



UNITED
NATIONS

EP

UNEP/MED WG.620/16



**Mediterranean
Action Plan**
Barcelona
Convention

16 July 2025
Original: English

Meeting of the MAP Focal Points

Athens, Greece, 16-19 September 2025

Agenda Item 5: Specific Matters for Consideration and Action by the Meeting, including Draft Decisions

Draft Decision IG.27/13: Implementation of Updated National Action Plans (NAPs) containing Measures and Timetables for their Implementation

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2025

Note by the Secretariat

1. Pursuant to Decision 26/14 on Programme of Work and Budget for 2024 – 2025, adopted by the 23rd Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP 23, Portorož, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023), and in a view of the conclusion of the 2015-2025 National Action Plans' (NAPs) cycle, the Contracting Parties were requested to update their NAPs and Programme of Measures (PoMs). This requirement stems from Articles 5 and 15 of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol).
2. It emphasizes that the main feature of the new NAPs is to ensure that Contracting Parties undertake both national and regional measures - including enabling investments - to implement the legally binding requirements set forth in the Regional Plan on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management and the Amendments to the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean which were endorsed by Decisions IG.25/8 and IG.25/9, respectively, at COP 22 (Antalya, Türkiye, 7-10 December 2021), as well as the Regional Plan on Agriculture Management, the Regional Plan on Aquaculture Management, and the Regional Plan on Urban Stormwater Management which were subsequently endorsed through Decisions IG.26/6, IG.26/7 and IG.26/8 at COP 23.
3. The preparation of the new NAPs was preceded by the development of the National Baseline Budget for pollutants entering the Mediterranean Sea, either directly or indirectly, the identification of hotspots, and the preparation of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report.
4. The update of the NAPs is currently underway, with the Contracting Parties approaching the finalization stage. Following the Secretariat's preparation of the report on synergies with global efforts aimed at preventing and controlling marine pollution, the new NAPs /PoMs emphasize prevention and upstream actions - particularly targeting pollution hotspots and areas that have yet to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES). They are proposed in response to the key requirements of the LBS Protocol:
 - a) Strengthening policy and regulatory frameworks;
 - b) Enhancing institutional and technical capacities to implement pollution prevention and control measures;
 - c) Advancing phase-out strategies and the elimination of pollution hotspots;
 - d) Establishing operational systems for monitoring, evaluation, and enforcement based on NAP indicators, to ensure effective tracking of implementation progress.
5. The updated NAPs/PoMs have been developed to address three pollution-related and marine litter Ecological Objectives - EO5 (Eutrophication), EO9 (Contaminants), and EO10 (Marine Litter). These updates incorporate the findings of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR) and consider the recommendations from the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA), while also reflecting as appropriate, recent developments with the regards to the implementation of EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), the Water Framework Directive (WFD), and relevant national reports under the scope of the LBS Protocol. The NAPs/PoMs feature a dedicated monitoring plan to enable effective tracking of implementation progress through specific NAP Indicators. They also include a set of project fiches focused on prioritized key national actions and measures, facilitating collaboration between the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat aimed at mobilizing substantial external investment to support NAPs implementation.
6. In line with established practice, the COP endorses NAPs as key policy instruments at the national level. In the view of the Secretariat, the implementation of NAPs and PoMs should be positioned as a flagship initiative under the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development for the period 2026-2035 to draw attention and grow political interest and reach out. This would enhance stakeholder engagement for their effective implementation - particularly from the private sector - and open up greater opportunities for funding.
7. For Contracting Parties that are also EU Member States, it remains at their discretion whether to develop stand-alone NAPs/PoMs or to reference existing policy documents. In either case, a clear

explanation should be provided in writing to the Secretariat on how these measures contribute to the implementation of the Regional Plans and LBS Protocol provisions generally.

8. The implementation of the proposed Decision is reflected in the proposed Programme of Work and Budget for biennium 2026-2027, under activities 1.2.2 and 1.2.4.

9. The proposed Decision is hereby submitted to the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points (Athens, Greece, 16-19 September 2025) for consideration and possible transmission to the 24th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP24, Cairo, Egypt, 2-5 December 2025).

Draft Decision IG.27/13

**Implementation of Updated National Action Plans (NAPs)
containing Measures and Timetables for their Implementation**

The Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and its Protocols at their 24th Meeting,

Welcoming the outcome document of the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC-3) entitled “Our ocean, our future: united for urgent action”, reaffirming the strong global commitment to conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas and marine resources and reconfirming the need to strengthen the role of regional seas conventions and action plans,

Being inspired by the high-level celebration of the anniversary of the 50 years of the UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan and the 30 years of the Post-Rio Barcelona Convention, in UNOC-3, on 10 June 2025, as a strong sign of renewed commitment of the Contracting Parties, as reflected in their Ministerial Declaration,

Recalling the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 67/296 of July 2022, entitled “Our Ocean, Our future, Our responsibility”,

Referring to the United Nations Environment Assembly Resolution 6/15, adopted in March 2024, on strengthening ocean efforts to address climate change, marine biodiversity loss, and pollution, which underscores the need to implement regional seas conventions, protocols, and action plans for the protection and conservation of the marine and coastal environment; Resolution 3/10, adopted in December 2017, on addressing water pollution in inland, coastal, and marine ecosystems to protect and restore water-related ecosystems, as well as the related Action Plan for its implementation, which focuses on supporting developing countries in freshwater monitoring, sustainable wastewater management; Resolution 5/8, adopted in March 2021, on establishing a science-policy panel, which laid the foundation for negotiations that resulted in the agreement reached in June 2025 on a new global science-policy panel to provide countries with independent, policy-relevant scientific advice on chemicals, waste, and pollution prevention; Resolution 5/14, adopted in March 2022, which set the basis for the process on developing an international legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution; and the Global Framework on Chemicals, adopted by the 5th session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) in December 2023, which provides political impetus for addressing the lifecycle of chemicals—including products and waste — and supports transitions to circular economies, together with the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund, which assists countries in its implementation,

Complying with Articles 5 and 15 of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) on elaboration and implementation of national and regional action plans and programmes containing measures and timetables for their implementation, and COP 22 Decision IG.25/5 (Antalya, Türkiye, December 2022) on Amendments to Annexes I, II and IV to the LBS Protocol; COP 19 Decision IG.22/8 (Athens, Greece, February 2016) on Implementation of Updated National Action Plans (NAPs), Containing Measures and Timetables for their Implementation; COP 22 (Antalya, Türkiye, December 2021) Decision IG.25/8 on the Regional Plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management and Decision IG.25/9 on Amendments to the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management, as well as COP 23 (Portorož, Slovenia, December 2023) Decision IG.26/6 on the Regional Plan on Agriculture Management, Decision IG.26/7 on the Regional Plan on Aquaculture Management, and Decision IG.26/8 on the Regional Plan on Urban Stormwater Management regarding new legally binding measures in various sector of activities; and COP 23 Decision IG.26/3 on the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report and a Renewed Ecosystem Approach Policy in the Mediterranean,

Considering the findings and policy recommendations of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report - particularly those identifying impacts of pressures from agriculture, industry, aquaculture, tourism, infrastructure, energy facilities, ports and maritime works and structures, as well as maritime activities, together with the emerging impacts of climate change - which together hinder progress towards achieving good environmental status of the Mediterranean marine environment,

Appreciating the efforts of the Contracting Parties in implementing the 2015–2025 NAPs and in undertaking their update through the preparation of the new 2026–2035 NAPs,

1. *Endorse* the 2026–2035 National Action Plans (NAPs) and Programmes of Measures (PoMs) as operational policy instruments essential for the effective implementation of the LBS Protocol and the achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES) of the Mediterranean;

2. *Urge* the Contracting Parties to implement the NAPs/PoMs, enhancing coherence with other national policies and strategies, and regularly report on their implementation pursuant to Article 13 of the LBS Protocol, while securing enabling conditions for their long-term sustainability within the broader context of global efforts to address the combined threats of the triple planetary crisis - climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, and contribute to the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development for the period 2026-2035;

3. *Invite* the Contracting Parties to provide on voluntary basis the necessary financial and institutional support for the effective implementation of the NAPs/PoMs;

4. *Invite* the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Contracting Parties, to engage with relevant international financing institutions, regional and international organizations, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders to identify and pursue opportunities for mobilizing financial resources in support of the implementation of the updated NAPs/PoMs;

5. *Request* the Secretariat (MED POL) to conduct in 2030 a mid-term evaluation of NAPs/PoMs' implementation for submission to COP 27, based on indicators and the existing reporting framework, in close collaboration with the Contracting Parties, along with developing the actions to address the identified gaps for the remaining period of their implementation, as well as to assess the NAPs/PoMs' contribution to advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the regional, sub-regional and national levels with a particular focus on SDG 14.