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Agenda Item 3: Progress Report on Activities Carried Out during the 2024-2025 Biennium

Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Activities Carried Out during the 2024-2025 Biennium

Note by the Secretariat:
This revised version of the Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Activities Carried Out during the 2024-2025 Biennium (document UNEP/MED WG.620/3/Rev.1) is rectifying specific editorial errors and omissions identified during the MAP Focal Points Meeting (Athens, Greece, 16-19 September 2025) by the European Union and Lebanon.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AaB	Adopt-a-Beach
AB	Advisory Body
ABNJ	Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
ACCOBAMS	Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area
ActionMed	Action Plans for Integrated Regional Monitoring Programmes, Coordinated Programmes of Measures and Addressing Data and Knowledge Gaps in Mediterranean Sea
Adriatic CP	Adriatic Contingency Plan
AGEM	Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean
APAL	Agence de Protection et d'Aménagement du Littoral
ASM	Annual Stocktaking Meeting
AUA	Agricultural University of Athens
BACs	Background Assessment Concentrations
BAT	Best Available Techniques
BBNJ	Biological diversity Beyond National Jurisdiction
BC	Background Concentrations
BCRS	Barcelona Convention Reporting System
BD	Biodiversity focal area strategy (GEF)
BlueMissionMed	Mission for the Mediterranean under the EU's Horizon Europe programme
BMP	Blue Mediterranean Partnership
BP	Blue Plan
BSC-PS	Black Sea Commission – Permanent Secretariat
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
BSOs	Business Support Organizations
BWM	Ballast Water Management
BWM Convention	International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004
CAMP(s)	Coastal Area Management Programme(s)
CASADAPT	Project: "Research-action: analyze, imagine, consult, adapt the socio-ecosystems of the Mediterranean coast to climate change"
CASS	Climate Awareness and Sustainable Skills
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEDRE	Centre of Documentation, Research and Experimentation on Accidental Water Pollution
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CETI	Center for Eco-Toxicological Research Podgorica
CGI SCP	Cyprus, Greece, and Israel joint Sub-regional Marine Pollution Contingency Plan
CIEMAT	Centro de Investigaciones Energéticas, Medioambientales y Tecnológicas
CIESM	Mediterranean Science Commission (Commission Internationale pour l'Exploration Scientifique de la Méditerranée)
ClimVar & ICZM	Integration of climate variability and change into national strategies for the implementation of the ICZM Protocol in the Mediterranean
CME	Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement
CMR	Carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic to reproduction

CNRS-L	National Council for Scientific Research - Lebanon
COP	Conference of Parties
CORMON	Correspondence Group on Monitoring
CP	Child Project
CPMR	Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions
CS	Civil Society
CU	Coordinating Unit
CVC	Climate Variability and Change
CW	Chemicals and Waste (GEF)
DeFishGear	Derelict Fishing Gear Management System in the Adriatic Region
DesirMED	Demonstration and mainstreaming of nature-based Solutions for climate Resilient transformation in the MEDiterranean
DG ENV	Directorate-General for Environment (European Commission)
DG MARE	Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (EC)
DG REGIO	Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
DOALOS	Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea
EACs	Environmental Assessment Concentrations
EASIN	European Alien Species Information Network
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
ECA	Emission Control Area
EcAp	Ecosystem Approach
ECP	Executive Coordination Panel
EDC	Ethylene dichloride
EEA	European Environment Agency
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIA Directive	Environmental Impact Assessment Directive
EIB	European Investment Bank
EMFAF	European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund
EMODnet	European Marine Observation and Data Network
EMSA	European Maritime Safety Agency
ENI	European Neighborhood Instrument
ENI SEIS II East	implementing the Shared Environmental Information System principles and practices in the Eastern Partnership countries
ENPI	European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument
ENP-South	European Neighborhood Policy-South
EO	Ecological Objectives
ESE	Ecosystem-based Spatial Evaluation (platform)
ESM	Environmentally Sound Management
ESPOO Convention	Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context
ETC/BD	European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity
EU	European Union
EUSAIR	EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FEBEA	European Federation of Ethical and Alternative Banks
FEDERCHIMICA	Federazione Nazionale dell'Industria Chimica
FEMISE	Forum Euroméditerranéen des Instituts de Sciences Économiques (the Euro-

	Mediterranean Forum of Institutes of Economic Sciences)
FfL	Fishing-for-Litter
FishEBM-MED	Fisheries and Ecosystem Based Management for the Blue Economy of the Mediterranean
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GES	Good Environmental Status
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
GIIN	Green Impact Investing Network Initiative
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GloBallast	Global Ballast Water Management Project
GWP-MED	Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean
H2020	Horizon 2020 Programme (EU)
HABs	Harmful Algal Blooms
HAPI	Honest Alternatives to Plastic Index
HCMR	Hellenic Centre for Marine Research
HELCOM	Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission - Helsinki Commission
HELMEPA	Hellenic Marine Environment Protection Association
HNS	Hazardous and Noxious Substances
HORECA	Hotels Restaurants Cafes
HW	Hazardous Wastes
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IEFCA	Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award
IMAP	Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria
IMET	Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool
IMC	Inter-Ministerial Committee
IMO	International Maritime Organisation
INFO/RAC	Regional Activity Centre for Information and Communication
InfoMAP	UNEP/MAP Mediterranean Knowledge Platform
InforMEA	United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements
Interreg MED	Transnational European Cooperation Programme for the Mediterranean Area
IOPC Fund	International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund
IOGP	International Association of Oil and Gas Producers
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (2014-2020)
ISPRA	Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (Italy)
ITCP	Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme
ITOPF	International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUCN-Med	International Union for Conservation of Nature Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation
IUCN-ROWA	International Union for Conservation of Nature Regional Office for West Asia
IW	International Waters (GEF)
IWGs	Intersessional Working Groups
IWRS	Institute of Water of the Republic of Slovenia

JRC	Joint Research Centre
LBS	Land Based Sources
LME	Large Marine Ecosystems (Consultative Meeting)
LPZ	Low Plastic Zone
MAMIAS	Marine Mediterranean Invasive Alien Species
MAP	Mediterranean Action Plan
MAP II	Action Plan for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Sustainable Development of the Coastal Areas of the Mediterranean (MAP Phase II)
MAPAMED	Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean
MASE	Italian Ministry for Environment and Energy Security
MARLICE	International Forum on Marine Litter and Circular Economy
MARPOL	International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
MAU	Mediterranean Assistance Unit
MAVA	MAVA Fondation pour la nature
MBP	Mediterranean Biodiversity Platform
MCPAs	Marine and Coastal Protected Areas
MCSD	Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development
MEA(s)	Multilateral Environmental Agreement(s)
MEA-IKM	Multilateral Environmental Agreement Information and Knowledge Management Initiative
MEDGIS-MAR	Mediterranean Integrated Geographical Information System on Marine Pollution Risk Assessment and Response
Med NOx	Mediterranean Nitrogen Oxides
MED POL	Programme for the Assessment and Control of Marine Pollution in the Mediterranean
Med SOx	Mediterranean Sulphur Oxides
MEDACES	Mediterranean database on cetaceans stranding
MEDASSET	Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles
MEDCIS	Support Mediterranean Member States towards coherent and Coordinated Implementation of the second phase of the MSFD
MedECC	Network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change
MEDEXPOL	Mediterranean Exercise on Pollution
MedHABNnet	Mediterranean Harmful Algal Bloom Network
MEDITS	Mediterranean International Trawl Survey
Medkeyhabitats	Mapping of key marine habitats in the Mediterranean and promoting their conservation through the establishment of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI)
MedPAN	Network of Marine Protected Areas Managers in the Mediterranean
MedPartnership	Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Sea Large Marine Ecosystem
MedProgramme	GEF Mediterranean Sea Programme: Enhancing Environmental Security
MedPCU	MedProgramme Coordinating Unit
MedSOS	MEDITERRANEAN SOS Network
Med SOX ECA	Mediterranean Sea Sulphur Oxides Emission Control Area
MENELAS	Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention
MEPC	IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee
MIO-ECSDE	Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development
ML MED PLUS	Marine Litter Mediterranean Plus (project title)
MoA	Memorandum of Agreement

MOAP	Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan
MOIG	Mediterranean Oil Industry Group
MONGOOS	Mediterranean Operational Network for the Global Ocean Observing System
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA(s)	Marine Protected Area(s)
MPN	Mediterranean Posidonia Network
MRE	Marine Renewable Energy
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
MSFD TG ML	MSFD Technical Group on Marine Litter
MSP	Marine Spatial Planning / Maritime Spatial Planning
MSP4BIO	Marine Spatial Planning for Biodiversity
MSSD	Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development
MTF	Mediterranean Trust Fund (MAP)
MTS	UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy 2016-2021
NAP(s)	National Action Plan(s)
NaTour4CC	Nature-based Tourism for Climate Change (project)
NBB	National Baseline Budget
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NbS	Nature-based Solutions
NCPs	National Contingency Plans
NECA TCE	Nitrogen Oxides Emission Control Area Technical Committee of Experts
NGO(s)	Non-Governmental Organisation(s)
NIS	Non-Indigenous Species
NO_x	Nitrogen Oxides
NSN	North Sea Network of Investigators and Prosecutors
OECMs	Other Effective area-based conservation measures
OFOG	Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group
OSPAR Convention	Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
PAM	Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean
PAMEx	Plan of Action for a model Mediterranean Sea
PAP/RAC	Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre
PLEINMED	Piloting Low Emissions in the Mediterranean
PBT	Persistent Bioaccumulative Toxic
PCB	Polychlorinated biphenyl
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PEGASO	People for Ecosystem-based Governance in Assessing Sustainable development of Ocean and coast (Project)
PIF	Project Implementation Form
PoM	Programmes of Measures
POSOW	Preparedness for Oil-polluted Shoreline clean-up and Oiled Wildlife interventions
PoW	Programme of Work
PRPI	Pollution Reduction and Prevention Investment
PRTR	Pollutant Release and Transfer Register
P&I Clubs	Protection and Indemnity Clubs
QSR	Quality Status Report
QUASIMEME	Quality Assurance of Information for Marine Environmental Monitoring in Europe

RAC(s)	Regional Activity Centre(s)
RCCAF	Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework
RCO	Regional Coordinating Organization
RCREEE	Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
REMPEC	Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea
RMS	Resource Mobilization Strategy
SAPBIO	Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Region
SAP-MED	Strategic Action Programme to Address Pollution from Land-Based Activities in the Mediterranean
SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund (GEF)
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
CGI SCP	Sub-regional Marine Oil Pollution Contingency Plan between Cyprus, Greece and Israel
SCP/RAC-MedWaves	Regional Activity Center for Sustainable Consumption and Production
SDG 14	Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDI	Spatial Data Infrastructure
SDSN-MED	Mediterranean Sustainable Development Solutions Network
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEIS	Shared Environmental Information System
SfPM	Summary for Policy Makers
SIMWESTMED	Supporting Implementation of MSP in the Western Mediterranean region
Sofigreen	Social Finance for Green Entrepreneurs
SOI	Sustainable Ocean Initiative
SO_X	Sulphur Oxides
SPA(s)	Specially Protected Area(s)
SPAMI(s)	Specially Protected Area(s) of Mediterranean Importance
SPA/BD	Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity
SPA/RAC	Regional Activity Center for Specially Protected Areas
SPI	Science Policy Interface
SSFA	Small Scale Funding Agreement
SSNPs	Switchers Support National Partnerships
SSSUP	Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies of Pisa
STM	Save the Med
SUPs	Single Use Plastics
SUPrEME	Supporting MSP in the Eastern Mediterranean
SWEEP-Net	Regional Solid Waste Exchange of Information and Expertise Network
SWIM	Sustainable Water Integrated Management
SWITCH-Med	Switching to more sustainable consumption and production in the Mediterranean
TACs	Technical Advisory Commissions
TUBITAK	Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye
TUDAV	Turkish Marine Research Foundation
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UfMS	Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean
UN	United Nations

UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP/GPA	UNEP Global Programme of Action
UNESCO-IHP	UNESCO International Hydrological Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNOC3	Third United Nations Ocean Conference
VPvB	Very Persistent and very Bioaccumulative
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas
WebGIS	Web Geographic Information Systems
WEFE	Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem Nexus
WestMED	Western Mediterranean Initiative
WFD	Water Framework Directive (EU)
WP3	Work Package 3
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
WWF-MedPO	WWF – Mediterranean Programme Office
WWF-NA	WWF North Africa

I. Introduction

1. This report is a summary of activities and outputs carried out for the implementation of the 2024-2025 Programme of Work (POW) of the United Nations Environment Programme /Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) adopted by the 23rd Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 23, Portorož, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023). The progress report highlights activities delivered in the period between January 2024 and June 2025 by the Coordinating Unit (CU) and the MAP Components. Information is aggregated at strategic outcome level per each of the Programmes of the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027 and of the POW 2024-2025, as well as information on Financial, Personnel, and Administrative matters. Detailed progress was reported to the MAP Components' Focal Points and the Bureau Meetings, which can be found in the reports of the Bureau and MAP Components' Focal Points Meetings (UNEP/MED WG.620/Inf.3 and UNEP/MED WG.620/Inf.9, respectively).

II. Main Activities/Outputs per Programme of Work (POW) theme linked to specific outcome

Programme 1. Towards a pollution and litter free Mediterranean Sea and Coast embracing circular economy

Outcome 1.1. Strategies and Action Plans addressing marine litter and plastics developed and implemented through comprehensive, coherent and collaborative approaches

2. Since March 2024, MED POL is executing the EU-funded "*Marine Litter MED PLUS project*" (herein after referred to as Marine Litter Project), with a strong component aiming at further supporting and expanding the implementation of the Marine Litter Regional Plan in the Mediterranean.

3. In this respect, during 2024, several agreements were signed to operationalize and deliver targeted financial and technical support to eligible countries (Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia) enabling the implementation of planned activities under this Project. Implementation of marine litter removal activities at pilot sites is progressing particularly: (a) "Adopt-a-beach" pilots have been executed and further expanded in 4 Countries (i.e., Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia). The pilots entail the addition of one additional site in the already scheduled seasonal survey monitoring. National teams are in place, pilots and data collection are ongoing, in line with the standard monitoring protocol. These pilots are expected to be completed by December 2026. Negotiations are ongoing to engage also Algeria; and (b) "Fishing-for-Litter" pilots have been executed and further expanded in three Countries (i.e., Libya, Morocco and Tunisia). The pilots entail one additional port and up to three additional fishing vessels. National teams are in place, pilots are ongoing and expected to be completed by December 2026. Negotiations are ongoing to engage in this activity also Algeria.

4. Regarding the work by REMPEC on lost containers at sea, in March 2025, a questionnaire was circulated to all Contracting Parties and interested stakeholders to assess the number of lost containers at sea in the Mediterranean. Under the Marine Litter Project the legal and regulatory framework for lost containers at sea, evaluating quantities and mapping affected seafloor areas, and proposing best practices for the marking and retrieval of lost containers at sea in the Mediterranean region, while promoting regional cooperation envisaged. This questionnaire is the first step to undertake such an assessment. The draft Study is expected in July 2025.

5. SCP/Regional Activity Center (RAC)-MedWaves is working on the implementation of Low Plastic Zones (LPZ) with the financial support of the Italian Government under MAP/MASE Bilateral collaboration Agreement. With the financial support from France (Voluntary contribution) different actions have been implemented in 2024 with local authorities in Tunisia and Morocco to reduce and prevent plastic pollution aimed to help Hotels Restaurants Cafes (HORECA) businesses and reduce their use of Single Use Plastics (SUPs). An analysis of the context, including existing waste management systems, the legal and regulatory framework related to the consumption and production of SUPs and their management was carried out in the two target countries. Any alternative solutions to SUPs were mapped, including their typology, price, and suppliers. The Honest Alternatives to Plastic Index (HAPI) Guardian web application was adapted to the local context and translated to Arabic and French, allowing companies in the HORECA sector to diagnose their consumption of SUPs and obtain a targeted improvement plan. A communications strategy was also developed to adapt the outreach

campaign to the needs and expectations of local businesses, their customers, and suppliers, while maximizing businesses participation from the HORECA sector in the LPZ initiative.

6. In addition, new actions to reduce SUPs in the HORECA sector and to assess the contribution of tourism in the generation of marine litter from land-based sources have been scaled up in Montenegro through the 2024 French Voluntary Contribution. Advanced discussions with different actors and stakeholders in Montenegro were held to finalize the details of the actions, to select the HORECA businesses, mainly Hotels in touristic hotspots such as Kotor and Podgorica and define the scope of action. The activities will be implemented during the 3rd quarter of 2025, and the aim is to support up to 10 HORECA businesses (Hotels) to develop an Implementation Plan that helps them reduce and phase out the SUPs consumption and usage at their facilities and services provided.

7. In February 2025, Tunisia, Morocco and Lebanon were consulted by SCP/RAC-MedWaves to select the three municipalities that will be object of the Marine Litter Project activities which aim at reducing the consumption of selected/priority single-use plastics with a focus in engaging with businesses of the hospitality sector (hotels, restaurants and cafés – HORECA) through voluntary commitments and a certification/labelling scheme (HAPI Check) among businesses. The HAPI Check is an online web application developed by the Spanish Foundation Save the Med (STM), which was adapted to the context of Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Lebanon during the execution of Marine Litter MED II project and activities funded previously from the voluntary contribution from Italy. In April 2025, activities were initiated in Tunisia and Lebanon, and two Workshops in Lebanon and Tunisia respectively are expected to take place in September/October 2025 to provide engaged HORECA businesses and other stakeholders, including public institutions, with more details on the specific measures that have been implemented to date through the LPZ targeted mentorship programme. In parallel, discussions have advanced with Morocco to organize a national Workshop in Tangier at the end of September 2025, aiming at raising awareness about the benefits of LPZ to the general public and beneficiaries, including policymakers and businesses. The work in the three countries would entail working with HORECA businesses during 2025-2027 to reduce their dependency on single-use plastics.

8. The Coordinating Unit (CU), MED POL and SCP/RAC-MedWaves participated in the 3rd edition of the MARLICE – International Forum on Marine Litter and Circular Economy 2024 ceremony. SCP/RAC-MedWaves organised a special BlueMissionMed Event within the MARLICE 2024, in collaboration with the Spanish Institute of Oceanography and Ecorys

Outcome 1.2. A holistic and efficient response to land and sea-based pollution, as a part of overall Ecosystem Approach policy for the Mediterranean, (chemicals, contaminants, eutrophication, noise, oil and emerging pollution) for a sustainable Mediterranean coastal and marine ecosystem is implemented

9. Under the framework of the Land Based Sources (LBS) Protocol, in particular its Articles 5 and 13, MED POL is supporting the Contracting Parties to develop new regulatory measures for priority sectors in line with Article 15 of the LBS Protocol; enforce the adopted Regional Plans measures; promote sustainable practices in the desalination sector; enhance the use of MED POL reporting tools to assess pollution loads from land-based sources and activities; and carry out pilot actions to prevent, eliminate, and ensure the environmentally sound disposal of obsolete chemicals.

10. In line with Decision IG.26/14 on the Programme of Work (PoW) and Budget for 2024-2025 (Activity 1.2.1), MED POL conducted a comprehensive analysis of existing regulatory measures, as well as the drivers and impacts of marine renewable energies on the marine and coastal environment. The objective was to identify necessary measures to combat and, to the fullest possible extent, eliminate pollution in the Mediterranean Sea Area. The resulting document "Analysis on existing regulatory measures and impacts on marine and coastal environment from Marine Renewable Energies" (UNEP/MED WG.627/9), was presented at the MED POL Focal Points Meeting held in Athens, Greece, on 17-19 June 2025. The Meeting took note of the document, endorsed its recommendations, and requested the Secretariat to i) include Marine Renewable Energy (MRE) among the issues to be addressed in the new MAP MTS in the long term, and ii) prepare guidelines for promoting sustainable MRE within the PoW for the 2026–2027 biennium.

11. In line with Article 5 and 15 of the LBS Protocol and to ensure the implementation of the adopted Regional Plans under the LBS Protocol, MED POL is providing support to eight Contracting Parties to

prepare their NAPs 2026-2035. The NAPs will be fully aligned with the obligations established under the LBS Protocol, particularly those stemming from the newly adopted Regional Plans. This important mandate is coordinated at regional level also supporting the Contracting Parties that are EU Member States fully comply with this obligation either in the preparation of stand-alone NAPs where preferred, or, alternatively, in demonstrating how their existing national policy frameworks contribute to the effective implementation of the Regional Plans and LBS Protocol.

12. To support the development of a regionally agreed shortlist of key prevention and reduction measures (UNEP/MED 627/10), MED POL conducted an analysis of global and regional policies, as well as legally binding measures related to the LBS Protocol. These identified measures were considered by the Contracting Parties (CPs) during the development/update of NAPs/PoMs for the 2026–2035 period.

13. The Contracting Parties have made significant progress in preparing and updating their NAPs/PoMs. During the MED POL Focal Points Meeting, held in Athens from 17 to 19 June 2025, they reported on national progress related to the identification of pollution hotspots and sensitive areas, the implementation of newly adopted Regional Plans, and the identification of measures addressing priority pollution sources and activities and areas that have not yet achieved Good Environmental Status (GES).

14. MED POL organized the following meetings during this biennium to facilitate and provide technical support to the CPs in the development of their NAPs/PoMs:

a) Meeting on the Development of new NAPs (2026-2035) and initiation of the 5th cycle of the National Baseline Budget Reports under the LBS Protocol of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention, held on 25-26 June 2024 in Athens, Greece. The Meeting presented the main elements for the development of the new NAPs (2026-2035); discussed and took note of the criteria and methodology for assessing pollution hot spots and sensitive areas in the Mediterranean; facilitated the exchange of information on the formulation of priority measures and the application of cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analysis, and provide a platform for sharing lessons learned and best practices from national NAP implementation experiences.

b) Regional Meeting on the Development/Update of NAPs (2026-2035) and Finalization of the 5th cycle of NBB Reports, held on 23-24 April 2025. The Meeting reviewed the identification of pollution hot spots in Mediterranean Sea, agreed on potential measures to be included in the updated NAPs, and reviewed the reporting format for monitoring the implementation of the six Regional Plans adopted under the LBS Protocol.

15. The two meetings dedicated to the development of NAPs were attended by representatives and technical experts from the majority of the CPs, in addition to representatives of MAP Components (i.e. PB/RAC, SPA/RAC, PAP/RAC). These meetings provided a valuable occasion for in-depth technical discussions, exchange of national experiences, and clarification of methodologies related to the preparation of NAPs/PoMs. Participants actively engaged by presenting national progress, identifying priority sectors and pollution hotspots, and proposing measures, while also receiving tailored technical guidance from MED POL. In addition, several bilateral meetings were held to address country-specific needs, offer tailored guidance, and ensure consistent progress in the preparation of national documents aligned with regional priorities and obligations.

16. The Proposed decision for endorsing of the NAPs/PoMs has been prepared and will be submitted for consideration by the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points (Athens, Greece, 16–19 September 2025), with a view to its possible transmission to the 24th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP24, Cairo, Egypt, 2–5 December 2025).

17. In line with the Programme of Work and Budget for 2024-2025 biennium, MED POL provided support to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, and Tunisia in the preparation of their 5th cycle National Baseline Budget (NBB) reports which are aimed at assessing pollution loads from land-based sources and activities. These assessments' results were instrumental in identifying and prioritizing measures in the framework of the National Actional Plans. MED POL organized several online working group meetings to review and discuss methodologies for estimating pollution loads from land-based sources of pollution, including the use of emission factors.

The preparation of the NBB reports is expected to be completed by September 2025.

18. Under the GEF-funded Child Project CP 1.1, MED POL is executing the implementation of Component 1, which focuses on reducing pollution from Persistent Organic Pollutants/Polychlorinated biphenyls (POPs/PCBs), mercury, and other hazardous chemicals in coastal hotspots across eight Mediterranean countries. The project aims to achieve the environmentally sound disposal of approximately 2,000 tons of POPs and 50–100 tons of mercury waste through coordinated national and regional actions. Notable progress has already been achieved, particularly in advancing the disposal of PCBs and mercury-contaminated waste. In Algeria, 401 tons of PCB-contaminated equipment were successfully disposed of during Phase 1 of the project. Building on this achievement, Phase 2 is underway, with an additional 613 tons scheduled for disposal by March 2026. In Lebanon, 271 tons of PCB waste are undergoing drainage, packaging, and preparation for final disposal. The Basel Notification for international shipment has been submitted, and UNEP/MAP is engaging with national authorities to expedite the approval process.

19. Progress is also advancing in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Tunisia, towards the environmentally sound management of approximately 700 tons of PCB-contaminated equipment. As of November 2024, Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) have been finalized for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro. In Tunisia, assessments were conducted at three waste sites in April 2025, and Terms of Reference (ToRs) for removal and supervision have been finalized and published. By March 2026, MED POL aims to ensure the environmentally sound disposal of approximately 2,000 tons of PCB waste across participating countries.

20. With regards to Mercury disposal under the GEF funded MedProgramme, with support from MED POL, comprehensive Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) for contaminated sites were finalized in Algeria and Tunisia. In Montenegro, assessments are ongoing to determine mercury contamination levels in harbor sediments. In Tunisia, efforts are focused on the Kasserine site, where approximately 390 tons of mercury-contaminated waste have been identified. Although the initial project target was the disposal of 50 tons, updated inventories increased the total quantity to 389 tons. However, due to unexpectedly high disposal costs, the target has been adjusted to a more realistic range of 50–100 tons, in line with available budget allocations. A disposal contract is scheduled for award by July 2025.

21. Following the approval of the Guidelines on Regional Standards for Discharge from Desalination Plants and Decision Support Systems for Sustainable Desalination Technologies in the Mediterranean (UNEP/MED WG.563/13), MED POL, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment of Cyprus, organized a Regional Meeting on the Implementation of Sustainable Desalination and Application of State-of-the-Art Technologies in Nicosia, Cyprus, on 7–8 November 2024. The Meeting provided an opportunity for exchanging knowledge, showcasing innovative practices and national experiences, thereby enhancing regional cooperation to advance the adoption of sustainable desalination practices across the Mediterranean region.

22. Plan Bleu/RAC pursued its work on desalination through a call for papers about “In-depth analysis of the desalination sector in the Mediterranean. A path towards sustainable unconventional water resources in a Mediterranean basin under climate change impacts and water resource scarcity?”. 10 academic papers have been drafted and are under review. An edited volume is planned to be released in autumn 2025. The results will be presented during the 19th World Water Resources Congress to be held in Marrakech, Morocco, from 1 to 5 December 2025.

23. Work on the Guidelines for the Development of Joint Spill Response Exercises was finalized, following a dedicated webinar held on 4 February 2025 and endorsed by the 16th Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 13-15 May 2025). To align with developments in the field of preparedness and response to marine pollution, REMPEC developed, in March 2025, an updated version of Part II Basic Information on Dispersants and their Application of the Mediterranean Guidelines on the Use of Dispersants (2011) and in December 2024, a Study on Readiness of the Mediterranean region to respond to marine pollution incidents involving low-sulphur fuels and alternative fuels; and, in October 2024, an electronic version of the Oiled Shoreline Assessment Form of the Mediterranean Guidelines on Oiled Shoreline Assessment (2009).

24. REMPEC in cooperation with IMO, organized a Sub-regional Workshop on Liability and

Compensation Regimes for Oil Pollution Damage in Koper, Slovenia between 17 and 18 June 2025. The Workshop was attended by delegations from the competent national authorities involved in marine oil pollution response from the six Adriatic countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, and Slovenia, as well as by observers from Cyprus, Greece, Morocco, and Spain, as members of other sub-regional agreements on contingency planning in the Mediterranean. The Workshop was delivered by experts from the International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund (IOPC Fund), ITOPF, the International Group of P&I Clubs, and REMPEC.

25. REMPEC liaised with the HELCOM Secretariat and the OSPAR Commission/Bonn Agreement Secretariat to discuss about cooperation as well as explore the possibility to jointly endorse the final draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report endorsed by the 15th Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Kappara, Malta, 13-15 June 2023) for use in OSPAR, HELCOM and Mediterranean Sea areas. During the discussions, it transpired that an older version of the common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report was used, and the update/revised report was submitted to the 16th Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC and approved accordingly. The matter was also presented during the 21st Inter-Secretariat Meeting organized by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) in February 2025.

26. Following the recommendation of the 6th Meeting of the MENELAS, REMPEC has updated the Terms of Reference establishing MENELAS and submitted them for consideration by the 16th Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 13-15 May 2025), which approved them, with a view to submission for consideration by the forthcoming COP24.

27. Since July 2024, concrete technical support was provided by SCP/RAC-MedWaves to address regulatory issues in Morocco and Tunisia on POPs and mercury. For POPs, the tasks included identifying regulatory gaps related to the management of new POPs, proposing directives for governance in the construction sector, establishing guidelines for the lifecycle management of specific substances, updating regulations for chemical substances and imported articles, and proposing discharge limits and monitoring mechanisms for water and air. For Tunisia, the work consisted on updating national legislation to align it with the Minamata Convention's strict regulations and to analyzing mercury waste hotspots. This includes producing a report on mercury-contaminated waste management and identifying hotspots in various sectors, as well as updating the national inventory of mercury releases. The work was finalized pending validation by the competent national authorities.

28. Plan Bleu/RAC contributed to the organization of two online meetings of the MedHABNnet (the academic and informal Mediterranean network on Harmful Algal Blooms) held in March 2025 and May 2025. In October 2024, Plan Bleu/RAC contributed to a poster presented during the 43rd CIESM congress as well as an article to be published on Elsevier. The submission title is “Marine biotoxins in Mediterranean seafood: Environmental occurrence and food safety concerns”. The work is supporting the LBS Protocol implementation on pathogenic micro-organisms specific issue.

29. Plan Bleu/RAC initiated drafting of an edited volume based on academic papers on “Advancing Sustainable Desalination in the Mediterranean”. A webinar is planned for September 2025 and the report is planned to be released in autumn 2025.

Outcome 1.3. Systemic approaches for Circular Economy, eco-innovation as well as Sustainable Consumption and Production incorporated into key sectors of activity which are main sources of pollution

30. Implementation of the Switchers Support Programme is ongoing by SCP/RAC-MedWaves with the aim of developing and supporting sustainable business development in the Mediterranean countries. The Switchers Support National Partnerships (SSNPs) were established in eight Southern Mediterranean countries under the umbrella of the SwitchMed project, and now they continue to be supported and operative under the framework of new projects and agreements with a regional focus. These networks bring together 100+ private and public Business Support Organizations (BSOs) supporting the creation of sustainable businesses. In the upcoming months of the biennium the work will continue to scale up best practices and support the set-up of a regional network of Mediterranean BSOs.

31. A public-private impact fund facility was launched in cooperation with SEFEA Med, the Messina

Foundation, (an Italian fund manager and a philanthropic foundation) and SCP/RAC-MedWaves as an advisory partner. This impact fund aims to increase funding operation and investments of the SwitchersFund, which was created within the framework of the Switchers Support Programme. The SwitchersFund is an innovative financial tool designed to empower green and social enterprises across the region. The fund's governance setting and business plan have been finalized, and external financial institutions are engaged to support the first investment round of the fund during the fourth quarter of 2025. Through the Switchers Support Programme, SCP/RAC-MedWaves has already worked with hundreds of entrepreneurs in sectors such as renewable energy, sustainable tourism, organic agriculture, waste management, and more. The SwitchersFund will now take this work to the next level, offering a smart mix of finance, mentoring, and policy alignment to maximize the impact on the green and social business ecosystem.

32. During the first semester of 2025 SCP/RAC-MedWaves closed all initiated activities in the beneficiary countries of the SwitchMed II Project, which was finalized in 2024, and implemented the core of the Switchers Support programme. During these last 5 years, through SwitchMed II, up to 1,500 Green Entrepreneurs in 10 Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Spain, Palestine and Tunisia) have been supported to develop their sustainable business model by applying eco-innovation and life cycle thinking (including eco-design). From them 51% are women. Moreover, during this same period, 150 green and circular start-ups in 10 Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Spain, Palestine and Tunisia) have been supported to develop their sustainable business plan and incubated to launch their companies (51% of which are women).

33. The Open Innovation Platform led by SCP/RAC-MedWaves has reached more than 500+ members registered. Moreover, two value chain analyses have been conducted for identified sectors (Tourism and Agri-food Packaging). Also, market deals have been achieved in five countries with 14 ongoing collaboration agreements in the Textile Sector.

34. The Switchers Community has been strengthened by SCP/RAC-MedWaves with a communication and marketing plan enhancing visibility of eco-innovative enterprises and members. Switchers have been engaged in a number of events and international fora. A delegation of 12 Switchers were invited to participate at the MSMEs Arab Summit held in Doha, Qatar, in November 2024, in collaboration with AMWASH. Different side-events on the Switchers Community were organized, and Switchers had access to a range of donors and capital venture funds to engage their activities.

35. The "Switchers Products Platform", led by SCP/RAC-MedWaves, which was developed and launched in 2023, coupled with a digital and direct marketing helpdesk, is expanding offering marketing and businesses services to the beneficiary members. The Switchers Products Platform integrates the theswitchers.org and +90 sustainable products/services hosted on the platform.

36. On 13 February 2025, the 3rd Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) of Child Project 1.2 of the MedProgramme was held. The European Investment Bank (EIB) presented the overall scope of Child Project 1.2 as well as the main developments in each of the three countries of intervention, focusing on progress made in Tunisia and Egypt and efforts in Lebanon to overcome the challenging situation preventing EIB from pursuing implementation in the country. The 3rd SCM agreed that the portion of the funds dedicated to Lebanon under Child Project 1.2 is expected to be reallocated to a new intervention to be identified by the CU, in agreement with the Lebanese Ministry of Environment.

Outcome 1.4. One Health approach developed and implemented, linking human and ecosystems health with pollution reduction and prevention, taking into account lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic

37. Plan Bleu/RAC started the preparation of a technical workshop and concept note on "health-environment" relationship in the Mediterranean and its related monitoring issue (through indicators). The meeting will be organized in October 2025 in Nice, France, in collaboration with University Côte d'Azur and IRD.

38. Plan Bleu/RAC in close collaboration with REMPEC is finalizing the two papers addressing the potential socio-economic impacts of the Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Nitrogen Oxides (Med NOx ECA) with a focus on tourism and fishing sectors. To this aim, a workshop is under preparation for November 2025.

39. With the adoption of the amendments to MARPOL Annex VI concerning the designation of the Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides and Particulate Matter (Med SO_X ECA) at the 79th Session of the International Maritime Organization (IMO)'s Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 79) (London, UK, 12-16 December 2022), with date of entry into effective implementation on 1 May 2025, efforts have been made on ratification and effective implementation of MARPOL Annex VI. Constant follow-up was made by the Secretariat and REMPEC with the Contracting Parties that have not yet ratified MARPOL Annex VI, namely Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon and Libya. In January 2025, Israel deposited the instrument of acceptance to MARPOL Annex VI with IMO.

40. REMPEC has also continued to provide technical support and capacity-building to Contracting Parties, which so request, to ratify and effectively implement MARPOL Annex VI and Med SOx ECA. National Workshops on Ratification and Effective Implementation of MARPOL Annex VI were held in Egypt in November 2024 and in Algeria in December 2024, through the voluntary contribution from MASE. A National Workshop on the implementation of MARPOL Annex VI was held in Morocco in December 2024 and financed by the IMO's Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP). Support has also been provided by REMPEC for the consistent implementation of the 0.10% sulphur limit under MARPOL Annex VI in the Med SO_X ECA, through the organization of a Regional Workshop on 22-23 May 2024 in Malta and the preparation of a draft Guidance Document. The draft Guidance Document was adopted by the 16th Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 13-15 May 2025).

41. In preparation for the effective application of the Med SOx ECA, REMEPC launched a three months online awareness campaign addressed to all CPs and interested stakeholders. It also developed a leaflet on the consistent implementation of the Med SOx ECA, which provided useful information on the requirements and implementation measures. REMPEC co-organized two webinars with HELMEPA, a MAP Partner, to raise more awareness about the effective application of the Med SOx ECA. The webinars were attended by over 350 participants from leading shipping companies operating in the Mediterranean Sea including crew and office personnel and from Contracting Parties.

42. A Study on the Environmental and Legal Impact of the Use of Exhaust Gas Cleaning Systems (EGCS) in the Mediterranean Sea has been undertaken by REMPEC, through the voluntary contribution from MASE. The Study recommendations were considered by the 16th Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 13-15 May 2025).

43. In January 2025, the consortium to carry the detailed Technical and Feasibility Study for the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Nitrogen Oxides (Med NOx ECA) started work and the first draft of the Study was circulated for review and feedback of the Technical Committee of Experts (NECA TCE) in April 2025. A revised draft Study taking into consideration the feedback provided by Contracting Parties, together with draft recommendations, including a draft roadmap, were circulated for review and feedback for the NECA TCE in June 2025 with a deadline for submission of feedback in the beginning of July 2025. Plan Bleu/RAC is working on two sectoral technical papers on the impacts of a possible Med NOx ECA on tourism sector and on fishing sector; a workshop will be organized by REMPEC and Plan Bleu/RAC in the second semester of 2025.

Programme 2. Towards Healthy Mediterranean Ecosystems and Enhanced Biodiversity

Outcome 2.1. Ecosystem resilience improved through restoration of those with best regeneration potential

44. Efforts focused on restoring *Pinna nobilis* populations based on the adopted restoration programme following COP 23. Tunisia continued monitoring living specimens, while similar activities will start in Libya by October 2025. Additionally, discussions are advancing with IUCN-Med to establish a Mediterranean-wide task force before the end of November 2025.

45. Plan Bleu/RAC is working within the framework of the Waterlands EU-project to support the drafting of "*Identifying evidence-based recommendations for governance for wetland restoration at Action Sites*" to plan next year's outreach and advocacy activities. In the same framework, Plan Bleu/RAC worked together with Tour du Valat on a publication entitled *"Characterizing governance models for upscaling wetland restoration*". Based on the report 'Characterizing supportive governance

and policy for wetland restoration', this article was submitted in December 2024 to Environmental Management Journal and has been accepted in June 2025 for publication.

46. Draft guidelines for species recovery plans were prepared as provided for in Action 2 of the Post-2020 SAPBIO and were presented to the 17th Meeting of SPA/DB Focal Points as information document. Furthermore, the development of the criteria for the full inventory of ecosystems with the highest ecological relevance and/or regeneration potential, as provided for by Action 12 on restoration of the Post-2020 SAPBIO to support the country to undertake such inventories, is underway.

47. SPA/RAC, as member of the task force of the Mediterranean Posidonia Network (MPN), supported the organization of the second seminar (Hammamet, Tunisia, 5 -9 May 2025) which further discussed the implementation of measures for conservation of marine vegetation in the Mediterranean Sea.

48. SPA/RAC participated in the Institutional Dialogue event of the Interreg Euro-MED Natural Heritage Mission (Málaga, Spain 28-29 November 2024), which aimed to discuss critical issues related to marine and coastal restoration in the Mediterranean, build capacity in navigating the policy-science interface, and foster collaboration within the Natural Heritage community of practice.

Outcome 2.2. Comprehensive, coherent Mediterranean network of well-managed MPAs and OECMs in place, expanded, effective and sustainable

49. The Terms of Reference of the Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM) were updated in late 2024, then reviewed and validated by the SPA/RAC Focal Points in January 2025. A list of 52 experts was proposed to the SPA/BD Focal Points to vote on, so as to select the most voted 16 experts to join the AGEM. AGEM composition was therefore renewed, composed of 16 volunteers, experts and representatives of 5 regional organizations (GFCM, IUCN/WCPA, MedPAN, WWF and ACCOBAMS). AGEM held its fourth meeting on 21 March 2025 by teleconference, and agreed on its Programme of Work (PoW) for 2025 and Key Priorities for 2026-2027 biennium; AGEM held its fifth meeting on 15 April 2025 by teleconference and discussed a draft Guidance document on Other Effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) identification and criteria application in the Mediterranean. The document was circulated to the SPA/BD Focal Points for further comments and feedback and was then submitted to the 17th meeting of the SPA/BD Focal Points as a working document.

50. The ecological, socio-economic, and fish stock assessment study reports for Ain Ghazala and Farwa, conducted under the MedProgramme GEF CP 3.1, were finalized and endorsed by the Ministry of Environment of Libya. Under CP 3.1, the final version of the legal and institutional framework for the establishment of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs) in Libya has been finalized, in close consultation with all relevant stakeholders and endorsed by the Minister of Environment of Libya. As part of the MedProgramme's Child Project 3.1 on supporting the management and expansion of marine protected areas in Libya, the executing partners IUCN, WWF-NA and SPA/RAC, in collaboration with Ministry of Environment of Libya, organized an online training on 25 March 2025, with 45 participants from 8 Civil Society Organizations and the Ministry of Environment in Libya. This was followed by a 3-day in person training on 28-30 April in Tripoli, Libya, which strengthened key skills for MPA management, from planning and monitoring to governance, based on priorities and needs identified by local managers.

51. Furthermore, the three executing partners, namely SPA/RAC, IUCN and WWF-NA participated in the Third Annual Stocktaking Meeting (ASM), under the theme "The MedProgramme: Greater than the Sum of its Parts", which took place in Istanbul, Turkiye, from 8 to 10 April 2025. The event provided a space to reflect on collective progress, exchange knowledge, and explore opportunities to scale up impact. SPA/RAC contributed actively to several sessions, including panel discussions with Executing Partners IUCN-MED and GFCM, alongside representatives from beneficiary countries (Libya, Montenegro and Morocco). These panels focused on key achievements and perspectives related to Child Project 3.1 and FishEBM-MED.

52. Within the EU-funded SEMPA project, the comprehensive ecological and socio-economic assessments are currently being conducted in the coastal and marine areas of the three pilot sites: Ashtoum El Gamil Protected Area (Egypt), Bsis Islands (Libya), and Cap des Trois Fourches (Morocco).

53. The Government of France, the Secretariat and SPA/RAC, the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People and IUCN-Med co-organized a Mediterranean Regional Workshop on Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, in Montpellier, France, from 2 to 5 June 2025, bringing together Mediterranean countries and partners to exchange on progress, challenges, and tools to effectively implement Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework. The initiative came at a key moment, in the margins of the Third UN Ocean Conference in Nice and contributed to reinforcing regional collaboration and a shared path towards the 30x30 target in the Mediterranean Region by defining key priority actions, from improving governance and sustainable financing, to expanding well-connected and equitably managed protected and conserved areas. A regional communiqué has been jointly prepared and elaborated by the workshop participants : https://bit.ly/45hn1XF

54. The Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) Evaluation System (SES) was updated following the amendment of the Format of the periodic review of SPAMIs by COP23. Several video tutorials were also developed in English and French to facilitate the use of the SPAMI evaluation system by its concerned users. SPA/RAC has collaborated with the relevant designated national authorities in Albania, Cyprus, France, Italy, Lebanon, Monaco, Slovenia, Spain and Tunisia to carry out ordinary and extraordinary reviews for the 25 SPAMIs to be evaluated during the biennium 2024-2025. Technical Advisory Commissions (TACs), each composed of the National SPA/BD Focal Point, the SPAMI manager, a national expert and two non-national experts (recruited by SPA/RAC) were formed for the 25 SPAMIs concerned by the evaluations. Site visits were carried out by the TACs for 17 SPAMIs in late 2024 and for eight SPAMIs in early 2025. The 25 SPAMI evaluation reports were finalized and submitted through the SPAMI Evaluation System.

55. As part of the SPAMI Twinning Programme funded by MASE, several online exchanges were organized to present the programme, and discuss the priorities and the needs of the participating SPAMIs representatives. A first exchange visit was held from 18 to 22 November 2024 in the Miramare MPA in Italy, with the participation of representatives from La Galite (Tunisia) and Al Hoceima (Morocco). A second visit took place from 25 to 29 November 2024 in the Egadi SPAMI in Italy, involving other representatives from the same two MPAs. A follow-up activity was organized by the Tunisian delegation on the monitoring tools in Tunis from 28 to 30 April 2025 in Bizerte, with the support of the Miramare MPA.

56. The four editions of the SPAMI Twinning programme (since 2018 until 2025) were evaluated through questionnaires and interviews to highlight the Twinning programmes importance, identify their strengths and successful practices, as well as aspects that need improvement to enhance their efficiency, sustainability, and impact. The findings will be used to improve the design and planning of future programme editions and to promote the programme while supporting SPA/RAC in securing funding.

Outcome 2.3. Mediterranean endangered and threatened species and key habitats in favourable status of conservation

57. In accordance with Decision IG.26/5, the draft assessment and update of the several Regional Action Plans and Strategies has been achieved and were reviewed by 17th Meeting of the SPA/BD Focal Points, and are submitted to the MAP Focal Points meeting and COP 24, for consideration: the Monk seal, the coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions, the marine turtles and the cartilaginous fishes,

58. The modalities of collaboration between SPA/RAC and the Agencia Estatal Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) is under finalization concerning the T-MEDNet platform. This initiative aims to develop an observation network on climate change effects in marine coastal ecosystems by implementing standard monitoring protocols for seawater temperature and biological indicators on a large scale and over the long term.

59. A collaboration was established with the Institute of marine biology in Montenegro to deploy dataloggers to record temperature and assess the impact of heatwaves on coralligenous assemblages in National IMAP sites. The process was initiated to deploy dataloggers to record temperature and assess the impact of heatwaves in other sites (Tunisia and Libya).

60. SPA/RAC joined a consortium for the NEXT MED call and a project proposal on climate change and ecosystems was submitted.

61. SPA/RAC contributed to the elaboration of the Mediterranean Blue Carbon Strategy prepared by the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, which was presented as an information document to the 17th Meeting of the SPA/BD Focal Points (UNEP/MED WG.608/Inf.5).

62. Within the framework of the implementation of the MED Monk Seal Project, SPA/RAC is supporting monitoring and awareness-raising activities in Egypt, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia which were preceded by capacity-building training sessions. The second subregional training on Monk seal monitoring was organized on November 2024 in Mersin, Türkiye, back-to-back with the second IUCN Monk seal experts meeting. SPA/RAC has contributed to the review of the document "Mediterranean Monk Seal: A comprehensive set of monitoring and research techniques for the study and conservation of Monachus monachus in the Mediterranean Sea" which was submitted as information document at the 17th Meeting of the SPA/BD Focal Points (UNEP/MED WG.608/Inf.16).

63. Within the second and third phase of the Marine Litter Project, the elaboration and the implementation of the national monitoring programme of CI 24 in Egypt, Libya and Morocco continues with the support of SPA/RAC. An update on the progress made related to Candidate Indicator 24 has been presented during the Biodiversity/NIS CORMON meeting (7-8 April 2025) including the finalization of its Baseline Value and Threshold Value.

64. Thanks to the French Voluntary Contribution, SPA/RAC has supported the bird winter census in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia, as well as the setup of new rescue center in Morocco.

65. In close consultation with its national Focal Points of Spain and Greece, SPA/RAC is supporting Tethys Research Institute to implement the 2025 research projects: "Enhancing Knowledge on fin whale movement in the Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic waters using bio: logging" and "The annual monitoring of monk seal population parameters in the Ionian Archipelago (Greece)".

66. With support by the bilateral Cooperation Agreement signed between UNEP/MAP and MASE to implement the MAP Programme of Work 2024-2025 and to improve national monitoring, management and capacity-building for conservation of endangered elasmobranchs in the Adriatic areas, SPA/RAC has elaborated an overview of the status of elasmobranch in the Adriatic region (presented as information document during the 17th Meeting of the SPA/BD Focal Points) and has organized, in cooperation with Sharklab ADRIA, the Sub-regional training on monitoring, identification and advanced research methodologies of the Cartilaginous Fishes (chondrichthyans) in the Adriatic Sea (Vlorë, Albania, 21-23 January 2025). As part of the third activity, six communication initiatives submitted by NGOs and universities from the Adriatic region were implemented, aiming at the conservation of cartilaginous fishes.

67. To sustain regional efforts for sea turtle conservation, SPA/RAC contributed to the organization with NASNAT and WWF NA of the Forum for a Sustainable, Safe, and Significant Marine Environment for Sea Turtles in North Africa, (Monastir, Tunisia, December 2024) and to the publication "Turning the tide: A roadmap to sea turtle survival in the Mediterranean" coordinated by MEDASSET.

68. The joint programme SPA/RAC-ACCOBAMS has been updated for 2025 and annexed to a new MoU; it concerned mainly the support for the organization of the 36th European Cetacean Society Conference (Azores, Portugal, May 2025) and the participation of SPA/RAC to the side event on The ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative II organized at the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3, Nice, June 2025) and to the talk "Mitigating dolphin depredation in Mediterranean fisheries: results and insights from collaborative efforts for cetacean conservation and sustainable fisheries" held within the One Ocean Science Congress, (Nice, France, June 2025). The draft evaluation of the effectiveness of Regional Action Plans under the SPA/BD Protocol in light of the Global Biodiversity Framework,

Post-2020 SAPBIO, and EcAp/IMAP processes has been carried out and presented during the 17th SPA/BD Focal Points Meeting as working document. The meeting agreed to submit the Recommendations on the way forward for the Regional Action Plans approach for selected species and habitats adopted under the SPA/BD Protocol to the MAP Focal Points meeting and COP24 for consideration.

69. With reference to the Decision IG.26/4 on the adopted amendments to Annexes II and III to the SPA/BD Protocol, Plan Bleu/RAC in close collaboration with SPA/RAC is finalizing a socio-economic study on the impacts of Implementing Conservation Measures for Cartilaginous Species in the Gulf of Sirte, Libya. This study evaluates the socio-economic impacts of implementing conservation measures for cartilaginous species listed in Annexes II and III of the SPA/BD Protocol under the Barcelona Convention in the Gulf of Sirte, Libya. The first version of this study has been presented during the 17th SPA/BD Focal Points Meeting.

Outcome 2.4. Non-indigenous species introductions minimized and introduction pathways under control

70. On 23–24 January 2025, SPA/RAC has organized two back-to-back workshops on Non-Indigenous Species (NIS) in Rome, Italy, with the support of MASE, and in collaboration also with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forests of Italy (MASAF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The first workshop focused on managing the spread of NIS across the Mediterranean. The second workshop specifically addressed two invasive blue crab species (*Callinectes sapidus* and *Portunus segnis*). Both workshops underscored the urgency of integrated approaches for sustainable NIS management and biodiversity conservation in the Mediterranean. The following documents were discussed and reviewed during these back-to-back workshops: (a) “Guidelines Document on the Identification and Introduction of Appropriate Measures for the Reduction of New Introductions and for Eradication/Control of NIS in Priority Sites in Line with Post 2020-SAPBIO" (presented as information document UNEP/MED WG.608/Inf.7 to the 17th SPA/DB Focal Points meeting); and (b) “Status of blue crabs in the Mediterranean and Best practices and management measures for mitigating the spread of blue crabs and addressing their impact on biodiversity and local economy” (presented as information document UNEP/MED WG.608/Inf.8 to the 17th SPA/BD Focal Points Meeting.

71. SPA/RAC coordinated the Intersessional Working Group (IWG) on NIS (CSO 5) (IWG-NIS) within the implementation of The Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) in collaboration with REMPEC.

72. REMPEC has completed the Mid-Term Review of the Ballast Water Strategy for the Mediterranean (2022-2027), to which SPA/RAC also contributed, and the related draft Resource Mobilization Strategy. The mid-term review found that a key barrier to implementation has been the lack of funding, which has significantly hindered progress. To address this, the adoption of the Resource Mobilization Strategy to implement the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) is crucial to securing the financial support necessary for effective implementation. Additionally, biofouling management has become increasingly relevant, requiring alignment with the REMPEC Biofouling Study and existing IMO Guidelines to ensure efficiency and avoid duplication of efforts. While most activities remain feasible for implementation within the Strategy’s timeline, the implementation timetable must be adjusted to prevent a bottleneck effect in the final years of the strategy. Moving forward, immediate action is required to initiate pending activities and update the work plan to ensure the Strategy’s successful implementation. The Mid-Term Review Report and the draft Resource Mobilization Strategy were considered by the 16th Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 13-15 May 2025).

73. The 10th EUSAIR Forum (6-7 May 2025) was attended virtually by REMPEC to highlight the work undertaken on BWM, under the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system, including an overview of the BWM Strategy for the Mediterranean, with the objective of emphasizing that enhanced cooperation and collaboration between REMPEC and EUSAIR exemplifies a regional governance model that bridges EU strategies with UNEP/MAP regional frameworks, promoting coherent and sustainable maritime environmental protection in the Mediterranean and regionally coordinated implementation of BWM measures. It was agreed that synergies and cooperation between UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention (REMPEC) and EUSAIR on BWM were to be sought through the

submission of projects for potential funding.

74. REMPEC prepared a concept note exploring the possibility to organize a Joint REMPEC-SPA/RAC-MAP/OSPAR/HELCOM Conference on Ballast Water Management and liaised with the relevant regional organizations to explore this possibility. Whilst there was interest in organizing such a joint conference, there was no willingness and funds available to hold it during 2025.

Programme 3. Towards a Climate Resilient Mediterranean

Outcome 3.1. Legal, policy and institutional framework strengthened at the regional and national level to efficiently address climate change related challenges (flooding, erosion, land degradation, pollution, disasters etc.)

75. A contribution towards strengthening of the policy and institutional frameworks has been achieved through mainstreaming of adaptation concerns into Coastal Plans in Morocco and in Montenegro, by PAP/RAC and Plan Bleu/RAC, with the support of the GEF SCCF and 2.1 projects. Building on these and other experiences, a guideline for Coastal Plans is under development. Emphasis will be placed on inviting countries to initiate adaptation planning processes in low-elevation coastal zones, which – especially when urbanized - represent the areas of highest risks in relation to sea level rise and coastal flooding.

76. Within GEF/SCCF project and Child Project 2.1, PAP/RAC is implementing activities related to coastal adaptation to climate change in Montenegro and Morocco. National experts in the field continued working together with the other national team members related to the preparation of the Coastal Plans for Boka Kotorska Bay in Montenegro and Tanger-Tetouan-Al Hoceima in Morocco. Cost–benefit analysis was carried out for selected adaptation measures in both Plans. Streamlining of the climate change and adaptation measures into integrated reports of the Coastal Plans as well as the analysis of institutional and legal barriers and opportunities were finalized. Experiences from the two Coastal Plans will be among the key inputs for development of the Guidelines for development of Coastal Plans. In the framework of UNOC-3 in Nice, France, on June 7, PAP/RAC joined the launch of the Ocean Rise & Coastal Resilience Coalition on the invitation of Ocean & Climate Platform, spotlighting the role of cities and regions in building coastal resilience. Inputs from this gathering of more than 300 cities and regions will contribute to the development of the Guidelines.

77. The SCCF project enabled PAP/RAC to prepare the study on risks for investors in the low-elevation coastal zones. The key messages from this study were prepared as a Policy Brief. Another project activity resembled 10 case studies, mainly in the project countries, which were prepared to complement the existing 11 case studies collected with the previous EU-funded project AdriAdapt, aiming to form the case studies bank for the future coastal resilience platform MedAdapt.

78. Within the scope of the GEF/SCCF project, PAP/RAC contributed to Plan Bleu/RAC's workshop organized in Tanger, Morocco, on 4-5 November 2024, on Nature-based Solutions (NbS). PAP/RAC also contributed to GWP-Med's and Plan Bleu/RAC's regional roundtable "Catalysing Financing for Climate Change Adaptation in the Mediterranean: The Role of the Private Sector**"**, organized in Athens, Greece, on 2-3 December 2024.

79. GEF/SCCF project enabled PAP/RAC to participate at the 29th UNFCCC COP in Baku, Azerbaijan, and in particular in an event on 19 November 2024 highlighting Tunisia's effort toward a sustainable and resilient future, by addressing climate challenges through initiatives aimed at protecting vulnerable coastal zones and advancing ICZM. On the margins of this conference, PAP/RAC representatives held discussions with Tunisia's Minister of the Environment, the Secretary General of Maritime Affairs, and the Director General of the Coastal Protection and Planning Agency (APAL), laying the groundwork for activities, including the 2025 Mediterranean Coast Day, celebrating APAL's 30th anniversary. On 21 November, PAP/RAC contributed to the topic of science-policy-community linkages of the MedECC event, launching a new report on coastal risks that aligns adaptation actions with the SDGs, emphasizing the region's social and cultural values. PAP/RAC's side event, "Enhancing Regional Climate Change Adaptation in the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas," marked the closure of the Mediterranean Pavilion and the COP29. The session addressed the needs of coastal management authorities in terms of strategic planning and adaptation priorities. Presentations of Coastal plans were made, focusing on resilience from Šibenik-Knin County (Croatia),

Boka Kotorska Bay (Montenegro), and Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima (Morocco), followed by success stories from Tunisia, Croatia and regional partners, including GWP-Med, Plan Bleu/RAC, and the Ocean & Climate Platform.

80. The MedProgramme SCCF Project supported the preparation of "Methodological guidelines on preparing financial plans for climate change adaptation in Mediterranean coastal areas" (elaborated by GWP-Med, with support from PAP/RAC and Plan Bleu/RAC) to support partner countries to screening, targeting and successfully mobilizing available funding sources for climate action comprising domestic, international, and private sector investment.

81. The MedProgramme SCCF Project enabled the preparation (by GWP Med) of a proposal for submission to the Green Climate Fund to address the vulnerability of the Mediterranean coastal areas linked to water scarcity and ecosystems degradation. The proposal, which is oriented towards the promotion of nature-based adaptation solutions, combines two Projects tackling distinct climate impacts occurring in the region. One is focused on enhancing the beneficiary countries' adaptive capacity to ensure water security while protecting coastal and marine ecosystems and the second is dedicated to the protection and restoration of the emblematic Posidonia Oceanica ecosystem.

82. Various studies to contribute to the collective efforts towards reducing greenhouse (GHG) emissions from ships in the Mediterranean region have been undertaken by REMPEC pursuant to the MAP PoW and Budget 2024-2025, through the voluntary contribution from the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, as well as the voluntary contribution from MASE, namely: a) a Study on the effective implementation of the 2023 IMO Strategy on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships in the Mediterranean region; b) a Study to assess the legal and technical implications of the European Union Emission Trading Scheme (EU ETS) for shipping in the Mediterranean region; c) a Study on the implementation of emission control and energy efficiency measures for ships in port areas in the Mediterranean region; d) a Study analyzing the impact of biofouling on the energy efficiency of ships and the GHG abatement potential of biofouling management measures in the Mediterranean region; and e) a study on the implementation of possible Green Shipping Routes (Corridors) and Maritime Hubs (Green Hubs) to reduce GHG emissions from shipping in the Mediterranean region. The Studies' recommendations were considered during the 16th Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 13-15 May 2025). The Studies were also presented during side-events co-hosted by REMPEC during the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3) held in Nice, France, in June 2025.

83. The above-mentioned studies, conducted by globally reputable research organizations, proposed potential actions and measures in each respective area, which in instances are similar in nature. In light of this work, the progress made at IMO following the adoption of the 2023 IMO Strategy and the initiatives by the EU which will inevitably have a bearing on the region, REMPEC sought to prepare a draft Roadmap with expected outputs to address GHG emissions reductions from ships in the Mediterranean region for consideration by Contracting Parties. The draft Roadmap provides a comprehensive framework for future work by Contracting Parties to reduce GHG emissions from ships and at the ship-shore interface through: 1) regulatory and policy arrangements; 2) low carbon shipping 3) capacity building; 4) green ports; 5) green corridors; and 6) green financing. The draft Roadmap was considered and approved during the 16th Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 13-15 May 2025), and subsequently submitted through a draft Decision to the MAP Focal Points meeting, before submission to COP24.

84. Furthermore, a report identifying the most appropriate funding for an eventual Project Proposal to enhance capacity-building to reduce GHG emission from shipping in the Mediterranean region, as well as a draft Guidance Document on the preparation of National Action Plans to address GHG emissions from ships in the Mediterranean region were prepared by REMPEC. The draft Guidance Document was considered and adopted by the 16th Meeting of Focal Points of REMEPC (13-15 May 2025).

85. REMPEC has partnered with a number of Contracting Parties and relevant stakeholders in the Mediterranean to submit a Project Proposal under the INTERREG NEXTMED Programme, named Piloting Low Emissions in the Mediterranean (PLEINMED), with the aim to secure funding to implement capacity-building activities related to low emissions. The Project Proposal was not successful under the first call and was resubmitted under the Second Call for Proposals under the

INTERREG NEXTMED Programme in May 2025.

86. REMPEC has also partnered with a number of Contracting Parties and relevant stakeholders in the Mediterranean and submitted a Second Project Proposal under the INTERREG NEXTMED Programme Second Call, named “MedShipGreen: Transitioning to Green Shipping Practices in the Mediterranean”.

87. National technical support actions for the formulation of national/local climate change adaptation strategies or action plans integrated with the Integrated Coastal Zone Management strategies and plans are being developed with interested countries under the FishEBM project, in the period July 2025-December 2026. These initiatives aim to enhance coastal resilience and align adaptation planning with integrated coastal zone strategies in Mediterranean countries participating in FishEBM.

Outcome 3.2. Nature-based, technical solutions promoting prevention or reduction of the impact of climate change on coastal and marine ecosystems and increase resilience to climatic variability and change

88. SPA/RAC participated in drafting the “MEaDows4Coast” project proposal, promoting seagrass-based coastal resilience. It contributed to the FishEBM Med project by planning an assessment of national/local climate change adaptation strategies in coastal areas, bringing together previous and ongoing work to address particular issues affecting the commercial fisheries sector in the Mediterranean area (Activity 3.2.6 of FishEBM project) and assessment on nature-based technical solutions promoting prevention or reduction of the impact of climate change on coastal and marine ecosystems and increasing their resilience. Two regional workshops are taking place back-to-back in July 2025 to present findings and assessments. Coordination between SPA/RAC, PAP/RAC and Plan Bleu/RAC is ongoing to align with the MedProgramme and Climagine method.

89. PAP/RAC finalized the design of the document NbS for adaptation to climate change in different coastal typologies of the Mediterranean and made it available on-line. At the request of the National Focal Point from Cyprus (Department of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment), PAP/RAC provided support towards organizing a “Conference on Nature-based Solutions and their importance for coastal protection and coastal resilience".. The event took place in October 2024 in Nicosia, Cyprus, within the framework of LIFE Pandoteira project, where the guideline document was presented to present the document to national and local authorities and institutions.

90. PAP/RAC continued implementation of its activities within the Horizon EU project on NbS - DesirMED. In this project PAP/RAC is part of a demonstrating region of Split Dalmatia County, while also leading the WP3 related to upscaling innovative NbS and fostering their mainstreaming across the Mediterranean. The project’s General Assembly was held in Valencia, Spain, on 25-27 February 2025.

91. Following the recommendation of COP 23 to consider the preparation of the updated Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas (RCCAF), the Coordinating Unit launched a desk review of the MAP-relevant assessments, reports and findings from recent global and regional climate change developments and frameworks, complemented by a consultation with the Members of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD), MAP Components and MAP Partners, and through a specific questionnaire on the state of progress on the implementation of the Strategic Objectives and Directions of the RCCAF. The outcomes of this work have been presented during the Thematic Ad Hoc MCSD Meeting of 12-13 February 2025 as initial elements for the updated RCCAF. RCCAF 2026-2035 was further discussed and approved during the regional Meeting on Climate Change of national experts that took place in Istanbul, Türkiye, on 8-9 July 2025, before its submission to the MAP Focal Points meeting and subsequently to COP24 for possible endorsement.

92. The approach for the RCCAF 2026-2035 takes into account the significant changes of the global and regional policy framework for climate action since the first RCCAF was drafted in 2015. The RCCAF 2026-2035 provides the directions and the priorities to effectivity act on climate change adaptation and accelerate implementation, while in parallel the role of national, local and subnational levels through the National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and National Determined Contributions (NDC) are crucial to operationalize the Framework. The RCCAF 2026-2035 newly introduced framework for monitoring and evaluation will allow a reinforced assessment of the RCCAF implementation and

progress, thus better informing on revision needs in the future.

93. Plan Bleu/RAC contributed as WG coordinator on Ecosystem Restoration and Nature-based Solutions, to the production of a draft policy brief with Interreg Euro-MED community partners, which was first presented in October 2024 during a D4N webinar with the four thematic Working Groups' members, for their inputs. It was also presented during the Annual Institutional Dialogue event held in Malaga, Spain, in November 2024, for a consolidated version. At this Dialogue, Plan Bleu/RAC organized a roundtable "From Policy to Action" to explore innovative financial mechanism models and concrete strategies to translate policies into actions. Plan Bleu/RAC in collaboration with SPA/RAC, also prepared a roundtable on "Adopting the Restoration Agenda in the Mediterranean".

Outcome 3.3. Better understanding and knowledge of climate change and its impacts on environment and development

94. The Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC) launched the preparation of the Second Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR2) to provide updated scientific knowledge and a comprehensive understanding of climate and environmental challenges specific to the Mediterranean region. To this end, the MedECC Secretariat continues coordinating work for the discussion of the outlines of MAR 2 (held online in April 2025). Furthermore, MedECC has now selected new coordinators and has received manifestations of interest from coordination lead authors and contributors for MAR2.

95. The special MedECC report on WEFE nexus was finalized and its Summary for Policymakers is submitted to the MAP Focal Points Meeting and subsequently to COP 24 for adoption through a draft Decision.

Outcome 3.4. Mitigation of Climate Change progressed through Circular Economy, increased resource efficiency and carbon neutrality business strategies

96. SCP/RAC-MedWaves designed together with partners an analysis model as underlying methodology to develop a handbook linking concrete circular economy business strategies and climate change mitigation measures. This exercise resulted in the publication of a study paper titled "*Working Paper on the contribution of Circular Economy to Climate Action*". The report has been translated to French and Arabic and was further disseminated in the second quarter of 2024.

97. SCP/RAC-MedWaves, in collaboration with a consortium of international universities, has been supporting the development of a Decision Support System (DSS), a Horizon2020-funded initiative, to assess and promote circularity of specific productive units, including climate change indicators. A Just Transition Decision Support System Tool (DSS Tool) was officially launched in August 2024, and high-level International Workshops were organized in Thessaloniki (March 2024) and Barcelona (July 2024) under the title "Boosting a Just Transition in the Mediterranean: From Research to Action". These workshops brought together experts, business leaders, policymakers, UNEP/MAP Focal Points and representatives from Ministries of Environment across the Mediterranean region. Attendees explored the prospects and challenges of harnessing the potential of the just transition to circular economy, while tested the DSS Tool aiming at designing new or improving existing Circular Economy practices while supporting policymaking decisions.

98. SCP/RAC-MedWaves and PAP/RAC attended UNFCCC COP29 under the framework of the Mediterranean Pavilion, led by the UfM and in close collaboration with the MAP CU, and together with other partner institutions. The CU co-organized two side events, one on PAMEx with Greece and one on regional cooperation with Black Sea Commission, BSEC and Tehran Convention; SCP/RAC-MedWaves organized one side-event on circular economy and climate change mitigation, as well as on Just Transition to Circular Economy; while PAP/RAC organized a side event on the MedProgramme SCCF Child Project.

Programme 4. Towards the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources including circular and blue economy

Outcome 4.1. Sustainability of coastal and marine resources achieved through the synergetic implementation of planning and management approaches, including the adequate consideration of Land-Sea Interactions (LSI)

99. Under a synergetic approach to planning and management, PAP/RAC supported the development of the National ICZM Strategy and the Integrated Management Plan for Damour in Lebanon; advanced coastal planning in Boka Kotorska Bay, Montenegro, and the Tanger-Tetouan-Al Hoceima region, Morocco; and laid the groundwork for CAMP initiatives in Malta and İzmir, Türkiye. In parallel, provided assistance to Albania, Türkiye, and Tunisia in enhancing their readiness for Marine Spatial Planning (MSP). On the methodological front, PAP/RAC initiated the preparation of Guidelines for Coastal Plans and further developed MSP methodologies for the Mediterranean through several EU-funded projects.

100. Funded by GEF MedProgramme Child Project 2.1 and SCCF, PAP/RAC continued the work on the National ICZM Strategy in Lebanon as well as on Coastal Plans for the Boka Kotorska Bay in Montenegro and for Tanger-Tetouan-Al Hoceima region in Morocco. There was no progress related to the vulnerability studies for two Algerian regions, El Tarf and Mostaganem.

101. In Lebanon, a joint activity of all project partners (PAP/RAC, Plan Bleu/RAC, GWP-MED and UNESCO-IHP) commenced on an Integrated Management Plan for Damour, with bi-weekly meetings facilitating progress. PAP/RAC experts played a crucial role in boundary delineation, data and GIS gap analysis, and stakeholder engagement.

102. The Coastal Plan for the Boka Kotorska Bay in Montenegro continued with the organisation of the Final Conference, "Collaborating for a Sustainable Future: Adapting to Climate Change in Boka Kotorska While Enabling Socio-Economic Growth" held in Kotor Bay on 10 December 2024. The event gathered representatives from institutions, NGOs, experts, and donor organizations to define priority actions for implementing the Coastal Management Plan. The conference's extensive national and local media coverage underscored the importance of strategic cooperation for a sustainable future for Boka Kotorska Bay. The article on this initiative was published in the GEF International Waters newsletter. Finally, the Coastal Management Plan and its Summary for decision-makers are available on the new PAP/RAC website dedicated to GEF-funded initiatives. In May 2025 a video about the Coastal Plan has been finalized and presented at the LME meeting in Athens.

103. The other Coastal Plan (Schéma régional du littoral) being prepared within GEF MedProgramme's Child Project 2.1 and SCCF is the one for the Tanger-Tetouan-Al Hoceima Region in Morocco. The Coastal Plan was finalized, but the Moroccan counterparts requested some additions, to complete the national law requests for the Schéma régional du littoral. Additional funds were requested at the Steering Committee of the CP 2.1 from project partners, and PAP/RAC and MedPCU responded positively.

104. Based on the previous and actual Coastal Plans, PAP/RAC continued working on the drafting of the methodological guidance for preparation of coastal plans in the framework of the GEF MedProgramme CP 2.1. This publication was proposed to UNEP and it was accepted under the terms of collaboration with UNEP's Climate Change Division and Law Division.

105. In the framework of preparatory activities for the CAMP Malta, PAP/RAC agreed the content of the upcoming Feasibility Study with Malta's Focal Point. After receipt of the Annotated Outline of the Feasibility Study, in October 2024, the report was validated. During the first months of 2025, a consultation process was launched with MAP Components to identify opportunities for their involvement in the future CAMP Malta.

106. As part of pre-CAMP Türkiye activities, based on the needs identified, a Feasibility Study for the CAMP project, to be implemented in Izmir region, was drafted. The Focal Point of Türkiye submitted the draft study, and PAP/RAC provided comments and suggestions for improvement. The final version has been completed and will serve as the basis for preparing the CAMP Agreement by the end of 2025. The potential involvement of other UNEP/MAP Components has been considered, and all components were invited to participate in preliminary discussions to ensure a truly integrated project approach.

107. In the framework of PAP/RAC's assistance to Contracting Parties in implementing MSP, after initial consultations with national partners in Albania, a scoping report was prepared, outlining the existing MSP framework and proposing key actions to advance the national MSP process.

108. In the framework of Integration of transboundary EIA/SEA into the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system, a regional technical consultation was held on 6 February 2025 in Athens, Greece. Based on a draft legal study, participants considered approaches ranging from guidelines to potential amendments of existing legal instruments or the development of a dedicated new Protocol. There was broad agreement on the need to strengthen transboundary EIA/SEA to support the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols. Participants recommended drafting guidelines for adoption at COP 25 (2027) while also proposing an exchange of international and national experiences in the Mediterranean region related to transboundary environmental assessments. The meeting emphasized the importance of exchanging best practices, promoting training, and enhancing capacity in collaboration with the Espoo Convention Secretariat. In addition, assessment of potential activities to strengthen MAP capacity on EIA/SEA, in synergy with the existing global and regional relevant mechanisms is being undertaken. National experts from countries not bound with the ESPOO convention have been involved to provide relevant inputs addressing national needs and priorities.

109. PAP/RAC launched the new MSP project MEDIGREEN, funded under EMFAF, which commenced on 1 November 2024. MEDIGREEN aims to accelerate the European Green Deal transition in the Mediterranean Sea through MSP.

110. PAP/RAC activities related to analysis of the key barriers and levers for improving marine policies coherence are supported by the EU Horizon MSP4BIO project. The activity of Screening MSP plans in Slovenia and Malta resulted in drafting recommendations to enhance policy coherence and biodiversity policy implementation, as well as updating the online ESE platform with initial policy recommendations. PAP/RAC co-authored a blog post titled *"Mitigating Marine Threats with Restoration Measures"*, which was published in autumn 2024 (available here) and participated in a science-policy dialogue during the EU MSP Week.

Outcome 4.2. Sustainable Blue and Green Economy tools and approaches in the context of Sustainable Development and MSSD implementation

111. The Secretariat, in coordination with EC Directorate General for the Environment (DG ENV) and with the UNEP Liaison Office to the European Union, has advanced its cooperation with the EC Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fishery (DG MARE) maximizing synergies as appropriate on key issues to advance the cooperation on: Marine Spatial Planning aquaculture, Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters, Energy Transition Partnership for the EU Fisheries and Aquaculture, smart specialization strategies for sustainable blue economy.

112. In addition, the Secretariat has been in contact with the Directorate General for Regional and Urban policies (DG REGIO) and with the Intermediterranean Commission of the Conference of the Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) in order to monitor the developments for the potential establishment of the Mediterranean Macro Regional Strategy, to position the MSSD as cooperation partner and to plan synergies with respective flagship initiatives. Accordingly, the Secretariat has provided substantial input to the draft action plan of the macro-regional strategy for the Mediterranean.

113. The Secretariat became a member of the Advisory Body (AB) of the Technical Group on Sustainable Tourism of the WestMED initiative. The objective of the AB is to discuss trends and opportunities towards sustainable tourism within the region and to support the development of project ideas, promoting linkages with green transition, digitalization, promotion of social inclusion, governance, and skills. The participation to the AB will allow the Secretariat to further promote linkages and synergies with the objectives of the MSSD on blue and green transition and with the new MSSD flagship initiative on sustainable blue tourism, while supporting the outreach of the MSSD with new stakeholders and potential new partners.

114. In March 2025, the Secretariat attended the Monaco Blue Initiative 2025, which gave the opportunity to liaise with relevant stakeholders on issues related to the MSSD objectives as well as with reference to the opportunity offered by the partial renewal of the MCSD non-Contracting Party Members. Main messages included a) the potentiality to enable the conditions to support a regenerative blue economy of shipping, tourism, renewable energies, infrastructure; however, this implies important financial investments as well as international cooperation and development of regional direct and indirect value chains; b) in order to upscale the implementation of Sustainable

Development Goal 14, very much linked to blue economy related activities, fisheries in particular, financial mobilization is crucial; however SDG 14 remains one of the less financially supported Goals. In addition to public funds, it is key to involve the private sector as well as banks and other investors; c) science must further upscale its role in guiding institutional and economic decision-makers in preserving, sustainably managing and restoring marine ecosystems.

115. The Secretariat is a member of the recently set up Steering Committee of the Blue Mediterranean Partnership (BMP), whose overall aim is to tackle the Mediterranean Sea's severe environmental threats by coordinating the financing of sustainable blue economy investments in the region. The Secretariat attended the Steering Committee meetings of 17 December 2024 and 10 June 2025.

116. At the 17th UfM meeting on Sustainable Blue Economy, the Secretariat represented by SCP/RAC-MedWaves, highlighted the key role of sustainable blue economy in the framework of the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027, related Programmes of Work, as well as in the framework of the MSSD and specifically under its Objective 5.

117. In October 2024, the Secretariat and PAP/RAC participated in the MSP stakeholders' event in Marseille, France, which covered a range of priority topics on the integration of climate-smart trends and cutting-edge technologies, how MSP plans are being updated to address contemporary issues such as climate change and multi-use conflicts.

118. PAP/RAC advanced with the preparation of the Position Paper on Advancing MSP in the Mediterranean, aiming to support the implementation of the COP 23 Decision IG.26/10 and provide practical proposals for advancing MSP within the framework of the Barcelona Convention. The outline of the Position paper was discussed with the MSP Working Group, based on which the draft document is being prepared. The working group provided inputs for updating the MSSD by addressing MSP-related priorities. The first meeting of the WG was organized on 23 October 2024 in Marseille during the EU MSP Week. Two additional meetings took place online, in February and March 2025. A fourth meeting was held on 6 May in Athens, Greece. Following COP Decision IG.26/10, the WG will continue its work as an official WG within Barcelona Convention for advancing MSP in the Mediterranean.

119. Plan Bleu/RAC attended the Sun & Blue congress in Almeria (Spain) in November 2024. The selection was made of the French Pilot site, which is an MPA in St Jean-Cap Ferrat (south of France). The diagnostic phase of the other pilot areas started by the identification and assessment of the main coastal tourism-related issues, within the framework of the NaTour4CC project. In the same framework, the edition of the manual on best practices of climate action in coastal tourism destinations is also finalized.

120. A Steering Committee meeting of the CASADAPT project was held in July 2024 and a final event in December 2024 in Nice, France. The project has been finalized successfully with strong follow up by media and involvement of universities, local institutions and authorities. The link with territories and local issues is a fundamental achievement of this project.

121. Under the umbrella of the EU-funded Sofigreen project, SCP/RAC-MedWaves is working to support a number of start-ups and green entrepreneurs from the social and solidarity sector in the Mediterranean region with the aim to assess their environmental, social and economic impact. During the second and third quarters of 2025, up to 20 green entrepreneurs are assisted and supported to improve their environmental and social impact activities, including capacity-building programs and trainings.

122. Under the umbrella of the EU-funded BlueMissionMed project, a Report has been prepared by SCP/RAC-MedWaves and HCMR on transformative solutions to prevent and eliminate pollution of ocean, seas and waters. Moreover, a catalogue of exploitable assets for the Mediterranean Sea Basin lighthouse has been drafted and a second multidimensional catalogue of services and experts of the Mediterranean Sea basin lighthouse is prepared. Also, the Strategy for the sustainability and exploitation of results of the Mediterranean Sea Basin Lighthouse was published (Ocean Mission), a policy brief has been drafted and published, and a survey was launched to collect the voices of all actors in the Mediterranean basin, concerning the needs, gaps and priorities for the prevention, minimization and elimination/remediation of pollution from chemicals, plastics and microplastics at

the end of 2024.

123. A Workshop titled “Blue Solutions for Ports to Face Plastic Pollution” was organized in Barcelona on November 2024 in the SMARTCITY EXPO WORLD CONGRESS by SCP/RAC-MedWaves and the BlueMissionMed Spanish Hub. Presentation of five solutions to tackle plastic pollution in Ports, municipalities and Tourism sector were showcased.

Outcome 4.3. Innovative environmental management and economic instruments implemented for the protection and efficient use of coastal and marine resources

124. Plan Bleu/RAC delivered its first edited volume on harmful environmental subsidies and drafted a series of 13 academic papers on “Environmentally Friendly Economic Tools and Finances”. An academic workshop has been held at Plan Bleu/RAC’s office in January 2025 to present and discuss the 13 papers. These have been used as inputs for the MSSD revision, especially on the MSSD Objective 5.

Outcome 4.4. Measures defined within the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan applied at regional level and by each Contracting Party within their jurisdiction to ensure the safety of offshore activities and reduce their potential impact on the marine environment and its ecosystem

125. The process to review and update the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan (MOAP) for the period 2026–2035 was timely launched, leading to the development of the final draft of the MOAP 2026-2035 in November 2024. In parallel, progress was made on the finalization of the Regional Offshore Standards and Guidelines on the Removal/Decommissioning of Installations and the Related Financial Aspects. Both documents were reviewed and approved by the Fifth Meeting of the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG) Sub-Group on Environmental Impact, held in Malta on 19–20 February 2025, for submission to the MAP Focal Points meeting and subsequently to COP 24.

Programme 5. Governance

Outcome 5.1. Effective Implementation and Enforcement by the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols, MAP Policies, including Ecosystem Approach related COP decisions, the MSSD and Programmes of Measures achieved at regional and national levels

126. Work for the preparation of the updated Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS) was conducted during the biennium. In line with the discussions at the Task Force on Reporting Implementation, MED POL has prepared and submitted the draft reporting format (UNEP/MED WG 613/4) pertinent to (a) reporting of the implementation of the six new regional plans (Table III of the Reporting Format); and (b) National Action Plans Implementation (Table IV of the Reporting Format) to its technical meeting (3rd Regional Meeting on NAP/NBB Preparation, 23-24 April 2025) for review. After the comments were introduced to the document, the updated BCRS was submitted to MED POL Focal Points Meeting held in Athens, Greece on 17-19 July 2025. The Meeting agreed on the Reporting Format (UNEP MED WG.627/6) for submission to the MAP Focal Points and then to COP 24 for consideration, through a dedicated draft Decision.

127. From October 2023 until March 2025 a number of meetings took place, in presence and on line, to ensure an inclusive and extended consultation process for the update of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, progressively integrating comments and recommendations on thematic and governance gaps: two meetings of the Steering Committee of the MCSD, one Thematic Ad Hoc MCSD, five meetings of the Extended MCSD Steering Committee, as well as nine thematic working group meetings of national experts on Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), Circular Economy, and Ocean Economy/Sustainable Finance. The 21st MCSD Meeting (Corinth, Greece, 24-26 June 2025) approved the MSSD 2026-2035 for consideration and submission to COP24 (Cairo, Egypt, 2-5 December 2025).

128. In parallel, the MSSD Final Evaluation report was delivered by an independent expert, based on the 2019-2020 MSSD Mid-Term evaluation and on the most recent relevant regional, global and UNEP/MAP reports and policies/frameworks, as well as bilateral interviews with main regional actors, MSSD flagship initiatives leaders, UNEP/MAP Regional Activity Centers (RACs). The Final Evaluation after being discussed during the 54th meeting of the UNEP/MAP Executive Coordination Panel (ECP) of 17-19 September 2024 (Split, Croatia) and during the online extended Steering Committee MCSD meeting of 12 November 2024, was revised accordingly and has been submitted as

a working document to the Ad Hoc Thematic MCSD Meeting of 12-13 February 2025 (Istanbul, Türkiye). Following this, it has been submitted to the 26th MCSD Steering Committee and to the 21st MCSD meeting (held back to back on 23-26 June 2025, Corinth, Greece) and has equally been submitted as an Information Document to the MAP Focal points meeting (UNEP/MED WG.620/Inf.20).

129. Plan Bleu/RAC delivered a synthetic analysis of 10 core sustainable development indicators, that better communicate on the main challenges the region is facing (in terms of adaptation to climate change, demography, water resources, air quality, plastic pollution, etc.). It gives an overview of the state of sustainable development over the period 1990-2020.

130. The process for revising the EcAp Roadmap Policy and upgrading IMAP was initiated in early 2024. The 11th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group (EcAp CG) (online, 2 October 2024) reviewed and welcomed the preliminary elements proposed by the Secretariat for revising the EcAp Roadmap, as well as for revising IMAP, and requested for additional time to provide concrete comments and general guidance on the specific elements proposed by the Secretariat. A questionnaire with the aim to receive feedback from the Contracting Parties, based on a number of elements and questions agreed during the 11th EcAp CG Meeting, was distributed on 17 October 2024, further to which feedback was received by five Contracting Parties (i.e. Egypt, France, Israel, Malta and Türkiye). A number of IMAP and EcAp-related elements have been reviewed by the Meetings of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Monitoring (CORMONs) on Biodiversity and Non-Indigenous, Pollution and Marine Litter, Coast and Hydrography, and respective Components Focal Points Meetings, in line with the respective mandates, all held during 2024 and 2025. A consolidated and upgraded version for EcAp and IMAP will be submitted to the 12th Meeting of EcAp Coordination Group (Athens, Greece, 15 September 2025); its content is included in the draft decision for a revised roadmap for EcAp Policy and IMAP Enhancement, submitted to the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points and subsequently to COP24 for consideration.

131. To ensure the update of the Mediterranean Integrated Geographical Information System on Marine Pollution Risk Assessment and Response (MEDGIS-MAR) database on accidents, REMPEC renewed the license with the Lloyd's List in January 2025. These data are, inter alia, useful for the reporting on pollution incidents under the Prevention and Emergency Protocol and the Offshore Protocol under the BCRS. In April 2025, REMPEC completed the assessment of the 2022-2023 National Implementation Reports on the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol and on the Offshore Protocol.

132. SPA/RAC launched the mid-term assessment of the Post-2020 SAPBIO, focusing on startup activities. An international team of experts assists the center to achieve the evaluations process, the elaboration of the simplified monitoring tables for national and regional actions and the framework for the future assessment of the collective implementation planned for expected results for 2027 and 2030. Coordination meetings and documents review were conducted in close consultation with the Post-2020 Advisory Committee. The draft versions of these reports were presented and reviewed during the Eleventh meeting of the Post-2020 SAPBIO National Correspondents (Athens, Greece 9-10 April 2025). The Main conclusions of the mid-term assessment focusing on the Post-2020 SAPBIO start-up activities and the Draft Monitoring Framework for the assessment of the collective implementation of the Post-2020 SPABIO as reviewed by the Seventeenth SPA/BD Focal Points Meeting are submitted to the MAP Focal Point and COP24 for adoption, through a draft decision.

Outcome 5.2. Systemic strengthening and effective functioning and delivery of MAP decision-making and advisory bodies ensured, and efficiency enhanced with new digital approaches

133. In line with the decision-making process, the regular meetings of the governing and advisory bodies of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system have been convened with an active participation of representatives of Contracting Parties and stakeholders. In some cases, efforts should be made in order for meetings to be attended by all Contracting Parties, to the extent possible.

134. During the current biennium, the Coordinating Unit and MAP Components organized the following main governance meetings:

(a) The 95th (Ljubljana, Slovenia, 3-4 April 2024), 96th (Cairo, Egypt, 19-20 November 2024) and 97th (Evia, Greece, 1-2 July 2025) Meetings of the Bureau

(b) The 52nd, 53rd, 54th, 55th and 56th Meetings of the Executive Coordination Panel (Vrachati, Greece, 16-17 January 2024; Athens, Greece, 15 April 2024; Split, Croatia, 17-19 September 2024; Rome, Italy, 21-23 January 2025; and Barcelona, Spain, 27-28 March 2025, respectively);

(c) The 20th and 21st Meetings of the Compliance Committee (Athens, Greece, 19-20 June 2024, and Athens, Greece, 4-5 June 2025, respectively);

(d) The 25th and 26th Meetings of the MCSD Steering Committee (Athens, Greece, 18-19 April 2024; and, Corinth, Greece, 23 June 2025, respectively);

(e) The Thematic Ad Hoc MCSD meeting (Istanbul, Türkiye, 12-13 February 2025), on the MSSD update;

(f) The 21st Meeting of the MCSD (Corinth, Greece, 24-26 June 2025);

(g) All MAP Component Focal Points meeting in May and June 2025, in view of the MAP Focal Points meeting and COP 24;

(h) The 5th Meeting of the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG) Sub-Group on Environmental Impact (Malta, 19-20 February 2025);

(i) The CORMON Meetings on Marine Litter and Pollution Monitoring, were held on 29-30 January 2025 (teleconference) and 27-28 May 2025 (Anavyssos, Greece);

(j) The CORMON Meetings on Biodiversity and Fisheries (Teleconference, 6 June 2024, and Athens, Greece, 7-8 April 2025);

(k) The CORMON Meeting on Coast and Hydrography (Teleconference, 17 October 2024);

(l) The 11th Meeting of EcAp Coordination Group (Teleconference, 2 October 2024);

(m) The 12th Meeting of EcAp Coordination Group (planned to take place in Athens, Greece, on 15 September 2025)

(n) Meeting of the MAP Focal Points (planned to take place in Athens, Greece, on 16-19 September 2025).

135. The above meetings reviewed progress achieved and provided policy and technical guidance for successfully delivering key outputs mandated by COP 23. They contributed to the effective implementation of the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027, the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-2025 and the relevant COP Decisions and moved forward the preparations for the 2025 MAP Focal Points Meeting and the 24th Meeting of the Contracting Parties. More information on the above meetings and their outcomes can be found in the relevant information documents submitted to the MAP Focal Points meeting (UNEP/MED WG.620/Inf.3, Inf.5, Inf. 6, Inf.7, Inf.8, Inf.9, Inf.14).

136. The two new EU-funded projects, namely EcAp MED PLUS (worth US$2.2 million) and Marine Litter MED PLUS (worth US$1.2 million), commenced in March 2024 for a period of 36 months (i.e. until Feb. 2027), and work is undergoing with the seven beneficiary countries (i.e., Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia) and respective MAP Components. The First Meetings of the Steering Committee for the two Projects were held successfully on 25 and 26 February 2025 in Athens, Greece.

137. Under the EcAp MED PLUS project, and in line with the country-based management approach, the CU and MED POL are supporting two Contracting Parties for the update of national IMAPs (namely Israel and Morocco). The intervention in Israel is currently active, whereas the intervention in Morocco is scheduled to be activated in July-August 2025. The updated national IMAPs for all clusters in the two countries are expected to be delivered by December 2026 in line with the revised IMAP (to be endorsed by COP24). The update of Israel's National Action Plan (NAP) is supported through the same workstream, with progress ongoing and completion expected by December 2025.

138. A roadmap on Science-Policy Interface (SPI) is currently being developed under EcAp MED PLUS project, to support the implementation of IMAP towards the achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES). The SPI roadmap is expected to be finalized by November 2025, with the support of SPA/RAC, Plan Bleu and PAP/RAC, and Pilot interventions are planned to begin in (up to) three eligible South Mediterranean Countries as of January 2026.

139. The EU funded SEMPA project "Bolstering Mediterranean biodiversity and MCPAs for nature" with an overall budget of €4 million euros, covers a period of 48 months starting in July 2023. Further to the first Meeting of the Steering Committee successfully held on 7 February 2024 (Athens, Greece), the second meeting was successfully held on 12 March 2025 (Athens, Greece). The project has progressed in particular for the MPA component, where coordination and planning meetings have been held with Beneficiary Countries and field work has started in Libya. Among other activities, a regional training course on the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET) was conducted in Tunis from 13 to 20 February 2025, bringing together 13 SPAMI/MPA managers. Progress can be also reported for the IMAP component of the project where the intervention is activated in Israel, Lebanon, Libya and Morocco, where the preparation of the implementation plans of the field work is being finalized. In addition, the intervention in Tunisia is expected to be activated in July/August 2025. The project's interventions in Algeria and Egypt remain without progress as at 15 July 2025.

140. The IMAP and EcAp Task Forces, have been meeting on a regular basis (at least on monthly basis) and have supported the organization of a number of UNEP/MAP institutional Meetings, including the 11th EcAp CG meeting (online, 2 October 2024) and the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Monitoring (CORMONs), all IMAP Clusters (i.e., Biodiversity and Non-Indigenous, Pollution and Marine Litter, Coast and Hydrography), and MAP Components Focal Points held in 2025, mainly through coordinating inputs regarding the revision of EcAp Policy for the Mediterranean and the update of IMAP.

141. PAP/RAC's activities in support of establishing and enhancing inter-ministerial Committees' implemented within the GEF MedProgramme CP 2.1 slowed down in Lebanon due to the geopolitical situation in the region. For Tunisia several online consultations were organized with Tunisian partners to support them in the implementation of their national ICZM strategy. The analysis of the institutional framework was validated by the PAP/RAC Focal Point of Tunisia, and a proposal to reactivate an existing body (the National Commission for Sustainable Development), including a working group on ICZM, was accepted.

142. Plan Bleu/RAC is partner of five Interreg EURO MED projects (D4N, on biodiversity conservation; C4T, on tourism and ICZM; Natour4CChange, on Governing sustainable tourism in territories with high environmental value - reconnecting tourism and nature for addressing the climate crisis with an ecosystem-based approach; Artemis, on Accelerating the restoration of Seagrass Meadows in the Mediterranean area through innovative ecosystem-service based solutions; INCORE-MED on inclusive coastal zone resilience) and two H2020 projects: Waterlands (on Water-based solutions for carbon storage, people and wilderness) and PERMAGOV (on assessing the performance of marine governance within the frame of the EU Green Deal).

Outcome 5.3. Policy coherence and complementarity ensured among relevant work at global, regional and national levels and among MAP-Barcelona Convention system's policy and regulatory instruments

143. The Third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC-3) has provided a significant occasion for the Mediterranean region, as ministers and high-level representatives gathered to commemorate 50 years of the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan and 30 years since the post-Rio amendment of the Barcelona Convention, during the Mediterranean high-level event organized jointly by the Government of Slovenia and UNEP/MAP, on 10 June 2025. UNEP Executive Director Ms. Inger Andersen and fourteen Ministers and Deputy Ministers participated at the event, which featured two insightful panel discussions: (a) "50 Years of UNEP/MAP: Success Stories and Added Value" moderated by H.E. Yasmine Fouad, Minister of Environment of Egypt; and (b) "Challenges and New Commitments, with a Particular Focus on Combating Plastic Pollution" led by H.E. Agnès Pannier-Runacher, Minister of Ecological Transition, Biodiversity, Forests, Seas, and Fisheries of France. The event concluded with a Ministerial Declaration, which was prepared through a dedicated working group of Contracting Parties led by France, reaffirming the common commitment to the protection and preservation of the Mediterranean Sea, an invaluable common good, as a regional contribution to the global efforts aiming at achieving SDG14. The declaration was presented at UNOC-3 for broader international dissemination and is Annexed to the present report (Annex I).

144. Greece hosted the 9th Our Ocean Conference in Athens on 16-17 April 2024. The Conference focused on climate change, biodiversity loss/marine protected areas, sustainable fishing, blue

economy, maritime security and marine pollution, with a special focus on sustainable tourism, green shipping, marine plastic pollution and the green transition in the Mediterranean. The Secretariat collaborated closely with the Government of Greece for the involvement and active role of UNEP/MAP in the 2024 Our Ocean Conference, including participation of the Coordinator as panel member in the panel on the Mediterranean, submission of side event proposals, and organization of a communication stand. To this end, the Coordinator participated in the "High-Level working luncheon for Heads of State Delegations on Sustainable Tourism on the Mediterranean" on 17 April 2024, and highlighted how in order to ensure the necessary transition towards a sustainable tourism, governments, private and public stakeholders should build on a reinforced multi-level governance and cooperation, both at national and regional level.

145. The Third Steering Committee Meeting of the Plan of Action for a model Mediterranean Sea (PAMEx) by 2030 and its Local Investment Finance Facility (PLIFF) was held online on 3 December 2024, while the Fourth Steering Committee Meeting of PAMEx took place in Athens, Greece, on 6-7 March 2025, both chaired by Greece. The 4th SC Meeting discussed a number of issues, including the update on Progress of PAMEx Implementation; the PAMEx Programme of Work for 2025; the PAMEx contribution to UNOC-3, COP24 of the Barcelona Convention, and other related international/regional meetings; the PAMEx Communication Plan for 2025; and the issues related to the PLIFF and Blue Finance for the Mediterranean. A side event on PAMEx, organised by the PAMEx Secretariat and Greece, took place during UNOC-3 on 10 June 2025, which gave the opportunity to discuss and share with a wider audience the achievements of PAMEx and the way forward regarding its four axes, on marine biodiversity, sustainable fisheries, marine pollution and in particular plastics, and sustainable maritime transport.

146. The Secretariat actively participated at UNEA-6 (Nairobi, Kenya, 26 February - 1 March 2024) also contributing in three side events/discussions on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, on Regional Seas, and on Raising ambition for the conservation and sustainable use of the Ocean and Seas by 2030 by accelerating action at global, regional, and national levels on biodiversity, pollution and climate change (co-organized by France and Costa Rica).

147. There is a growing collaboration with OECD, who is expanding its outreach to non-OECD members through its External Committee, which addresses the MENA region relevant to the Mediterranean. It is also increasingly integrating the issue of Oceans, as the item is spanning across several directorates of the organization (Environment directorate; Trade directorate; Agriculture, Fisheries; Science, Technology and Innovation directorate). A sustainable ocean initiative set up in 2019 mapped out ocean-related work across the house including country diagnostic on oceans, country programs with a green growth strategy review in Egypt and Morocco. A number of bilateral meetings between MAP and OECD Istanbul Office took place in 2024 and 2025, while OECD also hosted the Thematic Ad Hoc MCSD meeting (Istanbul, Türkiye, 12-13 February 2025).

148. The Secretariat co-organized and participated at the 1st Subregional Meeting on Environmental Assessments in a Transboundary Context – Mediterranean Sea (Rome, Italy, 28-29 May 2024). The Secretariat made an opening speech/welcoming remarks and contributed in the panel session on "Cooperation in Marine Regions". The meeting focused on aspects such as: Find ways to enhance the application of the Barcelona and Espoo conventions, extending the participation to new countries; Incorporate the good practices and expertise of the marine spatial planning of the Baltic Sea in the Mediterranean Sea, especially as regards the wind farms, their cumulative effects on the biosphere and the possible mitigation actions; Expand the cases in which the EIA and SEA processes could be applied, to enhance the transparency and sustainability of plans and projects, etc. .

149. The Secretariat also co-organized and participated in the second Sub-regional Meeting on Environmental Assessments in a Transboundary Context in the Mediterranean Sea (Portorož, Slovenia, 28–30 May 2025). The Secretariat made an opening speech/welcoming remark and contributed with a presentation on Prevention, mitigation and control of the environmental impact of transboundary activities, and its synergies with SEA and EIA. PAP/RAC also participated to present the legal study on integration of transboundary EIA/SEA in the context of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols. The ESPOO Convention Secretariat offered its support for the preparation of

guidelines on transboundary EIA/SEA under the MAP-Barcelona Convention system, if the CPs so decide.

150. MED POL has been tasked with working with an expert group on preparation of "Guidance Note for the Implementation of Source-to-Sea Management in Transboundary Basins" established by the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (UNECE). MED POL was co-author of the chapter on "Source to Sea Management and Transboundary Cooperation", where links between Ecosystem Based Approach and Source to Sea management have been established, together with main pillars of cooperation between Water Conventions and Sea Conventions.

Outcome 5.4. Enhanced partnerships and multi-stakeholder engagement, including with the private sector and science policy interface

151. The Meeting on "*Enhancing Interregional Cooperation for Monitoring and Assessing Riverine Input of Marine Litter"* (i.e. Output 3.3 of the project), was jointly organized with Black Sea Commission, HELCOM, and OSPAR, in the framework of MARLICE 2024, in Valencia, Spain, on 23 May 2024, at the kind invitation of Spain. The meeting has been supported by the EU-funded Marine Litter MED PLUS Project, attracted more than 30 experts from around the four Regional Seas areas. The UNEP/MAP guidelines for monitoring riverine input of marine litter have been shared with the three Regional Seas (i.e., BSC, HELCOM, OSPAR), and their review by HELCOM and OSPAR experts' networks is ongoing.

152. UNEP/MAP continues to collaborate with BSC Permanent Secretariat, to further support the implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Black Sea region, including the implementation of: (a) Adopt-a-beach pilots in 2 eligible Black Sea Countries; (b) operationalize at least 1 national monitoring programme on marine litter; and (c) support regional capacities in particular through the preparation of regional guidelines. The intervention is operational since July 2025 and expected to be completed by December 2026.

153. SPA/RAC began implementing the mechanism to grant the title of "Regional Action Plan Partner" as outlined in the relevant Regional Action Plan and according to the adopted criteria and procedures for awarding the title (Decision IG.26/5). Communication efforts were launched in 2024-2025 to promote these criteria at national level, particularly through letters sent to SPA/BD Focal Points and direct outreach to potential partners. The full list of partners was finalized in March 2025 and was presented at the 17th SPA/BD Focal Points Meeting as working document.

154. Progress on the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) (the "Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031)") adopted by COP 22 (Decision IG.25/16) was achieved. The work of the various Intersessional Working Groups (IWGs) established by the First Coordination Meeting on the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (Malta, 29 November-1 December 2022) was launched in July 2024 and reports were prepared by the IWGs coordinators in September 2024. A draft Guidance Document on the Preparation of National Action Plans for the Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy was prepared by REMPEC and was reviewed by the Regional Workshop on the Preparation of National Action Plans for the Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) organized by REMPEC on 20 November 2024 in Malta. A Biennial Review of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) was also undertaken by REMPEC in September 2024. The outcome of the work of the IWGs and of the Biennial Review was considered by the Second Coordination Meeting on the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) held in Malta, on 21 November 2024. The outcome and recommendations of the Meeting were considered by the 16th Meeting of Focal Points of REMEPC (Malta, 13-15 May 2025).

155. REMPEC held various meetings with HELMEPA on possible future cooperation and collaboration. HELMEPA participated in the ongoing IWG on the Mediterranean Strategy and presented the METAVASEA Project at the 2nd Coordination meeting, held on 21 November 2024. It was also agreed to cooperate on creating more awareness and visibility on the effective entry into force of the Mediterranean SOx Emission Control Area and to organize a HELMEPA-REMPEC webinar addressed to HELMEPA's membership (351 shipping companies, 2,330 vessels and 14,000+ seafarers) and other maritime stakeholders in the region. The webinar was organized in the last quarter

of 2024 by HELMEPA (via the Zoom platform).

Outcome 5.5. Coordinated approaches implemented to strengthen public institution capacities for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

156. PAP/RAC produced MedOpen training material on the calculation of the Land Cover Change indicator in English and translated to French with the support of the GEF MedProgramme CP 2.1. The course was successfully conducted during October 2024, bringing together 17 participants from 7 Mediterranean countries. The training consisted of both theoretical and practical components, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the indicator's application. To obtain certification, trainees were required to calculate the indicator for an imaginary coastal zone, reinforcing their practical skills in coastal monitoring and management.

157. On 11 October 2024, PAP/RAC provided an on-line training session for the students and professors of the Syrian Virtual University (SVU). The main topics were: Mediterranean 2023 Quality Status Report; Marine Spatial Planning in the Mediterranean; Challenges of climate change; and Solutions for climate change adaptation. This activity is in line with the MoU signed between PAP/RAC and the SVU.

158. PAP/RAC and partners launched the implementation of the new Erasmus+ KA220-YOU project "*Climate Change Awareness in the Mediterranean from Youth Perspective*" with a kick-off meeting in Ankara, Türkiye, on 24–26 February 2025, hosted by Ankara University's DEHUKAM. Alongside PAP/RAC, partners include Dokuz Eylül University (Türkiye), FISPMED (Italy), and Universidad Abat Oliba CEU (Spain). This 30-month project aims to raise climate change awareness among Mediterranean youth through academic research, fieldwork, and interactive CASS trainings (Climate Awareness and Sustainable Skills), aligning with EU youth priorities. PAP/RAC will contribute by supporting training sessions — especially on climate impacts in the Mediterranean — nominating 16 student participants, co-developing training modules and the e-learning platform and hosting the closing event in Split.

159. Collaboration with the MEPIELAN Centre and EPLO for the preparation of a short online course on "Sustainable Marine Governance in the Mediterranean: Environmental Governance and Sustainability" is ongoing. The course was originally planned for October 2024; however, for a number of reasons, including the request of potential participants to have the course in a more dispersed format, e.g. lectures outside working hours, the course was re-scheduled for October-November 2025 and in a more modular format. The course is expected to act as a pilot to a possible post-graduate course on environmental governance and sustainability in the Mediterranean, with focus on the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols. UNECE, OSCE and EEA have also asked to be involved as presenters in the course and to promote it in their networks.

Programme 6. Towards Monitoring, Assessment, Knowledge and Vision of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast for Informed Decision-Making

Outcome 6.1. Inclusive and participatory foresight activities conducted at regional and national and local levels, with associated capacity-building

160. The Secretariat is following closely the developments under the "Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection" (GESAMP) and participates in the UNEP/GESAMP Planning Meetings.

161. From January 2025 to March 2025, Plan Bleu/RAC, based on the Med2050 foresight report, organized three national workshops in Morocco, Tunisia and Croatia on transition pathways. The objectives were to present the report and the six scenarios, working at national level, promoting the best scenario and avoiding the worst one.

Outcome 6.2. Science-based IMAP, foresight and other assessments and assessment tools for strengthened science-policy interface and decision making

162. PAP/RAC organized CORMON Coast and Hydrography meeting on-line on 17 October 2024, gathering representatives from 15 Contracting Parties and several partner institutions. Discussions focused on proposing climate change-related indicators, exchanging updates on the EcAp/IMAP revision, and advancing the implementation of EcAp MED PLUS project. The major conclusion was

to include the Candidate Indicator (CI) 25 Land Cover Change in the List of IMAP CIs. Furthermore, discussions at the CORMON Coast and Hydrography meeting also covered CIs 15, 16, and 25, resulting in agreed-upon upgrades and clarifications to methodologies, mainly through revisions to the Guiding Factsheets. These developments mark significant progress in refining the IMAP framework and enhancing regional capacities for environmental monitoring and management.

163. With the contribution of the GEF MedProgramme CP 2.1, PAP/RAC secured a progress in monitoring land cover change, a critical environmental indicator as well as with capacity building for this monitoring. The calculation of CI 25 was updated and upgraded to incorporate elevation data, and a manual for its calculation was developed. During the methodology update and upgrade, the assessments were done for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro. National experts have been contracted in Lebanon, Morocco, Libya, and Tunisia, and they performed the calculation, with their reports being validated by the methodological expert group. Finally, the Manual was updated to incorporate findings from its application.

164. PAP/RAC prepared a set of change-related themes under specific indicators for EO7 and EO8 and presented those at the CORMON Coast and Hydrography meeting on 17 October 2024. The Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Monitoring (CORMON) Coast and Hydrography (Rome, Italy, 15-16 July 2025) agreed that comments and suggestions on the proposed indicators should be sent to PAP/RAC by the end of October 2025, following national consultations, with a view to having these inputs inform future discussions at CORMON meetings.

165. INFO/RAC upgraded the IMAP Infosystem to allow data submission and their quality control checks. It also collected data for cartographic representation of the 2023 MED QSR. The website dedicated to 2023 MED QSR is available (https://medqsr2023.info-rac.org/) and was officially launched during the MAP@50 celebrations launch event. The website includes all 2023 MED QSR available products (i.e., the big/integrated report, the Summary for Policy Makers and its Executive Summary). The 2023 MED QSR publication has been approved by UNEP's publishing board and it comprises one of the official UNEP publications[1].

166. The Secretariat, with the support of a dedicated Online Working Group and in cooperation and coordination with the Contracting Parties, as well as with the support of external expertise prepared the Summary for Policy Makers (SfPM) of the 2023 MED QSR, aiming to serve as one of the communication products of the 2023 MED QSR planned under the MAP PoW and Budget for 2024-2025. The SfPM was approved by the 11th Meeting of the EcAp Coordination Group (online, 2 October 2024). A working group, consisting of five Contracting Parties' experts, composed of representatives from Croatia, Egypt, France, Israel and Italy was established in April 2024, which substantively supported and coordinated its preparation.

167. Within the implementation of the IMAP Pollution Cluster, ongoing activities are focused on developing databases and methodologies to advance the establishment of Environmental Assessment Criteria (EACs) for IMAP Common Indicator 17 (concentration of key harmful contaminants measured in relevant matrices). This work also encompasses the development of databases and methodologies to advance the establishment of Background Assessment Criteria (BACs) and EACs for IMAP Common Indicator 18 (level of pollution effects of key contaminants where a cause and effect relationship has been established). Additionally, efforts are underway to establish new reference and boundary values for IMAP Common Indicator 13, which pertains to the concentration of key nutrients in the water column—specifically Total Phosphorus (TP) and Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (DIN). Parallel work is being conducted to update reference and boundary values for IMAP Common Indicator 14, related to Chlorophyll-a (Chl-a) concentrations, within selected pilot sub-regions or subdivisions, contingent upon data availability. The results of the ongoing activities are planned for consideration at the next CORMON Pollution Meeting.

168. Decision IG.26/14 on the Programme of Work and Budget for 2024–2025 (COP 23, 2023) mandated MED POL to deliver "e) IMAP Pollution and Marine Cluster Common Indicators (CIs) Guidance" under Activity 6.2.2. The work carried out led to the revision of IMAP Pollution Cluster, including the preparation of revised Guidance Factsheets for Common Indicators 13, 14, 17, 18, 20,

[1] https://www.unep.org/resources/annual-report/mediterranean-quality-status-report-2023-med-qsr

and 21, as well as for candidate Common Indicators 26 and 27. This revision incorporates advancements in monitoring and assessment practices, methodologies, GES targets, and environmental criteria, as approved for the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR by the meetings of the CORMON on Pollution, by the MED POL Focal Points meeting, and by the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group meeting, held in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. Following the review of the revised IMAP Pollution Cluster and related Indicators Guidance Factsheets by the Joint Meeting of the CORMONs on Pollution and Marine Litter Monitoring (Anavyssos, Greece, 27–28 May 2025), the documents were endorsed by the Meeting of MED POL Focal Points (Athens, Greece, 17–18 June 2025), for submission the 12th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group (Athens, Greece, 15 September 2025).

169. In line with Decision IG.26/14 (COP 23, 2023) and the mandate on the EcAp Roadmap and IMAP revision, the Secretariat and MED POL prepared a draft to update Operational Objectives, IMAP Common Indicators, GES definitions, and Targets for EO 5 (Eutrophication), EO 9 (Pollution), and EO11 (Underwater Noise). The proposals for EO5 and EO9 were first presented at the CORMON Pollution (online, 30 January 2025), where the establishment of an Online Working Group was agreed. Further adjustments were introduced by the Secretariat (MEDPOL) for consideration of the Joint Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Pollution and Marine Litter Monitoring (Anavyssos, Greece, 27 -28 May 2025) to ensure alignment with relevant decisions, especially regarding certain GES targets. Following the review of the IMAP Pollution Update for Ecological Objectives 5, 9, and 11 by the Joint Meeting, the documents were further discussed and endorsed by the Meeting of MED POL Focal Points (Athens, Greece, 17–18 June 2025) for use in preparing elements for EcAp Decision, to be considered at the 12th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group, the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points and COP24.

170. The CORMON on Marine Litter (Videoconference, 29 January 2025) paved the way for upgrading IMAP EO10, most importantly through agreeing in introducing a new common indicator on riverine litter and upgrading Candidate Indicator 24 into a Common Indicator. Moreover, a proposal for updating the Baseline Values (BV) and establishing Threshold Values (TV) for Candidate Indicator 24; updating Environmental Targets for IMAP Ecological Objective 10 (EO10) on Marine Litter; and Preliminary Elements for an Intercalibration Exercise for Collection and Analyses of Floating Microplastic Samples between Mediterranean Laboratories, were presented. The updated environmental targets were endorsed and submitted to the Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points, whereas an updated version of the BV/TV for Candidate Indicator 24 was submitted to the Joint Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Pollution and Marine Litter Monitoring (Anavyssos, Greece, 27–28 May 2025). The updated and consolidated version of IMAP EO10 as well as its Operational Objectives, IMAP Common Indicators, GES definitions, and Targets for EO 10 (Marine Litter) were submitted, reviewed and approved by the Joint Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Pollution and Marine Litter Monitoring (Anavyssos, Greece, 27 -28 May 2025) and the Meeting of MED POL Focal Points (Athens, Greece, 17–18 June 2025). Subsequently, the elements under EO10 for IMAP and EcAp Decisions are being submitted for consideration to the 12th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group, the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points, and COP24 (2–5 December 2025).

171. Monitoring of IMAP Common Indicator 23 (floating microplastics), is ongoing in three Countries (namely, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia) under the support of the EU-funded Marine Litter MED PLUS Project. Monitoring activities are implemented in line with the regional guidelines, surveys are conducted, and data has been generated. The intervention is expected to be completed by December 2026.

172. Monitoring activities have also advanced for IMAP Candidate/Common Indicator 24, under the support of the EU-funded Marine Litter MED Project and the supervision of SPA/RAC. Consultations with the SPA/BD Focal Points of Algeria, Libya and Egypt are completed since 2024. The implementation of the activities is initiated in Libya and Egypt since January 2025, through the establishment of contracts with national coordinators. The interventions in the three countries are expected to be completed by December 2026.

173. SPA/RAC initiated bilateral discussions to designate institutional partners in Algeria (ONEDD),

Libya (Ministry of Environment) and Tunisia (APAL). Agreements have been signed with Tunisia (June 2025) and Libya (May 2025) while, since January 2024, Agreements under the IMAP component of the SEMPA project have been shared with all beneficiary countries. Several meetings were held to select common indicators related to biodiversity. Due to challenges in transferring funds to Libya, SPA/RAC will directly implement project activities in close coordination with the Libyan Ministry of Environment. To ensure harmonized implementation of the two complementary projects, SPA/RAC organized in person coordination and planning meetings with national partners in Tunisia (July 2024), Libya (September 2024), and Algeria (January 2025).

174. Under the framework of the GEF-funded MedProgramme and its Child Project 1.1, aimed at reducing pollution from harmful chemicals and wastes in Mediterranean hotspots, Component 2 supports the extension of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) to offshore areas in GEF-eligible countries. Agreements with Lebanon and Morocco have been signed, an Agreement is ready for signature with Montenegro, while an additional Agreement with SPA/RAC is under preparation to support Libya and Tunisia in the implementation of pilot offshore monitoring.

175. As part of the French voluntary contribution aimed at strengthening the implementation of national IMAP-based monitoring programs and delivering quality-assured data, the needs of Montenegro and Albania for IMAP Biodiversity and NIS implementation have been analyzed, and instruments to support their national IMAP Biodiversity implementation have been identified. In Montenegro, Common Indicators 1 and 2 focus on benthic habitats, specifically Posidonia meadows and coralligenous assemblages. A comprehensive monitoring plan for field surveys of the selected Common Indicators at designated monitoring sites, aligned with the national monitoring program, was prepared and agreed upon with national counterparts. Work is ongoing in cooperation with the Institute of Marine Biology of Montenegro. For Albania, in common agreement, Common Indicators 3, 4, and 5, focusing on marine turtles, cetaceans and birds respectively, will be monitored. The activities will be completed, and the monitoring data will be uploaded into the IMAP Info System at the end of 2025.

176. To enhance the assessment component of IMAP, including the potential for integrated assessments across all IMAP clusters with a focus on assessment criteria and thresholds, the development of assessment methodologies, criteria and thresholds for biodiversity (CI1 and CI2) was agreed upon at the CORMON meeting held on 6-7 June 2024. A dedicated CI1 and CI2 Working Group for the three habitat types (Posidonia, Coralligenous, and Maërl) was established in September 2024, supported by SPA/RAC. A proposal of assessment methodologies, assessment criteria and thresholds for biodiversity common indicators CI1 and CI2 was developed with the support of the Biodiversity Online Working Group (OWG) on benthic habitats and was submitted to the CORMON Meeting on Biodiversity and Fisheries (Athens, Greece, 7–8 April 2025) for review and consideration. The CORMON and SPA/BD Focal Points meetings endorsed the proposed monitoring and assessment elements.

177. As part of its 2025–2026 Programme of Work, SPA/RAC organized two meetings of the CORMON for Biodiversity and Fisheries. The first meeting was held online on 6–7 June 2024 and the second meeting took place on 7–8 April 2025 in Athens, Greece. The two CORMON meetings focused on reviewing the development of Ecological Objectives EO4 (marine food webs) and EO6 (sea-floor integrity), discussing monitoring and assessment elements for Common Indicators CI1 and CI2 (benthic and pelagic habitats), providing a progress update on CI24, preparing the IMAP revision for Biodiversity (EO1) and Non-Indigenous Species (EO2), presenting best practices related to GES determination, climate change impacts, food webs, and sea-floor integrity, and updating factsheets, data dictionaries, and standards for indicators related to EO1 (biodiversity), EO2 (NIS), and EO3 (fisheries).

178. Regarding the Ecological Objective 4 (EO4) on marine food webs, and as a first step towards developing EO4 on marine food webs, SPA/RAC initiated a desk review study to inventory data sources, best practices, and methodologies for monitoring and assessing marine food webs in the Mediterranean (UNEP/MEDWG. 608/Inf.19). A biodiversity working group on marine food webs is established which focuses on advancing the development of IMAP EO4 on marine food webs, with support from the Italian Working Group under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD).

The main outcomes of the Working Group's recommendations, outlines the most relevant approach to developing IMAP common indicators and proposed common indicators for EO4 on Marine Food were submitted to the CORMON Meeting on Biodiversity and Fisheries (Athens, Greece, 7–8 April 2025) for review and consideration. The CORMON and SPA/BD Focal Points meetings endorsed the proposed indicators.

179. In view of reviewing and updating the Common Indicator factsheets related to Biodiversity (EO1) and Fisheries (EO3), preparatory work for the revision and development of CI factsheets under the upgraded IMAP framework was initiated during the CORMON meeting held on 6–7 June 2024. The way forward for updating the Common Indicator factsheets related to Biodiversity (EO1) and Non-Indigenous Species (EO2) was also discussed during the CORMON Biodiversity and Fisheries meeting (Athens, Greece, 7-8 April 2025). Discussions on collaboration with GFCM to update the Common Indicator factsheets under EO3 have also been initiated. GFCM participated in the CORMON Biodiversity and Fisheries Meeting (6–7 June 2024) and the EcAp Coordination Group meeting (online, 2 October 2024). During the CORMON Biodiversity and Fisheries Meeting (Athens, Greece, 7–8 April 2025), the GFCM Secretariat informed participants about the GFCM's contribution to the monitoring and assessment of the status of fisheries in the Mediterranean, and presented the way forward for Common Indicators CI7, CI8, and CI9.

Outcome 6.3. IMAP implementation and Environment and Development Observation provide updated and quality assured data in support of decision-making by Contracting Parties and assessment of GES.

180. In collaboration with the IAEA/MESL and MED POL, progress is being made in implementing the UN-to-UN agreement for the biennium 2024–2025. The focus is on three groups of activities: (a) The organization of two proficiency tests (PTs) which have successfully been conducted in the first half of 2025; (b) Mission visits to individual laboratories, scheduled for November 2025, aimed at conducting the analysis and capacity building; (c) With the support of QUASIMEME, a pilot proficiency test is planned for the first half of 2025, focusing on inorganic nutrients in high salinity seawater, estuarine and low salinity seawater, as well as chlorophyll a and phaeopigments in seawater under Common Indicators 13 and 14.

181. Given the significant issues encountered regarding the quality of data for EO5, the organization of related pilot proficiency testing is of particular relevance. Participants were nominated from ten countries for the pilot PTs for the Determination of Nutrients in a Water Column Sample (CI13) and for the Determination of Chlorophyll a in a Water Column Sample (CI14).

182. Pilot proficiency testing for IMAP Common Indicator 20 was also organized for the first time in the first half of 2025, given that no data were reported for the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR. The testing comprises the following three pilot PT exercises: i) Determination of Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) in seafood; ii) Determination of Dioxins and PCBs in seafood; iii) Determination of Heavy Metals in seafood (the material for Heavy Metals in seafood is the same as that used for Trace Elements (TE) in marine biota under Common Indicator 17). Participants were nominated from nine Contracting Parties for this PTs.

183. Training courses on the determination of trace elements and organic contaminants in seafood (CI20) are scheduled to be held concurrently with the training courses (CI17) on the determination of trace elements and organic contaminants in biota at the IAEA's Marine Environment Laboratories in Monaco, from 13 to 17 October 2025. Efforts are also underway to organize a pilot training course on the analysis of dissolved inorganic nutrients and chlorophyll a in the water column, scheduled to take place from 3 to 7 November 2025.

184. The Preliminary Elements for an Intercalibration Exercise for Collection and Analyses of Floating Microplastic Samples between Mediterranean Laboratories were presented and approved by the online Meeting of CORMON Marine Litter (29 January 2025).

185. REMPEC organized a regional workshop on Reporting, Monitoring and Data Sharing (MEDEXPOL 2024), on 25-26 September 2024, aimed at assisting the Contracting Parties in fulfilling their obligations under the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol and the 1994 Offshore Protocol, specifically in reporting, monitoring and data sharing on marine pollution incidents. The outputs of the Workshop were submitted to the 5th OFOG Group on Environment Impacts (19-20 February 2025)

and the 16th Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (13-15 May 2025). They are aimed to facilitate reporting on spill incidents under the BCRS, enhance monitoring and assessment of the marine environment using the IMAP five key CIs for offshore activities and the IMAP CI 19 on acute pollution, develop a concept note on "*Lowering of the Threshold for Reporting on Oil spills"* in the context of IMAP CI 19. Additionally, the workshop outputs aimed at upgrading the MEDGIS-MAR and the country profile page under REMPEC website as primary interfaces for the Contracting Parties for activities related to the implementation of both the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol and the Offshore Protocol.

186. Plan Bleu/RAC's regional observatory is regularly enriched with new maps (dealing with water resources management, wetlands, tourism) to reach 430 maps and indicators available in June 2025. Whenever the possibility exists, Plan Bleu/RAC promotes its observatory and its available data, maps and statistics to support decision making. All data and information gathered from thematic projects Plan Bleu/RAC is involved are included into Plan Bleu/RAC's observatory.

187. Plan Bleu/RAC finalized a pilot project with the support of UNEP/GRID Geneva and the association "Wings of the Ocean" on citizen science. Plastics debris collected by citizens are monitored on a platform connected with Plan Bleu/RAC's Observatory.

188. The MSSD dashboard has been updated (both data and texts) in April 2025. It is available online, in an interactive manner, allowing the users to interact with the diagrams and maps.

189. The EU-funded ILIAD project has initiated several activities aimed at capacity building and policy support. A joint workshop with FAO at FishForum 2024 was organized. A dedicated task force drafted a comprehensive ILIAD Guidebook/Toolkit, offering step-by-step instructions for leveraging digital-twin outputs in policymaking and marine management. Additionally, ILIAD contributed to various events, including the 6th GEO Dialogue and the EU Week of Cities and Regions. A policy workshop on fisheries was organized with AUA, GFCM, and DG Mare. A targeted policy workshop on sustainable fisheries— organized in partnership with the Agricultural University of Athens (AUA), GFCM and DG MARE—brought together managers, scientists and industry representatives to co-design indicators based on ILIAD outputs. Meanwhile, the project advanced a pilot monitoring plan and early-warning system for the Port of Valencia, integrating real-time oceanographic sensors with predictive modeling to support port authorities in pollution and safety management.

190. The SPAMI evaluation system was updated and used by the Technical Advisory Commissions, supported by a series of online tutorials and country-level help desks to ensure consistent application.

191. Several coordination meetings have been held with MedPAN to discuss and agree on the approach, tasks, and timeline for updating the MAPAMED database. Data collection has been proceeded with relevant stakeholders and from various official databases to gather information related to Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), facilitating the update of the database, which was last updated in December 2019. The data have been submitted to the SPA/BD Focal Points for review and validation

Programme 7: For informed and consistent advocacy, awareness, education and communication

Outcome 7.1. Stakeholders and policy makers properly informed about the state of the Mediterranean Sea and coast and aware of the environmental priority issues

192. The 5th edition (2024/2025) of the MSSD flagship initiative Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award (IEFCA) has been launched by the Secretariat on 29 November 2024 in cooperation with MedCities and the kind voluntary contribution of the Republic of Türkiye. The application was supported by INFO/RAC via the specific platform where all information were made available. In addition to two regional info day workshops that took place online on 19 March and on 13 May 2025, a specific help desk has been activated in order to respond to applicants' questions.

193. Upon the indications of the 25th meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee (Athens, Greece, 18-19 April 2024), the Secretariat made efforts to further promote the IEFCA and facilitate broader participation from the Mediterranean municipalities and, thus, receive more applications. To this end, the Secretariat worked on the simplification of the application by maintaining the four categories identified by the Decision IG.22/19 (Nature and Biodiversity Protection, Built Environment, Social, Economic and Cultural Sustainability, Policy and Governance), while selecting a limited number of

indicative directions within the given categories. The proposed simplified application form focuses on the following: under the category Nature and Biodiversity Protection, the indicative directions of Climate Change mitigation and Ecosystems protection; under the category Built Environment, the indicative directions of Sustainable land use and green areas, Water and Air Pollution; under the category Social, economic and cultural sustainability, the indicative directions Green Economy and Eco-Innovation; under the category Planning and management the indicative directions Environmental governance, Planning, monitoring and evaluation and Communication and outreach.

194. Ten cities/municipalities have applied for the Award. As per the procedure, defined at the relevant COP19, (Athens, Greece, 9-12 February 2016) Decision IG.22/19, the eligible applications are being assessed by the Evaluation Task Force led by the UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit. The proposed results of the evaluation will be validated indicatively in early October by the Jury, composed by the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and the President of the MCSD. The Award ceremony is planned to take place at COP24.

195. Plan Bleu/RAC launched its Instagram account. The number of followers continues to regularly increase: 6 monthly newsletters sent to 3000 contacts in 2 languages; Twitter: +1900 followers (1-2 posts/week); Facebook: +2500 followers (1 post/week); Linkedin: +7450 followers (3 posts/week); Website: in average 5500 single visitors per month; Youtube channel: +100 subscribers. Furthermore, Plan Bleu/RAC regularly publishes on its social media accounts (X, Twitter and LinkedIn) as well as on its website the main events its experts attend as well as its main publications.

196. As part of the production and dissemination of news and communication materials INFO/RAC ensured dissemination of the monthly online newsletter MEDNEWS.

197. The website of the 2023 MED QSR is available (https://medqsr2023.info-rac.org/) and was officially launched during the MAP@50 celebrations launch event in January 2025. The website includes all 2023 MED QSR available products (i.e., the full/integrated report, the Summary for Policy Makers and its Executive Summary). The 2023 MED QSR publication has been approved by UNEP's publishing board and it comprises one of the official UNEP publications.

198. The campaign for the 50th anniversary of UNEP/MAP was conceived, resulting in the creation of the ODYSSEY RELOADED campaign, including the development by INFO/RAC of its dedicated website (https://www.odyssey-map50.info-rac.org/get-involved/), video and informational outreach material.

199. A high-level event was organized during the third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC-3, 9 - 13 June 2025, Nice, France) to celebrate the 50th anniversary of UNEP/MAP and the 30th anniversary of the Post-Rio Barcelona Convention. The high-level event was held on 10 June 2025, with the participation of UNEP's Executive Director Ms. Inger Andersen and of fourteen Ministers and Deputy Ministers, and culminated in a joint declaration of the Ministers of Environment of the Mediterranean, which showcased the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system's joint determination to address the triple planetary crisis affecting our region and the commitment to ambitious actions on the ground. This important outcome was submitted to UNOC-3 and disseminated at large and is presented in Annex I to the present report.

200. The GEF-funded MedProgramme organized the Second MedProgramme Annual Stocktaking Meeting from 22 to 24 April 2024 in Podgorica, Montenegro, with the primary objective of enabling face-to-face knowledge exchanges and establishing synergistic interactions among MedProgramme's Child Projects while providing an opportunity to engage with a broad audience of peers and stakeholders in the Mediterranean Basin. The meeting successfully brought together representatives of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, MedProgramme's implementing and executing agencies, the GEF Secretariat, bilateral and multilateral donors and International Financial Institutions resulting in increased reciprocal knowledge, coordination and collaboration.

201. The GEF-funded MedProgramme further organized the Third MedProgramme Annual Stocktaking Meeting from 8-10 April 2025 in Istanbul, Türkiye, entitled: "the MedProgramme- greater than the sum of its parts," giving an enhanced role to the Partner Countries to report on progress at national and local level and to identify and support synergies across child projects to maximize efficiency, resource utilization, and achieving overarching programmatic goals. The Meeting was

designed to introduce the MedProgramme that is entering in the last year of implementation, in the wider framework of the GEF policies and funding schemes, as well as to illustrate the revised knowledge management and its gender mainstreaming strategies.

202. A new campaign on UNEP/MAP's approach addressing the full life cycle of plastic in the Mediterranean, in line with the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC), will be developed by SCP/RAC-MedWaves in the last semester of 2025. SCP/RAC-MedWaves has actively participated in the past INC3 and INC4, offering support and sharing expertise in addressing plastic pollution and marine litter. This involvement is rooted in its participation in the preliminary UNEA meetings, where the drafting of Resolution 5/14, ultimately adopted in March 2022 at the resumed fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2), was initiated.

203. As part of the SCP/RAC-MedWaves Communications Strategy for 2024-2025, dissemination activities and campaigns have been launched focusing on the nexus between Circular Economy/SCP and the preservation of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast. Moreover, SCP/RAC-MedWaves has carried out an extensive communication and marketing activity during the end of 2024 and the beginning of 2025, following its strategic plans: 1) A sustainable business contests organized (#EyesonEarth), coupled with information and awareness-raising on key environmental challenge; 2) 2nd edition of the Euro-Med Week for Waste Reduction; 3) +70 web articles have been published by SCP/RAC-MedWaves on topics related to MAP-Barcelona Convention; 4) A marketing assessment of the Switchers Community has been conducted; 5) A new communication and marketing plan has been drafted and a digital marketing campaign on SCP/circular economy alternatives is ongoing.

204. The 4th Edition of the WeMed Awards was celebrated at the end of June 2024 as flagship initiative of the MSSD. In this fourth edition, the award recognized successful business stories and practices in the blue economy sector. Thus, the WeMed Award targeted early and growth stage scalable eco-innovative ventures in the blue economy sector in the Southern Mediterranean region (SwitchMed eligible areas), including Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia. The Award was then addressed to entrepreneurs or companies in the Blue Economy sector that had integrated environmental and social values into their business models, in addition to having developed an economically viable business model and that are constituted in a Southern Mediterranean country. With over 40 applications received, three green entrepreneurs were awarded from Tunisia, Morocco and Lebanon. The prizes to the awardees included landing services, as well as marketing support and technical assistance services. Moreover, a Study-Tour & Workshop to Barcelona was organized for the awardees on 26-28 November 2024, to connect, learn and discover new potential markets.

205. On the occasion of its 40th anniversary, SPA/RAC developed a dedicated visual identity for the celebration, including a commemorative logo and a new slogan. The anniversary was marked by a special ceremony organized during the 17th Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points. The event opened with addresses by the SPA/RAC Director and UNEP/MAP Coordinator Tatjana Hema, followed by a video message from Ms. Susan Gardner, Director of the Ecosystems Division at UNEP, reaffirming the strategic role of SPA/RAC within the MAP-Barcelona Convention system. Designed with a strong emotional dimension, the event aimed to highlight the human side of SPA/RAC's work, through testimonials by long-standing partners and focal points, reflecting the spirit and values that guide its action. To foster participants engagement and give context to the Centre's 40 years of work, the ceremony featured an exhibition of "Letters to the Sea" written by children. This interactive and poetic element served to amplify the intergenerational message of conservation and to connect participants to the core mission of the Centre. A meditative experience was also included to encourage reflection on the bond between humans and nature, reinforcing the emotional driver of conservation efforts. SPA/RAC plans to replicate this immersive format at future events. The materials produced for the anniversary, including video testimonials and the "Letters to the Sea", are intended to be further showcased or repurposed in the future, to extend their reach and underline SPA/RAC's long-standing engagement in marine and coastal protection. Opportunities to compile and share these contributions in accessible formats are being explored.

Outcome 7.2. Citizen and general public awareness and outreach raised through citizen science and digital campaigns

206. PAP/RAC developed and implemented the 18th edition of the Coast Day awareness campaign in 2024 in a double edition, one on the ground and another online. The central topic was gender equality under the slogan "#WomensWave for coastal sustainability in the Mediterranean". In addition to the successful on-the ground event organized in Annaba, Algeria, which gathered over 160 key stakeholders, an additional online event was implemented under the Digital Transformation section. To support partners in organising their own Coast Day events, a comprehensive media toolkit was developed and distributed widely. It included bilingual leaflets (in English and French), a poster, a roll-up banner, social media cards, and custom-designed tote bags distributed at the Algerian celebration. Coast Day 2024 celebrations were also reported from Slovenia, Montenegro, Greece, and Tunisia. A detailed activity report was prepared and uploaded online, capturing the collective achievements and lessons learned. The activities were financially supported by the GEF MedProgramme Child Project 2.1. Preparatory activities for the Coast Day event in 2025 started. The topic of the event this year will be the importance of institutions, communicated also within the SDG 16. The central event will be celebrated in Tunisia, where the 30th anniversary of APAL and 40th anniversary of SPA/RAC, together with 50th anniversary of MAP will be marked.

207. At UNOC-3 in Nice, France, in June 2025, PAP/RAC organized an event jointly with the Republic of Croatia, UNEP/MAP, SPA/RAC and Blue Plan/RAC, and supported by GEF MedProgramme CP 2.1, entitled "Ocean, Our Future, Our Responsibility: Accelerating Adaptation and Enhancing Resilience from the Mediterranean Lands to the Sea" aiming to highlight the ocean as the final recipient of all waters, linking landscapes, communities, and ecosystems. This event aimed to promote PAP/RAC's nearly 50 years of experience in leading integrated coastal planning initiatives, jointly with all Mediterranean countries, Barcelona Convention Contracting Parties and the UNEP/MAP system.

208. SPAMI Day is celebrated either locally within SPAMIs or through a regional event bringing together SPAMI managers every other year. As a reminder, in 2023, following a call for proposals, five NGOs from Albania, Italy, Lebanon, Slovenia, and Tunisia implemented awareness-raising mini-projects in SPAMIs, contributing to the celebration of SPAMI Day both virtually and on site. In 2024, SPAMI Day was held in Tunis, with events focusing on management effectiveness, the role of civil society, and sustainable financing mechanisms. In 2025, SPAMI Day will echo SPA/RAC's 40th anniversary and serve as an opportunity to celebrate collective achievements in biodiversity conservation. A hybrid event was initially planned for 18–19 June 2025 in Lebanon, including the inauguration of a monk seal statue. The statue was designed to be installed around the Palm Islands SPAMI - an area where the species has recently begun to return. However, due to the unstable security situation in the region, the event has been postponed.

209. SPA/RAC's communication efforts included promoting key regional events, such as the 3rd Mediterranean Symposium on Ecology and Conservation of Marine and Coastal Bird Species (Djerba, Tunisia, February 2024) and the Smart Marine Conservation Forum (Al Hoceima, Morocco, March 2024), through dedicated websites, media coverage, and online sessions. SPA/RAC maintained active engagement with the public through its website and social media platforms (mainly Facebook-7,8K followers- and LinkedIn -4.8K followers). Awareness materials were developed with the support of the Med Monk Seal, FishEBM Med, and SEMPA projects, including videos on NIS management measures, the use of IMET to enhance MPA management, cartoon and posters on the Mediterranean Monk Seal. Additional materials, such as agendas with key messages and infographics were also produced.

210. In preparation for the effective application of the Med SOx ECA, REMPEC launched a three months online awareness campaign addressed to all Contracting Parties and interested stakeholders. It also developed a leaflet on the consistent implementation of the Med SOx ECA, which provided useful information on the requirements and implementation measures. Moreover, REMPEC co-organized two webinars with HELMEPA, a MAP Partner, to raise more awareness about the effective application of the Med SOX ECA. The webinars were attended by over 350 participants from leading shipping companies operating in the Mediterranean Sea including crew and office personnel and from Contracting Parties.

211. In the framework of the 29th UNFCCC COP in Baku, Azerbaijan, PAP/RAC participated in the

UfM event “Women leaders in climate action - perspectives from the Euro-Mediterranean region”, celebrating contributions of women in driving climate action and inspiring future leaders. PAP/RAC contribution focused on the outcomes of the Coast Day event dedicated to the women’s contribution in coastal management and coastal environment protection.

Outcome 7.3. Towards a digital transformation: use of digital technologies to improve networking and MAP visibility

212. The 2024 edition of Coast Day campaign highlighted the vital role of women in achieving coastal sustainability. A digital campaign, “#WomensWave for coastal sustainability in the Mediterranean”, showcased inspiring women from across generations and encouraged sharing personal testimonials. The campaign successfully engaged 12.2 million users on social media, generating over 18 million visits to PAP/RAC’s social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X) and demonstrating the importance of promoting women’s accomplishments in driving positive change in our coastal communities. The impact was multiplied by sharing posts by different MAP components. The insights and in-depth interviews from prominent women and men working in coastal management and supporting SDG 5 were featured through social media. The final step of the ongoing digital campaign was to publish the journeys of 29 inspiring women who applied for the online call to show how they are paving the way for a greener future in the Mediterranean. Their stories are featured in a storymap, showcasing MAP-Barcelona Convention’s reach across the Mediterranean basin. This platform is expected to spark new collaborations and partnerships, allowing the #WomensWave to grow even stronger. A detailed activity report was prepared and uploaded online, capturing the collective achievements and lessons learned.

213. Furthermore, during this reporting period PAP/RAC made significant steps in enhancing its communication activities. From strengthening communications outreach on social media using digital marketing to preparing articles tailored for various partners' newsletters and websites, such as the five articles on IW:LEARN (GEF’s International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network) and a scientific article recently published in the journal Environmental Science & Policy. As an illustration of the intensification of PAP/RAC’s efforts in communication, the Final Conference of the Coastal Management Plan for Boka Kotorska Bay was reported in 23 local and national media.

214. The 5th edition of the IEFCA was launched by the Secretariat on 29 November 2024 in cooperation with MedCities, with the support of INFO-RAC and the kind voluntary contribution of the Republic of Türkiye. Two regional info day workshops that took place online on 19 March and on 13 May 2025, a specific help desk has been activated in order to respond to applicants’ questions. The application period closed on 30 May 2025 with ten applications received. Based on the experience of the past four awards and with the perspective of upscaling best practices, the IEFCA is also part of the new flagship initiative on Mediterranean Zero Net Cities Network that actively promotes and supports exchanges of best practices among Mediterranean Cities, policy dialogue among Mayors on sustainable development challenges and institutional capacity building activities.

215. A communication strategy and plan has been developed to improve SPA/RAC communication, including its digital presence. SPA/RAC is launching a new call for tenders to redesign its website, in line with the recommendations of its new communication strategy, as the first call launched in March 2025 was unsuccessful.

216. UNEP/MAP online content and events were promoted through the official MAP social media accounts on X and LinkedIn.

III. Financial, Personnel and Administrative Matters

A. Financial and Administrative Matters

217. According to the audited and certified Statement of Financial Position, the Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF) balance amounted to USD 6.11 million as of 31 December 2023. The balance reflects the accumulated surplus for MTF and the amount put aside for the Working Capital Reserve (WCR). It represents the total net assets as at the end of the financial year and as such it includes the assessed contributions receivable (arrears) and advance transfers to implementing partners. According to the interim statement of changes in net assets for the year ended 31 December 2024, the MTF balance

amounted to USD 5.05 million (as of 31 December 2024). The financial statements of 2023 and 2024 are presented in Annex II.

218. According to the Statement of Financial Position, the host country contribution (CAL) cash balance amounted to USD 1,286,884.46 as of 31 December 2023. This balance reflects the accumulated surplus for CAL. It represents the total net assets as at the end of the financial year. The balance of the host country contribution will be utilized for the refurbishment of the current premises of the Secretariat. According to the Financial Statement for the period ended 31 December 2023, the available cash balance of the EC Discretionary Contributions (QML account) amounts to USD 1,647,200.85. Document UNEP/MED WG.620/17 (Draft Decision on the Programme of Work and Budget for 2026 – 2027) contains detailed information on the status of the MTF.

219. The status of Contributions to MTF as at 30 June 2025, as reflected in detail in Annex III, is summarized below:

- *Total annual pledges of ordinary contributions for 2024 and 2025: EUR 5,706,788 annually*
- *Total collections for 2024 as at 30 June 2025: EUR 5,618,352 (98.45%)*
- *Total collections for 2025 as at 30 June 2025: EUR 2,942,556 (51.56%)*
- *Total arrears as at 30 June 2025: EUR 1,083,848*

220. The EC Discretionary Contribution, amounting to EUR 596,484 for 2024 has been received.

221. With regards to consultancy, MAP Components are continuing the efforts to utilize mainly and on a priority basis external funding resources for the consultancies and to use MTF complementary, as need be, in most of the cases and apart from the cases where consultants/individual contractors are recruited to execute functions similar to vacant staff posts. During the year 2024, the consultancy costs were funded by the MTF/EC Discretionary Contribution at a rate of 50%.

B. Personnel Matters

222. The recruitment status is summarized below:

- P5 Deputy Coordinator (position No. 30600864): the post was advertised under job opening 252899 in Inspira with a deadline for applications of 23 April 2025. The recruitment process is underway.
- P5 Senior Programme Officer (MedPol) (position No. 31046424): Mr. Faraj El-Awar (national of Lebanon) was selected for the temporary position and reported for duty on 15 May 2025. A recruitment for the post as fixed-term appointment limited was advertised under job opening 257302 in Inspira with a deadline for applications of 12 June 2025. The recruitment process is underway.
- P3 Programme Management Officer (MED QSR) (position No: 31025245): Mr. Christos Ioakeimidis (national of Greece) was promoted to the position effective 6 September 2024.
- P3 Programme Management Officer (EcAp MED Plus Project) (position No: 30606551): Ms. Samar Kilani (national of Tunisia) was selected for the position and reported for duty on 21 January 2025. In parallel, a 6-month recruitment of a United Nations Volunteer (UNV) was initiated. Ms. Khouloud Athimen (national of Tunisia), was selected for the UNV assignment and reported for duty on 23 June 2025.
- P3 Public Information Officer (position No: 30600867): the post was advertised under temporary job opening 243897 in Inspira with a deadline for applications of 16 October 2024. Ms. Marie Daher-Corthay (national of Lebanon) was selected for the position and reported for duty in July 2025. In addition, the post was advertised under job opening 244360 in Inspira with a deadline for applications of 11 April 2025 and was cancelled by UNEP. A recruitment for the post as fixed-term appointment limited was advertised under job opening 257111 in Inspira with a deadline for applications of 12 June 2025. The recruitment process is underway.
- P2 Associate Programme Management Officer (Marine Litter MED Plus Project) (position No: 31038349): the post was advertised under job opening 249770 in Inspira with a deadline for applications of 13 February 2025. The recruitment process is underway.

- P2 Associate Programme Management Officer (SEMPA project) (position No: 31034029): Mr. Marc Attallah (national of Canada) was selected for the position and reported for duty at UNEP/MAP on 29 June 2024.
- P2 Associate Finance and Budget Officer (SEMPA project) (position No: 31053243): Ms. Zsuzsanna Sandor (national of Hungary) was selected for the position and reported for duty on 1 January 2025.
- P2 Associate Administrative Officer (position No: 31033893): the post was advertised under temporary job opening 246364 and was cancelled. In addition, the post was advertised under job opening 247594 in Inspira with a deadline for applications of 8 January 2025. The recruitment process is underway. Pending the completion of the post recruitment, Mr. Nuno Braganca Gomes Will (national of Sao Tome and Principe) was hired as a United Nations Volunteer (UNV) for 6 months and reported for duty on 4 May 2025.
- P2 Associate Finance and Budget Officer (GEF MedProgramme) (position No: 31039463): in anticipation of completion of the temporary assignment of Ms. Rachel Kagiri (national of Kenya) end July 2025, the post was advertised under job opening 259264 in Inspira with a deadline for applications of 26 June 2025. The recruitment process is underway.
- G6 Finance and Budget Assistant (position No: 30606488): Mr. Georgios Trikoupis (national of Greece) was selected for the position and reported for duty on 16 January 2025.
- G6 Administrative Assistant to the Coordinator (position No: 31009278): The recruitment process was completed. Ms. Nathalie Gomez (national of France) was promoted to the position and assumed her new role as at 1 June 2025.
- G6 Meetings Services Assistant (position No: 30606487): the position was been temporarily encumbered by Nathalie Gomez (national of France) until 31 October 2024. As for the regular post which was advertised under job opening 241349 in Inspira, the selection was completed. Mr. Andreas Tsiamitros (national of Greece) was selected for the position and reported for duty on 23 June 2025.
- G5 Finance and Budget Assistant (MASE Project, temporary) (position No: 30606487) Ms. Maria Syrakou (national of Greece) was selected for the position and reported for duty on 16 October 2024.
- G4 Administrative Team Assistant (temporary) (position No. 30600877): Mr. Dimitrios Boumpoukas (national of Greece) was selected for the position and reported for duty on 1 April 2025.
- Secondment of an Expert from France on a Non-Reimbursable Loan: Mr. Arnaud Comolet (national of France) was selected for the assignment and reported for duty on 2 December 2024.

167. Three new RAC Directors joined the MAP system in 2024-2025 as below:

- **SPA/RAC:** Mr. Mahmoud Elyes Hamza brings a long experience on governance and research especially in areas of biology and agronomy, including at international level. He has been appointed Minister of Agriculture, Water Resources, and Fisheries (Tunisia) from 2021 until 2023. Prior to that, he has followed a long academic and research career including his serving as the Director of the High Institute of Preparatory Studies in Biology and Geology (ISEP-BG, 2007-2009) and of the National Institute of Agronomy of Tunisia (INAT, 2009-2017) as well as President of the Institute of Agricultural Research and Higher Education (IRESA, 2017-2021). In 2012, Mr. Elyes Hamza obtained the title of Professor of Higher Agricultural Education, specializing in “Rural Engineering, Water, and Forests.

- **Plan Bleu/RAC:** Mr. Robin Degron brings a thirty years’ experience on governance and financing of sustainable development, including at international level. A former student of the National School of Administration (ENA) and of the National School of Rural Engineering, Water Resources and Forestry (ENGREF), Mr. Degron held a number of positions in the Ministry of the Environment (France) before being appointed special advisor to the Strategy and Future Study High Commissioner (France Stratégie). He has also served as a Senior Auditor at the Cour des Comptes (French Supreme Audit Institution).

- **PAP/RAC:** Ms. Daria Povh Škugor has extensive experience within the PAP/RAC, bringing over two decades of expertise in Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). For the past 15 years, she has focused specifically on climate change adaptation and coastal resilience in the Mediterranean. Prior to her appointment as PAP/RAC Director, Ms. Povh Škugor served as a Senior Programme Officer. In this role, she coordinated the implementation of various projects under UNEP/MAP, GEF, EU, and other initiatives, addressing local, regional, national, and coastal challenges across the Mediterranean. Daria Povh Skugor holds a Bachelor of Science in Coastal Economy from the University of Split and a Master of Science in Coastal Zone Management from the University of Ulster, UK. She spent a year with the University of Venice on a research project focused on the management of the Venetian lagoon.

Annex I

Declaration of the Ministers of the Mediterranean at the Third United Nations Ocean Conference (10 June 2025)

Declaration of the Ministers of the Mediterranean

Mediterranean Day of the United Nations Ocean Conference (June 10, 2025)

We, the Ministers of the Environment and heads of delegations of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention , gathered today to *reaffirm* our common commitment to the protection and preservation of our Mediterranean Sea, an invaluable common good, as a regional contribution to the global efforts aiming at achieving SDG14.

We celebrate the 50 years of UNEP/MAP and the 30 years of Post Rio Barcelona Convention, appreciating their pioneer work and achievements and, as Contracting Parties to the Convention, *commit* to continue cooperating and act for the benefit of people and nature.

We welcome the third edition of the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC-3), in Nice (France), as a key milestone to accelerate and mobilize all actors to conserve and sustainably use the ocean and reaffirm our will to effectively contribute to the success of this event. To this aim, *we commit* to properly mainstream UNOC-3 relevant outcomes in our work, in particular with a view to the 24th Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (COP24) to be held in Cairo (Egypt) next 2-5 December 2025.

We thank the four Champion Countries as decided by COP23, namely Slovenia, France, Egypt and Spain, and the hosts of UNOC-3, France and Costa Rica, for the organization of this major milestone in the life of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention.

1. *Alarmed by* the consequences of the environmental planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution and land degradation in the region, *we are determined* to continue supporting the achievement and the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 14, which has strong interlinkages with many other SDGs due to its cross-cutting nature, the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. *We affirm* the need to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources by implementing international law as reflected at the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of The Future We Want.

2. *Noting with concern* that due to anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases, the rate of climate change in the Mediterranean basin, both historical and projected, is faster than global trends and deeply concerned that 2024 was the hottest year on record according to the World Meteorological Organization, *we reiterate* our commitment to integrating climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience measures into our policies, including maritime policies, compatible with a trajectory to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial level. *We will* support actions and initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to the effects of climate change, promote decarbonization especially of energy production through renewable energy sources as well as to promote nature-based solutions and strengthen the resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems to the effects of climate change, considering the local context and country determinations for development. *We will* integrate them, as appropriate, in our nationally determined contributions to be submitted ahead of the 2025 UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP30).

3. *We support* the scientific assessment work conducted by the Mediterranean Network of Experts on Climate Change and the Environment (MedECC) on the impact of climate change on the Mediterranean basin, and *call for* the protection and the restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems, particularly by advocating for a new approach based on the water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus, and to intensify, as appropriate, ocean-based mitigation measures.

4. *We welcome* progress towards implementing the integrated source-to-sea approach through Integrated River Basin Management planning and enhanced interregional cooperation between the Mediterranean, the Danube and Black Sea to improve the climate resilience of river basins and coasts and enhance the health of coastal and marine ecosystems, taking into account the strong interlinkages between SDG 14 and SDG 6.

5. *We welcome* activities for integrating Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and Integrated Coastal Zone Management to enable sustainable management and planning to ensure the development of sustainable and resilient blue economy as a vehicle for green transition, together with the application of Strategic Environmental and Environmental Impact Assessments as important tools to integrate environmental consideration in MSP plans, with the view to applying an ecosystem-based approach, as agreed at COP 23 in Portorož.

6. *Deeply concerned* about the rapid deterioration of biodiversity worldwide, particularly in the Mediterranean, at an unprecedented rate, *we commit* to strengthening and expanding the network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) as well as establishing Other Effective Area Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean Sea with the aim to protect 30% of the Mediterranean Sea by 2030, ensuring effective conservation and sustainable management of the protected areas, including OECMs, and their integration into national and regional policies, thus contributing to target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), through the implementation of the Post-2020 SAP BIO for the marine and coastal environment, adopted at COP 22 of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.

7. *We encourage* Contracting Parties that have not yet done so to take action to ratify, approve, accept or accede to the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), as a contribution from the Mediterranean countries to its early entry into force.

8. *We renew* our commitment *to* take measures to ensure the protection of marine endangered species in the Mediterranean and *we will* support the dissemination of best practices to combat, control or manage non-indigenous species and the implementation of effective monitoring actions and coordinated management measures based on the most relevant scientific data.

9. *We reiterate* our commitment *to* raise the level of ambition and implement targeted actions to accelerate progress towards achieving Good Environmental Status and the SDGs, considering the very important processes of revision and update of the Ecosystem Approach RoadMap and of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD). These will take into account key findings of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report and the fact that work shall continue to achieve and maintain Good Environmental Status of the marine and coastal environment.

10. *Aware of* the ecological importance of marine and coastal ecosystems, we commit to intensifying conservation and restoration efforts for these ecosystems, in particular the Posidonia seagrass meadows *inter alia*, by supporting the Mediterranean Posidonia Network (MPN) and the related Flagship Initiative under the MSSD. *We affirm* our willingness to promote sustainable management practices and protection measures against anthropogenic pressures to preserve these critical habitats for marine biodiversity.

11. *We commit to* decisive and collective action to ensure sustainable fisheries and to strengthen the fight against illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, which poses a threat to the sustainable exploitation of marine resources in the Mediterranean. *We call* for the reinforcement of the international legal framework to fight IUU fishing activities, by ratifying the Food and Agriculture Organization's Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA), the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Cape Town agreement on fishing vessels safety, the International Labour Organization's convention on work conditions on fishing vessels and the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries

Subsidies, as well as WTO negotiations on additional provisions on fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing.

12. *We welcome* the efforts and the collective work for the implementation of the Particularly Sensitive Sea Area in the North Western Mediterranean Sea, a key tool for protecting marine mammals from collision risks designated by the IMO, and commit to contribute to the effective application of its associated protection measures.

13. *We welcome* the outcome of the 83rd session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) of the IMO aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping, in line with the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy and recommend the formal adoption of the proposed amendments to MARPOL Annex VI at the next MEPC extraordinary session to reach net-zero emissions from international shipping by or around 2050 i.e. close to, 2050.

14. *We welcome* the entry into force of the Sulfur Emission Control Area (SECA) in the Mediterranean, as decided by IMO MEPC.361 (79), as a crucial step in reducing air pollution from ships. *We commit* to rigorously applying SECA regulations, including through the ratification of MARPOL Annex VI, and promoting clean technologies for maritime transport to protect human health and the marine environment, and to accelerate our work in exploring the feasibility for the designation of a Nitrogen Oxide Emission Control Area (NECA) in the Mediterranean as a whole.

15. *We encourage* all stakeholders to integrate into their decision-making processes the work of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development and consider as appropriate the outcome of the Mediterranean 2050 Foresight report, coordinated by the Plan Bleu Regional Activity Center of UNEP/MAP.

16. *Noting with concern* the high and rapidly increasing levels of plastic pollution in the Mediterranean Sea as well as globally, with adverse effects on both human health and the environment, *we affirm* our determination and ambition to work together, in line with United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolution 5/14, towards fulfilling the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee's (INC) mandate to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastics[2] as highlighted by the Contracting Parties at the 2023 Barcelona Convention COP in Portoroz Ministerial Declaration.

17. *Reaffirming* the commitments made at previous Barcelona Convention COPs, *we call for* the identification, at the upcoming COPs, of relevant measures to implement the Barcelona Convention and support the contracting parties in the implementation of the future international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, building on the Mediterranean experiences and the well-established circular economy models, sustainable production and consumption patterns, and environmentally sound management of plastic waste, among other tools and measures to address marine litter, including plastic marine litter.

18. In that regard*, we will* strengthen the implementation of the legally binding Regional Plan for Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean under the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol), by taking concrete actions coherent to the implementation timeline of the measures provided for in the Plan to achieve a substantial reduction and prevention of pollution, with the intention to eliminate the release of plastics into the environment, through circular economy and source-to-sea approaches.

19. *We will* promote policies to phase out the production and consumption of unnecessary and problematic plastic products, based on criteria to be defined under the international legally binding

[2] Egypt set a reservation regarding "the full life cycle of plastics", since Egypt would like to add at the end of the paragraph "starting from product design"

instrument, in favour of safe, sustainable, reusable and cost efficient alternatives that are better for human health and the environment, taking into account specific national circumstances. *We therefore will* work on regulating and progressively eliminating, by 2030, the production and consumption of the most environmentally damaging single-use plastics and the use of chemicals of concern in plastics, based on criteria to be defined under the international legally binding instrument, especially those that come in direct contact with consumers and those most likely to cause harm or hinder circularity. *We also recognize* the importance of our constant monitoring of and combatting plastic litter in the marine environment in the Mediterranean Sea, and encourage the use of innovative technologies to remove this waste, including microplastics, to protect and restore marine ecosystems.

20. *We reiterate* our commitment to invest in effective wastewater treatment and waste management infrastructures, including recycling and material recovery facilities, and to implement national plans to gradually reduce and ultimately close coastal dump sites and where national geographical circumstances allow, landfills, in order to drastically reduce plastic waste and microplastics entering the marine environment. To achieve these goals, *we will* promote the mobilization of financial resources from a wide variety of sources as well as support research and development of new environmentally friendly technologies and materials.

21. *We decide* to strengthen cooperation among Mediterranean coastal countries and actors to harmonize policies, taking into account national circumstances as appropriate, and share best practices in plastic waste management, particularly within the framework of the Barcelona Convention and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). In this regard, *we support* the Mediterranean circular economy network Circe.med.

22. *We reiterate* our commitment to enhance action and synergies with relevant regional frameworks and agreements in particular the UfM, the General Fisheries Commission of the Mediterranean, Ramoge and Pelagos. *We also encourage* the implementation of concrete initiatives and actions, such as in the context of the Plan of Action “a Mediterranean: a model sea by 2030” (PAMEx), the Blue Med Partnership, the MedFund, and the the WestMED initiative.

23. *Aware of* the strong attractiveness of the Mediterranean region as a tourist destination and the impacts of unsustainable tourism practices on natural resources, and recalling the 2021 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy, *we will* work on promoting the transition to a sustainable blue economy in national strategies and, in particular, on supporting the Flagship Initiative on sustainable tourism under the MSSD.

24. *We recognize* the role of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs) in assisting countries and regions in addressing marine pollution and enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources, as well as their contributions to the achievement of SDG14 and the ocean related targets of the 2030 Agenda, and *commit* to raise the profile of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system and promote its involvement, as appropriate, at relevant ocean-related global events with the participation and support of the Secretariat.

25. *We reaffirm* our commitment to involve youth in environmental issues, including those related to climate change and decision-making processes innovatively, including through modernizing education programs and promoting education for sustainable development and global citizenship in both formal and informal settings to raise young people's awareness on the importance of the environment and sustainable development from an early age and as an instrumental tool for the achievement of the SDGs. To this aim, *we promote* inter-generational cooperation processes and global initiatives, such as but not limited to Youth4Climate, co-led by Italy and the United Nations Development Program, as effective tools to support youth-led and youth-inclusive solutions. *We reaffirm* the importance of facilitating public access to information and public participation, including that of civil society, which is key to ensure the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

26. *We call* on all actors, including local authorities, international organizations, financial institutions, civil society, academia, and the private sector including industry, to join us in this vital mission in the spirit of solidarity and reinforced regional collaboration. Together, we can look back to see the incredible path we went through for the last 50 years and look forward to ensure a sustainable future for the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal communities through the effective implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.

Annex II

Financial Statements of 2023 and 2024

Trust fund for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution
(Fund code: MEL)

I. Statement of Financial Performance for the year ended 31 December 2023
(United States Dollars)

	Total
Revenue	
Assessed contributions	6 077 516
Other revenue	221 723
Investment revenue	192 244
Total Revenue	**6 491 483**
Expenses	
Employee salaries allowances and benefits	1 940 767
Non-employee compensation and allowances	131 404
Grants and other transfers	4 819 670
Travel	341 423
Other operating expenses	203 643
Expected credit loss allowance for doubtful receivables	17 773
Programme support expenses	806 293
Total expenses	**8 260 973**
Surplus/(Deficit) for the period	**(1 769 490)**

II. Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2023
(United States Dollars)

	Total
Current Assets	
Cash and cash equivalents	5 438 699
Assessed contributions receivable	522 586
Other receivables	10 518
Advance transfers	718 196
Other assets	139 423
Total Current Assets	**6 829 422**
Non-Current Assets	
Property plant and equipment	3 240
Total Non-Current Assets	**3 240**
Total Assets	**6 832 662**
Current Liabilities	
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	79 128
Advance receipts	572 319
Employee benefits liabilities	62 325
Other liabilities	-
Total Current Liabilities	**713 772**
Non Current Liabilities	-
Total Non current Liabilities	-
Total Liabilities	**713 772**
Net of Total Assets and Total Liabilities	**6 118 890**
Net Assets:	
Accumulated surpluses/ (deficits) - unrestricted	4 804 213
Reserves	1 314 677
Total Net Assets	**6 118 890**

III. Statement of Changes in Net Assets for the year ended 31 December 2023
(United States Dollars)

	Total
Net Assets at the Beginning of the Period	**7 848 237**
Changes in net asset accumulated surplus – unrestricted	(18 226)
Changes in net asset reserve - unrestricted	58 369
Surplus/(deficit) for the period	(1 769 490)
Total Net Assets at the End of the Period	**6 118 890**

for Shugisha

Maryanne Kagoro
Chief, Accounts Section, BFMS
UNON

United Nations Office at Nairobi
ACCOUNTS SECTION
Budget and Finance
Management

16 October 2024
Date

Trust fund for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution
(Fund code: MEL)

I. Interim Statement of Financial Performance for the year ended 31 December 2024
(United States Dollars)

	Total
Revenue	
Assessed Contributions	6,333,838
Other Revenue	14,000
Investment Revenue	270,305
Total Revenue	**6,618,143**
Expenses	
Employee salaries allowances and benefits	2,101,534
Non-employee compensation and allowances	85,931
Grants and other transfers	3,543,456
Depreciation	488
Travel	71,973
Other operating expenses	6,489
Expected credit loss allowance for doubtful receivables	397,882
Programme support expenses	1,213,905
Net Foreign exchange losses	279,196
Total expenses	**7,700,855**
Surplus/(deficit) for the period	(1,082,712)

II. Interim Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2024
(United States Dollars)

	Total
Current Assets	
Cash and Cash equivalents	6,428,082
Assessed contributions receivable	530,328
Other receivables	5,254
Advance Transfers	55,992
Other assets	125,795
Total Current Assets	**7,145,452**
Non-Current Assets	
Property plant and equipment	10,404
Total Non-Current Assets	**10,404**
Total Assets	**7,155,856**
Current Liabilities	
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	132,009
Advance receipts	1,874,264
Employee benefits liabilities	103,963
Total Current Liabilities	**2,110,235**
Non Current Liabilities	
Employee benefits Liabilities	
Total Non current Liabilities	
Total Liabilities	**2,110,235**
Net of Total Assets and Total Liabilities	**5,045,621**
Net Assets:	
Accumulated surpluses/ (deficits) - unrestricted	3,672,460
Reserves	1,373,161
Total Net Assets	**5,045,621**

III. Interim Statement of Changes in Net Assets for the year ended 31 December 2024
(United States Dollars)

	Total
Net Assets at the Beginning of the Period	**6,118,890**
Changes in net asset accumulated surplus – unrestricted	(65,968)
Changes in net asset reserve - unrestricted	75,410
Surplus/(deficit) for the period	(1,082,712)
Total Net Assets at the End of the Period	**5,045,621**

Maryanne Kagoro
Chief, Accounts Section, BFMS
UNON

United Nations Office at Nairobi
ACCOUNTS SECTION
Budget and Financial
Management Service

20/05/2025

Annex III

Status of Contributions as at 30 June 2025

Status of Assessed Ordinary Contributions apportioned to the Parties of the Barcelona Convention as of 30th June 2025

Ordinary Contributions to MTF

Country	Unpaid Pledges for 2021 and prior years	Unpaid Pledges for 2022	Unpaid Pledges for 2023	Unpaid Pledges as of 31/12/2024	Pledges for 2024	Collections for 2024	Pledges for 2025	Collections for 2025	Unpaid Pledges for 2025	Deferred Income
	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR
Albania	-	-	-	-	3,704	3,704	3,704	3,704	-	
Algeria	121,095	-	50,469	171,564	50,469		50,469		**50,469**	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-	-	-	-	5,556	5,556	5,556	5,556	-	
Croatia	-	-	-	-	42,135	42,135	42,135	42,135	-	
Cyprus	-	-	-	-	16,669	16,669	16,669	16,669	-	
Egypt	-	-		-	64,360	64,360	64,360	64,360	-	
European Union	-	-	-	-	142,670	142,670	142,670	142,670	-	
France	-	-	-	-	1,999,323	1,999,323	1,999,323		**1,999,323**	
Greece	-	-	-	-	150,482	150,482	150,482	150,482	-	
Israel	-	-	-	-	259,755	259,755	259,755		**259,755**	
Italy	-	-	-	-	1,476,573	1,476,573	1,476,573	1,476,573	-	
Lebanon	67,880	16,669	16,669	101,218	16,669	-	16,669		**16,669**	
Libya (State of Libya)	664,262	8,334	8,334	680,930	8,334	-	8,334		**8,334**	
Malta	-	-	-	-	8,797	8,797	8,797	8,797	-	
Monaco	-	-	-	-	5,093	5,093	5,093	5,093	-	
Montenegro	-	-	-	-	1,852	1,852	1,852	1,852	-	
Morocco	-	-	-	-	25,466	25,466	25,466		**25,466**	
Slovenia	-	-	-	-	36,579	36,579	36,579	36,579	-	
Spain	-	-	-	-	988,086	988,086	988,086	988,086	-	
Syrian Arab Republic	121,801	4,167	4,167	130,135	4,167	-	4,167		**4,167**	
Tunisia	-	-	-	-	8,797		8,797		**8,797**	
Türkiye	-	-	-	-	391,252	391,252	391,252		**391,252**	
TOTAL	**975,039**	**29,170**	**79,639**	**1,083,848**	**5,706,788**	**5,618,352**	**5,706,788**	**2,942,556**	**2,764,232**	-

Year	*2020*	*2021*	*2022*	*2023*	*2024*	*2025*
Collection Rate	*99.33%*	*98.28%*	*99.49%*	*98.60%*	*98.45%*	*51.56%*

EC Discretionary Contribution

	Expected contribution for 2024	Received contribution for 2024	Expected contribution for 2025	Received contribution for 2025	Open Receivable for 2024
	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR
European Commission	596,484	596,484	596,484		-

Host Country Contribution

	Expected contribution for 2024	Received contribution for 2024	Expected contribution for 2025	Received contribution for 2025	Open Receivable for 2024
	USD	USD	EUR	EUR	USD
Greece	400,000	400,000	344,800		-

Note : Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations: Regulation 3.5. Contributions and advances shall be considered as due and payable in full within 30 days of the receipt of the communication of the Secretary-General referred to in regulation 3.4 or on the first day of the calendar year to which they relate, whichever is later. As of 1 January of the following calendar year, the unpaid balance of such contributions and advances shall be considered to be one year in arrears.