 20 “*Removal of Installations*” of the Offshore Protocol, stemming from Article 60 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), provides, in its paragraph 1, requirements for Operators to “*remove any installation which is abandoned or disused in order to ensure safety of navigation, taking into account the guidelines and standards adopted by the competent international organization. Such removal shall also have due regard to other legitimate uses of the sea, in particular fishing, the protection of the marine environment and the rights and duties of other Contracting Parties*”. Article 20, paragraph 2, of the Offshore Protocol specifies that “*The competent authority shall require the operator to remove abandoned or disused pipelines in accordance with paragraph 1 of this Article or to clean them inside and to abandon them or to clean them inside and bury them so that they neither cause pollution, endanger navigation, hinder fishing, threaten the marine environment, nor interfere with other legitimate uses of the sea or with the rights and duties of other Contracting Parties*”.
9. Article 23 of the Offshore Protocol provides for the formulation and elaboration of international rules, standards and recommended practices and procedures and the adoption of guidelines, in accordance with international practices.
10. In this guidance document, and as defined in paragraph 12, removal of an installation means the actions taken to comply with Article 20 of the Offshore Protocol, as recalled in paragraph 8 of this guidance document. By extension, as commonly employed in international terminology, the term decommissioning is used, with removal being one option assessed amongst others.
11. This guidance document provides further definition/clarification to the general obligations outlined in Article 20 of the Offshore Protocol.

1.2 Definitions and terminology

h)

12. This chapter defines terms (in alphabetical order) that are relevant to the decommissioning framework. Technical references may use topic-specific terminology that differs from the Offshore Protocol definitions, and these should be clearly defined.
 - .1 “Activities” concerning exploration and/or exploitation of the resources in the Offshore Protocol Area means *as defined in the Offshore Protocol*:
 - .1 Activities of scientific research concerning the resources of the seabed and its subsoil;

- .2 Exploration activities:
 - Seismological activities; surveys of the seabed and its subsoil; sample taking.
 - Exploration drilling;
 - .3 Exploitation activities:
 - Establishment of an installation for the purpose of recovering resources, and activities connected therewith;
 - Development drilling;
 - Recovery, treatment and storage;
 - Transportation to shore by pipeline and loading of ships; and
 - Maintenance, repair and other ancillary operations.
- .2 Comparative assessment²: a type of multicriteria decision analysis that takes into account criteria such as potential environmental impact, potential impact upon human health and safety, technical and practical feasibility, economics considerations, potential impact on other users and society in the assessment of decommissioning options of the offshore installations.
- .3 Competent authority: the administration of a Contracting Party responsible for issuing the single permit for implementation of the decommissioning plan and programme of the installation. According to Article 28 of the Offshore Protocol some Contracting Parties might appoint one or more competent authorities which may be indirectly reflected in the appointment of a Decommissioning regulatory approval panel.
- .4 Decommissioning: associated with the oil and gas activities, decommissioning refers to the process of a timely, safe, and environmentally responsible removal of, or otherwise satisfactorily dealing with, installations from an offshore area that was previously used to support oil and gas operations in compliance with the applicable regulations.
- .5 Decommissioning regulatory approval panel means an appropriate panel of experts set by the Competent authority which is responsible for:
- .1 Regulatory functions, such as evaluation and acceptance of decommissioning options, programmes, and plans;
 - .2 Supervision of compliance by operators, including through inspections, investigations, and enforcement measures; advising other authorities or bodies, including the licensing authority; and
 - .3 Preparation of reports; in cooperation with relevant authorities or contact points in

² Comparative risk assessment, as used in IMO's London Convention/London Protocol guideline.

Refer to Clause 3.8. pg 6:

<https://wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/OurWork/Environment/Documents/2019%20Revised%20guidance%20for%20platforms.pdf>

member states.

- .6 Dry or depleted well: a well that is no longer required for hydrocarbon production and no longer contains economically viable amounts of hydrocarbons.
- .7 Flowlines: pipelines used to connect and transport products, whether produced by individual wells or from other platforms/plants to a collector or treatment facility.
- .8 Hydrocarbon field: a geological formation containing significant accumulations of hydrocarbons.
- .9 Installation means any fixed or floating structure, and any integral part thereof, that is engaged in activities, including, in particular *as defined in the Offshore Protocol*:
 - .1 Fixed or mobile offshore drilling units;
 - .2 Fixed or floating production units including dynamically-positioned units;
 - .3 Offshore storage facilities including ships used for this purpose;
 - .4 Offshore loading terminals and transport systems for the extracted products, such as submarine pipelines; and
 - .5 Apparatus attached to it and equipment for the reloading, processing, storage and disposal of substances removed from the seabed or its subsoil.
- .10 Installation covers also the subsea production system.
- .11 Major Hazard Report: report that the Operator is typically required to submit to their national authorities. This report aims to evaluate potential risks, consequences and mitigation measures related to major incidents that could have severe consequences for personnel, the environment, or surrounding communities by extension the report presents the safety and environmental hazard analysis of the decommissioning execution activities. The major hazard analysis includes assessment of the risk of marine pollution.
- .12 “Operator” means *as defined in the Offshore Protocol*:
 - .1 Any natural or juridical person who is authorized by the Party exercising jurisdiction over the area where the activities are undertaken in accordance with the Offshore Protocol to carry out activities and/or who carries out such activities; or
 - .2 Any person who does not hold an authorization within the meaning of the Offshore Protocol but is de facto in control of such activities.
- .13 Operator related terms: company holding the mining concession, hydrocarbon license (an exclusive licence permitting the development and operation of a hydrocarbon field/entity to which the hydrocarbon production concession has been granted), owner of oil and gas installations and pipelines.

- .14 Removal of an installation means the actions taken to comply with Article 20 of the Offshore Protocol (as recalled in paragraph 8 of this guidance document).
- .15 Repurpose: use of the installations for alternative functions, other than what the installations were originally designed for.
- .16 Resources: *as defined in the Offshore Protocol*, all mineral resources, whether solid, liquid or gaseous.
- .17 Reuse: re-use of installations for hydrocarbon activities.
- .18 Substructure: The underlying or supporting structure of a platform, supporting the top sides or superstructure.
- .19 Superstructure: or topsides, is the upper portion of a platform or rig that rests on the substructure. It comprises decks, modules, living quarters, control rooms, and other operational areas where drilling, production, and accommodation activities are conducted.
- .20 Umbilicals: connections used offshore between subsea equipment and platforms, or related installations, to convey control and production treatment fluids.
- .21 Well Plugging & Abandonment (well P&A): within the context of these guidelines on decommissioning, means to install barriers which reseal the reservoir(s) in a manner which permanently prevents the migration of fluids from the reservoir(s) to the outer environment.

2. Decommissioning process

2.1 *Decommissioning Plan*

- 13. This chapter provides for establishing sound environmentally concerned procedures structuring the dialogue between the various parties involved in decommissioning and therefore identifying roles and responsibilities from the competent authority, of the Contracting Party, and from the Operator. This framework shall apply to the assessment by the competent authority of proposals for the issue of a permit for decommissioning.
- 14. The whole process should be supported by:
 - i. A declaration of intent to decommission or a decommissioning notice from the Operator to the competent authority, followed by;
 - ii. A submission, by the Operator to the competent authority, of the decommissioning plan which describes and provide justifications for the proposed decommissioning option (s), proposed execution timeline, cost estimates, financial securities etc.
 - iii. A review and approval of the decommissioning plan by the competent authority with

the support of the decommissioning regulatory approval panel;

- iv. A Submission, by the Operator to the competent authority, of the decommissioning execution plan, including an environmental and safety analysis (EIA/ Major hazard analysis);
- v. A review and approval of the decommissioning execution plan by the competent authority with the support of the decommissioning regulatory approval; and
- vi. A submission of the close-out report by the Operator to the competent authority.

15. Figure 1 set out at **Annex 1** provides an illustration of a typical decommissioning process.

16. The competent authority shall require that the Operator prepares a Decommissioning Plan which should include the documents and reports describing the current state of the installation. This should include as-built drawings, documents regarding the safety conditions, the prevention and preparation to mitigate against pollution, topsides and underwater inspections reports. It should also include a full description of the updated environmental conditions, including the seabed conditions and aspects related to cultural heritage.

17. The Decommissioning Plan specifically describes the proposed decommissioning solution and objectives for the installation and its components. Operators should conduct a multicriteria decision analysis using a comparative assessment, or similar methodology, of a comprehensive range of decommissioning options to determine the preferred decommissioning options. The comparative assessment shall consider technical and engineering aspects and impacts on safety, environment, and other economic and social uses of the seas in line with the IMO's London Convention/London Protocol. The Decommissioning Plan should include a summary of the comparative assessment as well as a description of the anticipated decommissioning solution for all the items of equipment, infrastructure and materials that have been installed or drilled.

18. The Decommissioning Plan shall be submitted to the competent authority and evaluated by the decommissioning regulatory approval panel appointed by the competent authority. In accordance with the decisions of the decommissioning regulatory approval panel, the Operator shall then submit to the competent authority a decommissioning execution plan as per chapter 3 of the present guidance.

19. From the date of the submission of the Decommissioning Plan, the Operator, of the installation to be decommissioned, shall maintain the installation until the completion of the decommissioning execution plan such that it does not cause harm to people and the environment.

20. In the event of a divestment, reuse or repurpose, the decommissioning liabilities should be transferred to the new Operator. The initial Operator shall provide all necessary information necessary for the continued operation, maintenance and eventual decommissioning of the installation where appropriate. There should be diligence check by the competent authority to assure that the new Operator can meet its legal commitments to decommissioning, including by assessing the financial and technical capabilities of new Operator as part of divestment, reuse or repurposing approvals.

3. Decommissioning of installations

3.1 Decommissioning execution plan

21. Once the decommissioning option(s) have been decided with the approval of the Decommissioning Plan by the Competent Authorities, a Decommissioning execution plan will have to be defined, and approved, outlining the execution details required to achieve the programme objective(s). The Decommissioning execution plan will provide detailed decommissioning programmes for all the items of equipment, infrastructure and materials of the installation and its components.

3.2 Permanent plugging and abandonment/ Decommissioning of wells

22. A well that is dry, depleted or no longer required for production must be permanently plugged and abandoned. Wells plugging and abandonment or well decommissioning is the first activity in the execution of the decommissioning programme and typically must be completed before the installation is removed, reused or repurposed. The general guidance³ for well Plugging & Abandonment (well P&A) is to ensure the integrity of the abandonment is such that no fluid or flow is possible through the wellbore and that there is no communication from any permeable formation to the seabed via any casing annulus.
23. After cessation of production, while the Operator shall notify its intent to decommission, the Contracting Party should determine the abandonment periods.
24. As part of the closure of activities referred to in the preceding paragraph 22, the well head and conductors shall be removed from the seabed. Deviations can be approved by the competent authority in relation with the technical specificities of the well and the technical feasibilities of the operation.
25. Completion of well P&A operations shall be subject to a suitable post-abandonment monitoring programme agreed with the decommissioning regulatory approval panel.
26. Alternative reuse or repurpose of wells may be authorized by the competent authority when requirements and safeguards are established.

3.3 Decommissioning of the installations (platforms, pipelines, subsea assets, ..., etc.)

i)

27. The execution of the decommissioning programme will be completed by the decommissioning of the installation which might be its reuse or repurpose, or its partial or full removal.

j)

k) **3.3.1 – Reuse and/or repurpose of an installation at existing location**

³ As per support bibliography.

28. The reuse and/or repurpose of an installation means:

- i. reuse of an installation at the existing or alternative location for hydrocarbon activities such as for hydrogen projects;
- ii. repurposing of an installation at the existing or alternative location, for other commercial or research activities such as, but not limited to, aquaculture, carbon capture and storage, habitat retention or creation, coastal protection, marine research and monitoring, recreational diving.

29. The competent authority should require companies or entities interested in the reuse or repurpose of an installation that is planned to be decommissioned to submit their application of the reuse or repurpose project, prepared with an adequate level of information and detail. Removal may not be required for installations that is approved by competent authority to be in its final end state e.g. when repurpose for habitat retention.

30. The applications referred to in paragraph 29 may be submitted by companies, or entities that have the appropriate technical, economic, financial and organizational capacity to execute the reuse or repurpose project, any necessary maintenance and operations, and for eventual decommissioning. Applicants shall have, in the country whose internal and territorial waters are concerned, technical and administrative facilities adequate for the activities envisaged, or submit a declaration in which the legal representative undertakes, if conferred, to establish them. The corporate purpose shall show that the applicant's activities include the activities envisaged in the reuse/repurpose project.

31. The application referred to in paragraph 29 shall be accompanied by a statement in which the proposing party undertakes to submit, prior to the single permit for the execution of the reuse project, a bank or insurance guarantee commensurate with the value of the removal works post reuse/repurpose of the installations and of the environmental rehabilitation, as well as economic guarantees to cover the costs of any accident, commensurate with those resulting from the most serious accident in the different scenarios assumed during the study and risk analysis phase.

32. For the purpose of assessing the economic and financial capacity, the applicant shall submit the documentation in **Annex 2**, item 1.

33. For the purpose of assessing the technical and organizational capacity, the applicant shall submit the documentation in **Annex 2**, item 3.

34. For the purpose of assessing the technical and organizational capacity related to health, safety, environment and risk management, the applicant shall submit the documentation in **Annex 2**, item 4.

35. The applications submitted, accompanied by the reuse or repurpose project as defined in paragraph 29 of this guidance document, shall be evaluated by the Competent Authorities, including for the purpose of comparing all projects (comparative assessment) referring to the same installations, on the basis of the following criteria, where appropriate to the proposal:

- .1 industrial and/or scientific and/or energy innovation promoted by the project;

- .2 general socio-economic impact (on a national and regional scale) and specific to neighbouring areas (competition) to the facilities to be reused and its spillover effects;
 - .3 economic sustainability of the project;
 - .4 implementable technological synergies between the features proposed in the new design and the existing structure;
 - .5 environmental sustainability of the project, including assessment of aspects concerning cultural heritage and landscape and any cumulative effects with other existing structures;
 - .6 facilities maintenance plan;
 - .7 completeness and rationality of the proposed project;
 - .8 planned time frame for project execution; and
 - .9 ways of carrying out the work, including referring to safety and environmental protection, as well as decommissioning and restoring the state of the site.
36. The reuse or repurpose project shall include at least the following where appropriate to the proposal:
- .1 maritime study with reference to:
 - navigational, meteorological-oceanographic, and hydrographic characteristics of the marine area, i.e., the intervention site;
 - technical-technological and traffic-navigation characteristics of the intervention in the marine area;
 - maritime safety measures concerning navigation and the stay of maritime objects;
 - protection of the sea from pollution by maritime objects approaching and within the intervention site in the marine area; and
 - procedures for handling extraordinary circumstances affecting navigation safety and sea protection from pollution.
 - .2 analysis of potential use conflicts (sea routes, marine protected areas, underwater archaeological cultural heritage, etc.);
 - .3 post-reuse decommissioning and environmental rehabilitation project, including any work for different purposes, of the installations;
 - .4 analysis of production potential at the site of interest relative to the chosen function(s) within the project (e.g., fish farming, agriculture, marine energy, etc.);
 - .5 reasoned choice of the function(s) to be implemented in the platform compliance area and/or to be integrated into the platform;
 - .6 complete graphical representation of the works envisaged by the project, highlighted in relation to the existing reused works, indicating any parts to be removed of the latter to be carried out at the expense of the Operator;
 - .7 estimated total production, if relevant, expected from the proposed different use;
 - .8 analysis of the environmental effects during construction, operation and decommissioning of the new installations/structures, platform and related installations, applying the mandatory elements of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process as described in national legislation based on the principle of what is best for the environment, with reference to:

- any changes in weather conditions, water quality, seabed and marine ecosystems;
 - natural resources, waste generation and disposal, emissions (including an analysis of the greenhouse gas emissions), and possible risks of serious accidents; and
 - underwater archaeological cultural heritage and landscape of the coastal territories neighbouring the works, especially with regard to the land-sea intervisibility ratio.
- .9 schedule of the work, including timelines and how it will be carried out to ensure safety;
- .10 analysis of costs, broken down by category; and
- .11 analysis of the social and economic impact of the project on an international, national and local scale.

1) **3.3.2 - Partial and full removal of installations**

37. The Partial and full removal of installations (Removal programme) considered in this chapter implies, among others, the following generic decommissioning options:

- .1 Full removal
- i. Reuse at another location;
 - ii. Onshore or Offshore demolition with onshore recycling and disposal.
- .2 Partial removal with parts of the installation decommissioned in situ
- i. Removal of any structure to an intermediate level⁴.

3.3.2.1 Removal programme

38. The Operator submits an application to the (competent authority) for permission for the full or partial removal programme prepared in accordance with the guidance and contents in **Annex 3** of these Guidelines.

3.3.2.2 Environmental assessment of the removal programme

39. Plans for the removal of installations, prepared by the Operator according to the contents in **Annex 4** of these Guidelines and accompanied by the information elements, are subject to an environmental review and approval by the competent authority.

3.3.2.3 Major Hazard Report

40. The Operator prepares the Major Hazard Report for the decommissioned installations removal operations, which shall be submitted to the competent authority. The competent authority evaluates the Major Hazard Report with the support of an appropriate decommissioning

⁴ As per IMO LC/ LP 41/17/Add.1: Annex 8: revised guidelines for assessment of platforms or other man made structures at sea. 2019 Revised guidance for platforms.pdf

regulatory approval panel including expertise on safety of sea operations.

Removal work shall begin after approval of the Major Hazard Report.

3.3.2.4 Final close-out Reporting

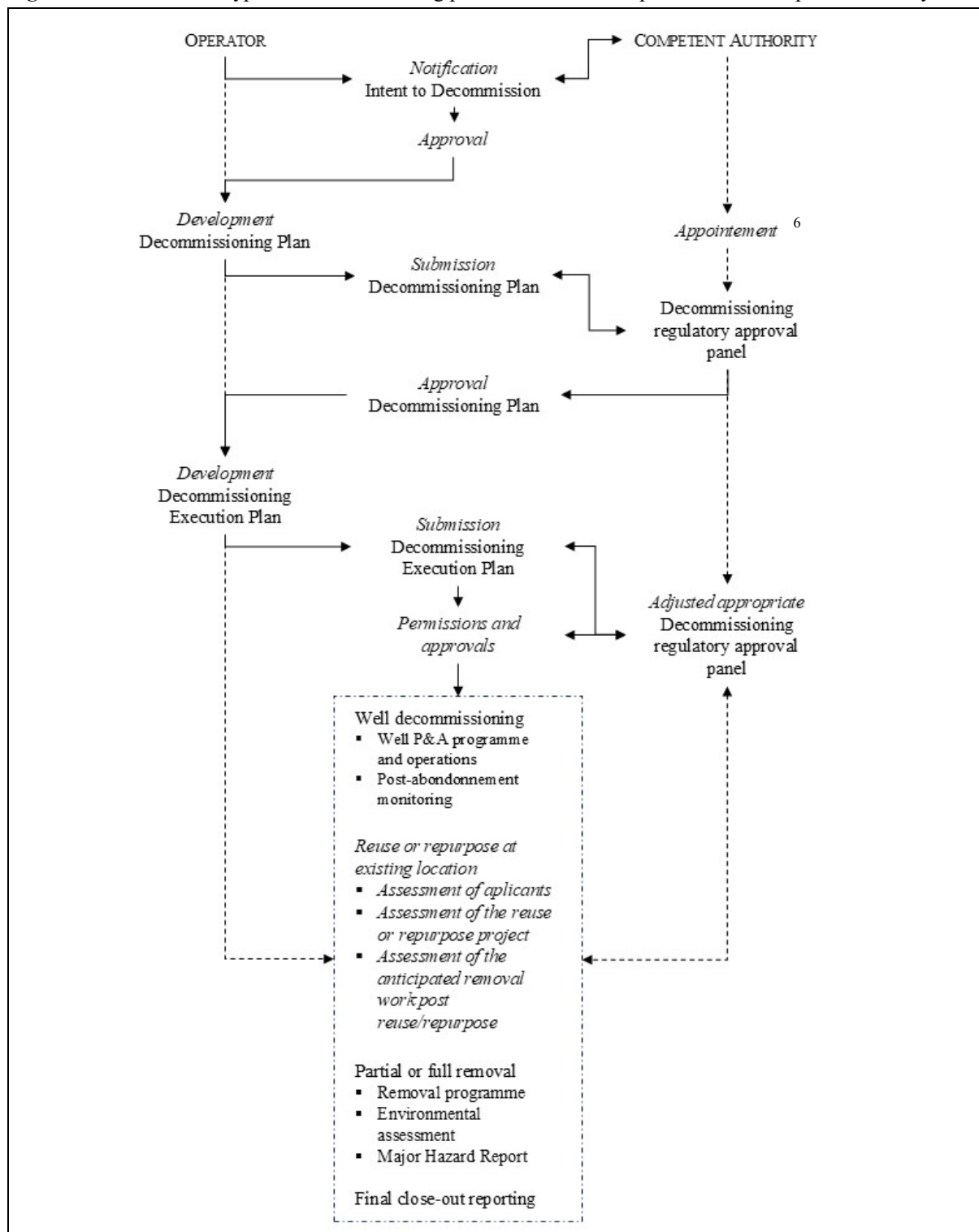
41. The Operator shall send to the competent authority a report, at an agreed interval, during the execution of the decommissioning works and a final report within six months, or other agreed timeframe, of the removal works, including the post environmental monitoring results (Annex 4).
42. Upon completion of the decommissioning work, if necessary, it is obligatory to carry out the environmental restoration of the sites affected by the removal work of the installations, based on the results of the environmental monitoring referred to in paragraph 41.
43. Upon review of the closeout reports and satisfactory delivery of the decommissioning plan, the competent authority shall provide to the Operator approval of completion of the decommissioning of the installation.

Annex I

Overview of a typical decommissioning process between an Operator and a Competent authority

Overview of a typical decommissioning process between an Operator and a Competent authority

Figure 1: Overview of a typical decommissioning process between an Operator and a competent authority⁵



Notes: in cases where the process is already established and described in national legislation, minor differences may exist. The dash-lines indicate parallel actions carried by the Operator or by the Competent Authority to support the process.

⁵ Competent authorities should established an agreed timeline for approval to allow operators to effectively planned their execution.

⁶ The regulatory approval panel should already be established before intent to decommissioning is made.

Annex II

Reuse or repurpose of installations at existing location - *Required documentation*

Reuse or repurpose of installations at existing location - *Required documentation*

1. For the purpose of assessing the general requirements, the applicant based **in the country whose internal and territorial waters are concerned** shall submit:
 - a declaration that they are not subject to insolvency proceedings of any kind: bankruptcy, compulsory liquidation, arrangement with creditors;
 - a certificate with the following information about the applicant: name, company name, registered office, registered capital, VAT number and/or tax code or equivalent, website, name of the group it belongs to (if any), name of the parent company (if any), name of the beneficial owner, name and contact information of the legal representative and the person in charge of relations with the authorities; and
 - an updated certified copy of the articles of incorporation and bylaws.
2. For the purpose of assessing the economic and financial capacity, the following documentation shall be submitted:
 - Copies of the approved financial statements for the last three years of the applicant, or financial statements as of the time of incorporation of the company, for those incorporated for less than three years, with attached reports of the administrative body and the board of auditors and statutory auditors on the management of the company. Financial statements shall be audited by a statutory auditing firm or similar standards for companies based in another state;
 - report assessing the cost of decommissioning relative to the remaining value of the field; and
 - report assessing the credit rating of the applicant.
3. For the purpose of assessing the technical and organizational capacity, the following documentation shall be submitted:
 - report with a description of the main activities, with reference to the submitted project, carried out **in the country** or abroad (in the case of a newly established company, elements relating to the parent company or corporate group to which it belongs may be provided);
 - attestation regarding the organizational structure and resources employed in the activities described in the report referred to in the previous letter;
 - report outlining the technical skills acquired in the activity indicated in the project with reference to the projects carried out; and
 - any other documents they deem appropriate to demonstrate the adequacy of technical capabilities.
4. For the purpose of assessing the technical and organizational capacity related to health, safety, environment and risk management, the following documentation shall be required:
 - environmental policies of the institution:
 - i. environmental management system and experience documentation with specific reference to environmental liability management;

- ii.* environmental protection procedure activities (waste management, recycling, energy conservation, company and vehicle maintenance, ...);
 - iii.* documentation of the institution's health and safety policies (hazard identification and risk analysis, occupational health and safety procedures, ...); and
 - iv.* documentation of the institution's security policies.
- any health, safety and environmental and risk management certifications; and
- rules for supervision of health and safety and environmental contractors.

Annex III

Removal of installations - *Required documentation.*

Removal of installations - *Required documentation.*

The removal programme of installations, even if it is planned for only parts of them, according to a reuse project, shall, besides elements provided in paragraph 14, contain at least the following data:

1- General information

- general outline of the installations included in the removal programme (platforms, structures and submarine pipelines);
- result of preliminary verifications carried out and updated documentation;
- information regarding the location, type, and status of other facilities not involved in the removal programme but which may be indirectly affected during operations;
- information regarding weather and sea conditions, water depth, and seabed characteristics;
- information related to activities such as, for example, fishing, boating and other commercial activities performed in the area where the facilities subject to the removal programme are located; and
- any other background information deemed useful to the removal programme.

2- Description of the installations to be decommissioned included in the removal programme:

- substructures of fixed and floating installations (type, configuration, weights and dimensions);
- superstructures of fixed and floating installations (type, configuration, weights and dimensions);
- submarine systems and equipment (type, size, materials, details of foundation piles, and other information regarding potential interactions with other neighbouring systems and equipment);
- lengths, diameters, coating type and installation type of rigid/flexible submarine pipelines;
- details regarding the state of burial of submarine pipelines, concrete mats or bags, or other systems used to cover and protect them;
- details of systems that are integral to submarine installations such as manifolds, valves, clamps, umbilicals, telecommunication cables, electrical cables, etc.
- information on investigations carried out to verify the status and condition of submarine pipelines; and
- any other information deemed useful in providing further details for the removal programme.

3- Detail engineering :

- description of the identified removal option, based on a multi-criteria decision analysis, the selected removal method and the prepared waste reuse, recycling and disposal program;
- description of the type and categories of waste to be handled during operations;
- description of any items or materials that will be left in situ at the end of operations;
- in the case of partial removal of the substructure, details of the free water head that will be guaranteed at the end of the operations.

4- Estimated cost of removal;

- 5- Schedule of operations with start and end dates indicated;
- 6- Characterization of the area affected by the infrastructure removal programme and possible remediation project;
- 7- Documentation pertaining to the description of the underwater archaeological cultural heritage, as well as the cultural heritage and landscape of coastal areas when affected by the execution of removal works of land-related infrastructure and subsequent site restoration;
- 8- Environmental and post-removal monitoring program; and
- 9- Indication and description of preparatory and actual removal work.

Additional data to be described in detail or included:

- 1- Preparatory work for platform removal includes the following activities to be described in detail:
 - cleaning and securing of equipment and lines including clearing of residual fluids and flushing;
 - marking of cutting lines and cleaning of cutting areas;
 - projection for the removal of any debris and excavation around the foundation piles;
 - preparation of superstructure and substructure for removal operations; and
 - prior checks for the protection of underwater archaeological cultural heritage.
- 2- Platform removal work includes the following activities to be described in detail:
 - vessels used and their characteristics;
 - location and submarine cutting systems and equipment used and monitoring of operations;
 - description, size and weight of each part removed;
 - description of work and its sequence; and
 - activities planned as a result of preventive inspections for the protection of underwater archaeological cultural heritage.
- 3- The programme for the removal of submarine pipeline shall include:
 - survey to check the condition of the submarine pipeline and the state of the seabed at the end of operations;
 - description of submarine pipeline cleaning/remediation operations;
 - vessels used for both cleanup operations and submarine pipeline recovery; and
 - activities planned as a result of preventive inspections for the protection of underwater archaeological cultural heritage.
- 4- In case of complete in situ abandonment of the submarine pipeline, the programme must provide at least:
 - a survey to check the condition of the submarine pipeline;
 - description of submarine pipeline cleaning/remediation operations that includes a list of chemicals planned to use during cleaning processes and plan and program for disposal of chemicals used;

- disconnection of pipeline ends from submarine wellheads and risers;
- possible burying of pipeline sections or their alternative protection;
- vessels used; and
- activities planned as a result of preventive inspections for the protection of underwater archaeological cultural heritage.

Annex IV

Removal of installations - *Environmental assessment of the removal programme*

Removal of installations - *Environmental assessment of the removal programme*

The Environmental assessment shall be done in line with the Guidelines for the Conduct of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) under the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil – Decision 25/15. Furthermore, the parties shall take into account the elements of Annex 4 applying the mandatory elements of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process as described in national legislation, based on the principle of what is best for the environment.

The programme to remove the platform and associated decommissioned installations includes:

- a. description of the removal programme with a summary of the information in **Annex III**.
- b. description of the current status of affected environmental components prior to the start of preparatory and removal work, including but not limited to:
 - location and description of marine protected areas, national parks, Natura 2000 network sites, areas affected by underwater archaeological cultural heritage, biological protection areas, areas affected by aquaculture facilities;
 - protected natural areas, Natura 2000 sites, Important Bird Areas, wetlands of international importance, biological protection areas and areas otherwise subject to environmental protection;
 - cultural heritage and landscape of coastal areas when affected by the decommissioning and removal of shoreline-related installations;
 - weather-climate characteristics of the area concerned;
 - physical, chemical characteristics of the water column;
 - characteristics of the seabed (morphology, bathymetry) and surface sediments (physical, chemical and ecotoxicological characteristics);
 - major benthic biocoenosis (with verification of the presence/distribution of habitats and species of conservation interest), demersal fish populations and nursery areas with special reference to species of commercial interest, marine mammals and reptiles, and avifauna; and
 - main socio-economic activities (fishing, boating, maritime traffic) present in the vicinity of the platform and related facilities removal area.
- c. Identification and estimation of possible impacts on environmental components and socio-economic activities both direct and indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short, medium and long term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative impacts related to the platform and related structures removal works, including but not limited to:
 - identification and descriptions of programme actions that may generate significant and adverse impacts on the environment (including but not limited to underwater noise, air emissions, water discharges, marine sediment handling, vessel presence, night lighting, accidental pollutant spills, transport of removed material, use of natural resources, underwater archaeological cultural heritage, etc.); and
 - Environmental components affected by programme actions (atmosphere, seabed, water environment, flora, fauna, marine ecosystems, cultural heritage and landscape of coastal areas, socio-economic activities, etc.).
- d. Description of measures planned to avoid, mitigate and/or compensate for significant and adverse impacts on affected environmental components;
- e. Description of previous environmental monitoring activities carried out prior to the construction of the offshore oil platform and related infrastructure and during its operation;

- f.* Environmental component monitoring programme; and
- g.* Environmental safeguard measures planned during any accidental hydrocarbon spills and accidents (information from the Major Hazard Report may be used).

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Annex V

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions and recommendations

The Fifth Meeting of the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG) Sub-Group on Environmental Impact, which was held in Lija, Malta, 19-20 February 2025, hereinafter referred to as the “Meeting”:

1 **expressed** appreciation for the financial support provided by the Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF);

2 **encouraged** the Mediterranean coastal States as well as the relevant regional and international organisations to provide voluntary contributions to support further activities in relation to the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil (hereinafter referred to as the “Offshore Protocol”);

3 **thanked** the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), for the work carried out since the last OFOG Meeting, as well as for the preparation and successful organisation of the Meeting;

4 **stressed** the importance of increasing the number of ratifications of the Offshore Protocol;

5 **urged** the Mediterranean coastal States, which had not already done so, to ratify the Offshore Protocol, at the earliest opportunity;

6 **took note** of the main challenges expressed by Contracting Parties (CPs) that have not yet ratified the Offshore Protocol, including some already expressed at the 4th Meeting of the OFOG namely:

- .1 overlap with other existing legislation already in place which already fulfils the requirements of the Offshore Protocol; promulgating a new law to ratify the Protocol would give little back in return;
- .2 requirement of a substantial effort to coordinate internal procedures and therefore a stable window of opportunity needs to be found in the political calendar; and
- .3 some legal issues were identified in the process leading to ratification, which take time to resolve and require a legal opinion;

7 **asked** the Secretariat to continue to provide technical assistance and capacity building to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which so request, to ratify the Offshore Protocol;

MOAP

8 **acknowledged** the consultative approach followed by the Secretariat for the development of a revised Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan;

9 **noted** the challenges encountered in the implementation of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan (MOAP) as expressed in document REMPEC/WG.60/INF.5, including limited dedicated financial and human resources, and therefore **recalled** the need to:

- .1 secure a dedicated staff post on the Offshore Protocol within one of the MAP institutional components;
- .2 streamline the two OFOG Sub-groups with a view that there is only one OFOG which addresses both the Environmental Impacts as well as Health and Safety; and
- .3 commit on support by the MTF for the Meetings of the OFOG.

10 **approved** the text of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan 2026-2035, set out at Annex 1 of document REMPEC/WG.60/3, with the amendments made during the Meeting, and **requested** the Secretariat to submit it for approval to the next Meeting of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) Focal Points;

11 **invited** the Secretariat to clearly highlight to the next Meeting of the MAP Focal Points the importance of the Resource Mobilisation Framework, along with the decision on the MOAP, to ensure its realistic and timely implementation and achievement of its specific objectives;

12 **tasked** the Secretariat to draft the text of a decision, for consideration by the MAP Focal Points Meeting and the 24th Meeting of the Contracting Parties' (COP 24), providing for the adoption of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan 2026-2035;

13 **reiterated** the views expressed since the 3rd Meeting of the OFOG that to ensure effective implementation of the MOAP, there is a need for a fixed-term staff position on the Offshore Protocol at the Secretariat to organize and support the coordination of the defined activities in the Plan and requested the Secretariat to bring the matter to the attention of the MAP Focal Points Meeting and the 24th Meeting of the Contracting Parties' (COP 24);

14 **urged** CPs as well as the relevant international and regional partners, to consider making available qualified experts to provide technical advisory services in kind to the UNEP/MAP system for the effective implementation of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan (2026-2035);

REPORTING

15 **re-emphasised** the importance of reporting under the Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS), in particular by Contracting Parties (CPs) that are Parties to the Offshore Protocol, and CPs with ongoing or planned oil and gas activities **and encouraged** all CPs to strengthen their national implementation reporting through the BCRS, with the support of the Secretariat as requested;

16 **encouraged** CPs to ensure timely reporting, as this is crucial for identifying needs and challenges and for supporting the effective implementation of the Offshore Protocol;

DATA SHARING AND MONITORING PROGRAMME

17 **acknowledged** the consultative approach of the Secretariat for **an agreement** on the utilization of the "To-do-lists" set-out at Annexes I and II of document REMPEC/WG.60/5;

18 **requested** the Secretariat, in coordination with the Regional Activity Centres (RACs), to ensure capacity building actions aiming at enhancing CPs capacities to conduct effective monitoring and assessment of the Offshore activities, operational and accidental pollution, on the marine environment within their national monitoring programme, applying Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast (IMAP) Common Indicator (CI) 19;

19 **encouraged** CPs to leverage their national expertise and knowledge within the framework of the IMAP to address offshore oil and gas activities, and within the work of the Correspondence Groups on monitoring (CORMON) Pollution;

REGIONAL STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

20 **approved** the revised version of the Regional Offshore Standards and Guidelines on the Removal (Decommissioning) of Installations and the Related Financial Aspects taking into account the changes introduced during the meeting, as presented in the document approved by the Meeting, bearing the official title: “Regional Offshore Standards and Guidelines on the Removal/Decommissioning of Installations and the Related Financial Aspects”;

21 **requested** the Secretariat to proceed with final editorial adjustments, then its submission to the MAP Focal Points Meeting for its consideration and approval;

22 **tasked** the Secretariat to draft the text of a decision, for consideration by the MAP Focal Points Meeting and the 24th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 24), providing for the adoption of the Regional Offshore Standards and Guidelines on the Removal (Decommissioning) of Installations and the Related Financial Aspects;

POW 2026-2027

23 **concurred** with the proposed planning cycle for a technical cooperation and capacity building programme for the biennium 2026-2027, as specified in document REMPEC/WG.60/6;

24 **provided** guidance to the Secretariat on the next activities to be undertaken, as a priority, in the implementation of the Offshore Protocol, and the MOAP, including developing guidance on the use and discharge of harmful or noxious substances and material and expressed priority for the following topics for training:

- .1 *The proposed Capacity building training A, as specified in document REMPEC/WG.60/6, should introduce the Offshore Protocol with the updated MOAP 2026-2035 and put emphasis on ‘the Guidelines, Special Restrictions or Conditions for Specially Protected Areas’ (SPA, 2019), the ‘Guidelines for the Conduct of Environmental Impact Assessment’ (EIA, 2021), and the ‘Guidelines on the Removal/Decommissioning of installations’ (2025) ; and*
- .2 *The proposed training on “Streamline shipping and offshore data-sharing and monitoring platform with InfoMAP Data management system” should incorporate a dedicated session on IMAP CI 19.*

25 **expressed** the need to increase the level of leadership and engagement by the CPs in achieving the specific objectives of the MOAP by proposing to take the lead in the development of concrete action/outputs and/or in tasks related to the organization of the OFOG work in general.
