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Thessaloniki, Greece, 30 November-1 December 2022

Agenda Item 3: Progress Report for March - October 2022

Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Activities Carried Out for the Period March - October 2022

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I. Introduction

1. This report covers the activities and outputs carried out between March and October 2022. The Reports by the Secretariat on Specific Issues and on Financial and Administrative Issues are prepared as separate documents, namely UNEP/MED BUR.93/6 and UNEP/MED BUR.93/5 respectively. The complementing "*Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Implementation of COP 22 Decisions*", is presented as document UNEP/MED BUR.93/4.

2. During this period the Secretariat has considered possible ways to update the way of reporting to the Bureau on progress achieved in order to better streamline reporting and focus on priorities and has presented some proposals in the Report by the Secretariat on Specific Issues, for the Bureau's consideration.

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

3. The Marine Litter Best Practices Meeting was successfully organized back-to-back with the MARLICE International Forum on Marine Litter and Circular Economy (17-18 May 2022, Sevilla, Spain). During the Meeting an overview of measures/instruments to prevent, control and manage marine litter generation from wastewater treatment plants, aquaculture activities, riverine inputs, and shipping was presented (UNEP/MEDWG.526/3). Plan Bleu/RAC, as partner of the Interreg Med project "*Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community*", in collaboration with SCP/RAC also participated in the organisation of a round-table during the MARLICE international Forum.

4. SCP/RAC prepared a policy brief, including recommendations to move forward towards Good Environmental Status (GES) for the IMAP EO10 on Marine Litter in Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). This policy brief is part of the capitalisation process of the Plastic Busters MPAs project, based on the results of various activities implemented in the context of this project. A regional training on understanding better microplastics and identifying how to address the issues was prepared by SCP/RAC, in collaboration with MIO-ECSDE, and took place through several online sessions in April and June 2022.

5. Small Scale Funding Agreements (SSFAs) were concluded and signed with nine 5 countries under the Marine Litter MED II Project and the Cooperation Agreement with the Italian Ministry for Ecological Transition (MiTE) and 3 more are undergoing, whereas another 3 are also operational with the Black Sea Commission, as well as with SPA/RAC and SCP/RAC. A number of pilots on adopt-a-beach, fishing-for-litter, enhanced management of marine litter in ports and marinas and riverine inputs of marine litter are effectively progressing in 5 countries in the South Mediterranean and the Adriatic.

6. Several processes were prepared by SCP/RAC to provide technical assistance to Southern Mediterranean countries on regulatory instruments to reduce and prevent the use of single use plastic (SUPs) items (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon, Tunisia), following the SUPs technical guidelines prepared by the Center. Those processes are supported by the EU-funded WES and Marine Litter Med II projects.

7. REMPEC has been providing technical support to MED POL on the EU-funded Marine Litter MED II Project activities related to the enhanced management of marine litter from sea-based sources in ports and marinas in the Mediterranean. A kick-off meeting was organised with the international consultant recruited by MED POL in July 2022. Bilateral meetings were organised with the beneficiary countries (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia) in September and October 2022 with a view to facilitating the recruitment of the national consultants to support the implementation of the activities at the national level as well as the selection of the additional port and marina by the respective countries.

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

8. With regards to the preparation of the Regional Plans on Agriculture, Aquaculture and Urban Stormwater Management, the first Working Groups Meeting was held in Athens, Greece from 25 to 27 October 2022. Drafts of the three regional plans were discussed. Proposed measures were reviewed, and deadlines on further work were agreed with working groups experts.

9. Preparation of technical guidelines for supporting implementation of the Regional Plans for urban wastewater treatment and sewage sludge management will be discussed in a Regional Meeting of experts that will be held in Ankara, Türkiye on 22 and 23 November 2022, kindly hosted by the Government of Türkiye. The Meeting will discuss and approve the use by the Contracting Parties of three guidelines on (a) available treatment technologies for urban wastewater and sewage sludge and decision support systems for their selection, (b) as well as pre-treatment standards of industrial effluents for industries discharging into urban wastewater collection systems, and (c) regional standards on desalination

technologies and available environmental standards for discharging brine to the marine environment. This activity is coorganized by the GEF funded MedProgramme.

10. The work is ongoing with the update the guidelines on dumping of uncontaminated inert materials, where a circulation of questionnaire will be shared for input of the Contracting Parties for possible best practices. The work is undertaken in synergy with the IMO London Protocol.

11. A tender for removal of Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) contaminated equipment is in the phase of evaluation of the bidders which will do the collection, transport and disposal of the 785 tons of PCB from Algeria and Lebanon (MedProgramme Child Project 1.1, Phase 1). Legal agreements with Algeria and Lebanon are in place to facilitate the implementation of this contract. Inventory and sampling of new persistent organic pollutants (POPs) (PFAs, HBCD, SCCPs) is under preparation in Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia. Policy roadmaps to update the national legislation to the current commitments under the Stockholm Convention are being drafted.

12. Technical brief for the development of a Master module on plastics and their additives in a circular economy is under preparation. The course will be introduced in Universities of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia (Master on Environmental Change Management in the Mediterranean). The activity is funded through an agreement with the Basel-Rotterdam-Stockholm Conventions Secretariat (INPLASTICS project).

13. REMPEC signed a letter of agreement (LoA) with Cedre, France (on advice and expertise in accidental water pollution), for the finalisation of the "*Condensates – Chemical Intervention Guide*", in accordance with the recommendations of the 14th Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points. REMPEC also initiated contacts with partner institutions and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to coordinate the preparation of the national workshops on the assessment of management capabilities to respond to oil pollution in Central and Eastern Mediterranean coastal states and the implementation of resulting improvement plans.

14. REMPEC launched the work of the MENELAS Working Group and progressed on the preparation for the development of modalities of possible creation and operation of a regional "*Blue Fund*", including in terms of governance and financing. REMPEC also liaised with the Secretariat of the RAMOGE Agreement to better coordinate and plan joint activities, ensuring the practical use of the draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report developed by the Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention (MENELAS), during the OSCAR-MED 2022 operation, and subsequent feedback from participating countries, as well as exploring the possible participation of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to the OSCAR-MED 2023 operation. REMPEC has been liaising with Türkiye, who holds the MENELAS Presidency, with a view to defining the date and venue for the 5th Meeting of MENELAS.

15. REMPEC completed arrangements with beneficiary countries for the organisation of a series of 14 national workshops on the assessment of management capabilities and national systems to respond to marine oil pollution and on the implementation of improvement plan, respectively, in Albania (18-20 October), Bosnia and Herzegovina (10-12 October), Croatia (26-28 September), Cyprus (27-29 September), Egypt (22-23 November), Greece (5-6 July), Israel (18-20 October), Lebanon (tbc), Libya (24-26 October), Montenegro (13-14 October), Slovenia (13-19 September), Syria (online tbc) and Türkiye (24-26 October) as well as Monaco (26-27 July).

16. REMPEC organised the two-day workshop on "Oiled Shoreline Assessment Technique (SCAT)'' (Netanya, Israel, 20-22 September 2022) within the framework of the Implementation Agreement between Cyprus, Greece and Israel, signed in 2018, to support the implementation of the related Sub-regional marine oil pollution contingency plan (SCP). The SCAT workshop was followed by the 3rd Meeting of the operational authorities of the three countries responsible for the implementation of the SCP. REMPEC also completed the preparation for the two-day Sub-regional workshop on "*Liability and Compensation for Oil and HNS pollution damage*"" (18-20 October 2022, Tunis, Tunisia), including recruitment of lecturers and logistical arrangements for the participation of representatives from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.

17. The development of the Adriatic Sub-regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan (SCP) between Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro and Slovenia is proceeding. The programme for the related 3 sub-regional meetings have been defined, i.e. Durres, Albania, 8-9 November 2022; Opatija, Croatia, 16-18 May 2023; and Italy, November 2023. REMPEC established contact with the EU co-funded NAMIR project to coordinate efforts and establish synergies, in the Adriatic region.

18. REMPEC completed the final version of the Guide on Condensates-Chemical Intervention for the Mediterranean. REMPEC and the International Oil Pollution Compensation (IOPC) Funds delivered an interactive session on tools and guidelines on response to Hazardous and Noxious Substances spills, in the margin of INTERSPILL 2022 (Amsterdam, Netherlands, 22 June 2022).

19. Further to the notification by the Tunisian competent authority of the incident in which an oil tanker, XELO, carrying 750 tons of diesel was shipwrecked on 16 April 2022 in the Gulf of Gabès, about 7 km off the south-eastern coast of Tunisia, REMPEC communicated to the Government of Tunisia the offers of assistance received from neighbouring countries. Upon request by the Tunisian authorities, REMPEC deployed an expert from ITOPF (Tunis, Tunisia, 25-29 April 2022) to provide support on claims and compensation. REMPEC activated the Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Climate Change (CMCC), member of the Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU), to provide predictions simulating the movement of oil in case of total loss of the cargo and bunker oils as well as satellite image showing layer of oil around the area of the sunken ship.

20. Plan Bleu/RAC established preliminary contacts with the Institut Méditerranéen de l'Eau (IME – Mediterranean Water Institute) to synergize activities for the establishment of a State of Play of Desalination under the WESR Med observatory, as well as with the Agence Française de Développement to collaborate on a decision support tool for sustainable desalination investments.

21. The MedProgramme Child Project 1.2 (Pollution Hotspots Investment project) started its implementation this year. Under component 1 of this project, the legal agreement with EIB has been signed to implement national actions in three contracting parties to reduce nutrient in coastal hotspots. Also, under component 2 of this project, three Working Group meetings for development of the three new Regional Plans on Agriculture, Aquaculture and Urban Stormwater Management will be held this year.

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

22. Regarding the Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan in Türkiye, the study on the construction and demolition value chain and its related policy roadmap is under revision by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change. Next steps are under discussion towards the organisation of a national workshop.

23. The Switchers Support Programme continues its development, in line with the progress achieved during the last biennium: A newsletter on sustainable business development "ACT Network" is under preparation; New members are using the Switchers toolbox providing sustainable business development tools to entrepreneurs, business support organizations and experts, and continuous improvement is ensured; The open-innovation methodology is being finalised before the development of the digital platform that will serve to manage open innovation communities; A Switchers Products platform will host products of and services to the Switchers Community Members; A policy brief of the Sustainable Finance Observatory is being prepared and the Observatory Structure is being designed.

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

24. The joint and coordinated proposal on the designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides (Med SOx ECA), set out in the Annex to Decision IG.25/14, was submitted on 4 February 2022, by France on behalf of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and the Member States of the European Union, to the 78th session of the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 78) (London, UK, 6-10 June 2022). MEPC 78 approved the designation of the Med SOx ECA under regulation 14 of Annex VI to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). The draft amendments to formally designate the Med SOx ECA were put forward for adoption at the 79th session of the IMO's MEPC (MEPC 79) (London, UK, 12-16 December 2022).

25. REMPEC progressed, in consultation with the 6 countries that have not yet ratified MARPOL Annex VI, on the finalisation of the national reports on the assessment of the needs of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon and Libya, including the work plan and timetable related to their ratification and effective implementation of MARPOL Annex VI as well as their implementation of the Med SOx ECA.

26. A draft regional fund-raising strategy to support Mediterranean coastal states in relation to the ratification and effective implementation of MARPOL Annex VI, as well as the implementation of the Med SOx ECA and linked compliance measures, was shared with the Contracting Parties that have not yet ratified MARPOL Annex VI. REMPEC also continued its dialogue with relevant stakeholders to provide technical support, through technical cooperation and capacity-building activities, including financial support and resource mobilisation activities, to address Contracting Parties' needs.

27. REMPEC initiated the preparation for the establishment of the Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) ECA(s) Technical Committee of Experts, with a launch scheduled immediately after MEPC 79.

Programme 2. Towards Healthy Mediterranean Ecosystems and Enhanced Biodiversity

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

28. Plan Bleu/RAC is one of the main partners of the Interreg Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community (MBPC) in charge of capitalization activities. In collaboration with the Communities' projects, Plan Bleu/RAC is leading the elaboration of a policy paper on transformative challenges for the conservation, restoration, and wise use of biodiversity in the Mediterranean. Plan Bleu/RAC organised on 18 January 2022 a workshop on "*Mediterranean Wetlands and MPAs Governance experiences from TUNE UP and the MBPC – capitalizing best practices and building a stronger network*" while the final event of the MBPC will take place in Brussels on 2-4 November 2022. The kick-off meeting of the wetlands restoration EU Horizon 2020 Waterlands project took place on 13-14 January 2022. Plan Bleu/RAC is involved in activities related to good governance for wetlands restoration, as well as advocacy and communications activities. The first project partner meeting took place in Dublin from 4-6 May 2022.

29. The UNEP Ecosystems division funded a preliminary study, to be conducted under Plan Bleu supervision, to define the terms of reference for a regional project on restoration and sustainable management of the Mediterranean forests. The concept note will be presented to UNEP leadership and to potential donors in the beginning of 2023.

30. Developed in the context of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), led by UNEP and FAO, and coordinated by UNEP Regional Office of Europe in cooperation with GRID-Arendal, the "*5 Seas Cooperation for Ecosystem Restoration*" project is a new initiative aimed at catalysing the effective restoration and regeneration of the marine environment in five sea basins: Baltic Sea, Black Sea, Caspian Sea, Mediterranean Sea, and North-East Atlantic basin. The project partners include the Black Sea Commission, the HELCOM Commission, the OSPAR Commission, the Tehran Convention Secretariat, and the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention Secretariat, including SPA/RAC, Plan Bleu/RAC, and PAP/RAC. The partnership is complemented by the CBD Secretariat, providing a global multilateral perspective. The project aims to contribute to the long-term goal of protecting, restoring and regenerating the ecological integrity and biological diversity of the five sea basins, safeguarding their ecological value and ecosystem services for future generations. The project will combine work at the local scale through a series of specific "*case studies*", with trans-basin scale work on knowledge exchange and capacity building across all project partners. The project partners will work together to create a handbook on marine ecosystem restoration and regeneration that will draw from the project's case studies and trans-regional knowledge exchange and capacity building programme. This handbook will be aimed at the global ocean community as well as actors working within the five sea basins of the project. The draft project proposal is under finalization. The partners are preparing communication materials in view of launching consultation with government representatives. The Secretariat will inform the MAP Focal Points in due course in view of obtaining support from interested Contracting Parties and donors.

31. A virtual workshop on "*The benefits of ecosystem restoration: and European perspective*" was organized by UNEP-WCMC on 24 May 2022. A first session demonstrated the multiple benefits of ecosystem restoration with the aim of promoting the implementation of landscape and seascape restoration programmes across Europe within the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. A second session provided the opportunity for restoration initiatives to exchange experiences and lessons learned with the workshop participants, in particular with regard to capacity building, upscaling initiatives, and future financing. The key messages and lessons learned from the session on oceans, coasts and wetlands, which was facilitated by UNEP ROE and UNEP/MAP, are summarized below: Support of governments and policymakers is important to upscale restoration initiatives; Advocacy is an important tool to showcase the benefits of restoration at the highest levels; Governance needs to be inclusive and local stakeholders involved; Monitoring is a meaningful tool for the success of any restoration effort; the private sector, green bonds, blue bonds, foundations and insurance companies are all potential sources of funding.

32. In the context of the Regional Seas Indicator Monitoring Framework and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, a project funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) has supported restoration actions for a key species and habitat; Pinna nobilis and coastal wetland in the Mediterranean.

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

33. The post-2020 roadmap for Mediterranean MPAs, part of the MPA forum collaborative process, which aim is to support the implementation of goals committed at global and regional levels such as the Regional Strategy on MCPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean, integrated the feedback from the MPA Forum sessions. The Forum Steering Committee reviewed the integrated version and provided its final comments during its 6th meeting on 17 May 2022. This new version was submitted to SPA/RAC and MedPAN governance bodies for its final validation by the end of October 2022, in view of its large dissemination. Plan Bleu/RAC attended and, in the framework of the Interreg Med "Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community" project, produced a report with contributions to the Post-2020 Roadmap. The MBPC project, of which Plan Bleu/RAC is partner, has also signed a MoU with the Pelagos Sanctuary during its COP (December 2021 in Rome) with concrete actions to be developed in collaboration to support the management plan approved in

December 2021.

34. A Partner collaboration workshop celebrated in Dubrovnik, Croatia, from 31 May to 1 July 2022 on the conservation of the South Adriatic Ionian Strait (SAIS) EBSA through diverse area-based effective conservation measures, including the development of an action plan for that area, which was discussed by the South Adriatic/North Ionian Sea Ecologically or Biologically Significant Area (SAIS EBSA) management development partners - in the framework of the Community for the Protection of Biodiversity Interreg MED - and attended by SPA/RAC representatives.

35. A study aiming at assessing the objectives and complementarities among different area-based conservation measures and developing recommendations for new designations to enhance their connectivity and effectiveness is being launched by SPA/RAC. The study is aimed to be presented at a workshop on OECMs planned for 2023.

36. Under the EU-funded IMAP-MPA Project, SPA/RAC is carrying out a regional capacity building programme for improving Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas (MPA) management and ensuring their sustainability, focusing on two main topics (management effectiveness of MPAs and the socio-economic value of MPAs). As the second part of this regional capacity-building programme, a second training course on "*Socio-economic Sustainability of Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas*" is scheduled in Türkiye as follows: (i) 13 November 2022: training for Mentors (one of the participants who have a senior profile with excellent knowledge of the MPA situation in their country); and (ii) 14–18 November 2022: training for all the proposed participants, including Mentors, for 5 days, including a one-day field trip.

37. SPA/RAC convened the Third meeting of the Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM) on 1 March 2022, by teleconference. The meeting provided guidance on (i) the development of the evaluation and monitoring framework for the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs) and OECMs in the Mediterranean, (ii) the implementing of the Post-2020 Regional Strategy, and (iii) implementing the OECM strategic pillar, and agreed on the Programme of Work of AGEM for the period 2022-2023.

38. The assessment-diagnosis phases of the elaboration of the management plans of Rachgoun island in Algeria and Tyre Coast Nature Reserve in Lebanon have been presented and discussed with the respective local communities of the three sites, respectively in March and June 2022. The assessment-diagnosis phases of the elaboration of the management plans of Shash area in the Gulf of Sirte in Libya will be presented and discussed in October 2022. The elaboration of the management plan for the Kuriat Islands Future MCPA (Tunisia) has been initiated since the end of March 2021. The deliverable of the first phase was endorsed by the Tunisian national authorities in October 2021. The second phase, the elaboration of the new management plan itself was finalized and endorsed by the Tunisian national authorities in May 2022. For Foça Special Environment Protection Area (Türkiye), the processes of the elaboration of the management plan have been initiated since May 2021. The assessment-diagnostic report was elaborated and endorsed by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation and its General Directorate of Natural Assets in September 2011. The elaboration of the new management plan is completed in February 2022. For Al Hoceima National Park (Morocco) and despite the Covid situation in 2021, local workshops and field technical consultations took place. The deliverable of the first phase was elaborated end of March 2022. The elaboration of a new management plan for Al Hoceima NP is completed in June 2022.

39. In the framework of the GEF-funded MedProgramme Child Project 3.1, draft law on Protected Areas in Libya has been presented and discussed with the relevant stakeholders in a national workshop organised on 16 May 2022. The revised version of the draft law will be submitted by the Ministry of Environment to the competent legislative authorities for revision and endorsement.

40. The newly developed online SPAMI Evaluation System's testing phase has been accomplished and the web application will be shared through the SPAMI Collaborative Platform. Access authorizations will be provided to the system prospective users including SPA/BD Focal Points and SPAMI managers.

41. SPA/RAC awarded four sub-grants to involve local civil society organisations (CSOs) in the management and sustainable development in and around SPAMIs, through the implementation of on-field activities two (2) in the Tyre Coast SPAMI (Lebanon) and Kneiss Islands SPAMI (Tunisia). SPA/RAC is also coordinating activities to scale-up good practices and enable networking among SPAMI managers, particularly through a dedicated twinning programme. Twinnings between the Tyre Coast SPAMI (Lebanon) and Medes Islands SPAMI (Spain) and between the Kneiss Islands (Tunisia) and Parc Marin de la Côte Bleue SPAMI (France) are ongoing; Four (4) visits to the concerned SPAMIs have been organized to exchange best practices among managers and with local stakeholders.

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

42. SPA/RAC organized the symposia on marine key habitats (marine vegetation, coralligenous and calcareous bio-concretions and dark habitats) and Non-Indigenous Species in the Mediterranean, which were held from 19 to 23 September 2022 in Genova, Italy. The symposia were organised thanks to the support of the Italian Institute for

Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA) and in collaboration with the University of Genova and its Department of Earth Sciences, Environment and Life Sciences (DISTAV). The symposia were also organized with the financial support of the MAVA funded project NTZ/MPA project and the EU-funded IMAP-MPA project. The symposia were attended by more than 180 participants and were broadcasted online. The proceedings will be finalized and disseminated through the symposia website (https://symposia.spa-rac.org).

43. SPA/RAC organized a regional workshop to discuss and validate the Restoration Programme of Pinna nobilis (Tunis, Tunisia, 20-21 June 2022). The draft restoration programme was elaborated thanks to the collaboration with the Pinna life project team. SPA/RAC organized also a Regional hands-on training on Pinna nobilis juveniles collection and transportation (Kerkennah, Tunisia, 28-30 June 2022).

44. SPA/RAC launched the work for the elaboration of the Mediterranean distribution Maps of Posidonia Meadows, coralligenous assemblages and marine caves habitats. The objective is to elaborate distribution Maps of Posidonia Meadows, coralligenous assemblages and marine caves habitats from available online data, national data and SPA/RAC data as foreseen in NTZ/MPA project and in SPA/RAC Programme of work 2022-2023 (activity 3.1.1). The data Collection methodology, Inventory, collection and Aggregation were made and will be send to CP for validation. The distribution maps are planned to be ready by December 2022.

45. SPA/RAC is supporting the Contracting Parties to implement their national monitoring programmes in line with the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) and to enhance knowledge on marine key habitats and strengthen monitoring at national level. A MoA is under finalization to contribute to the implementation of IMAP through the execution of the national monitoring programme in MPAs including the site concerned by the Medkeyhabitats I project and in high pressure areas, including the provision of related quality assured data, as well as respective national reporting using the IMAP Info System.

46. SPA/RAC has contributed to the CAMP Bosnia and Herzegovina by implementing the sub-activity to prepare a document/report: "*Marine species and habitats in the territorial waters of BiH, issues, monitoring, protection and future financing*".

47. On 31 January 2022, the bycatch data collection programme, started in November 2020 by SPA/RAC in collaboration with Tunisian partners, has been successfully completed. The data analysis started in the end of February 2022 and a National Report was elaborated in July 2022. The report is under validation process by the Tunisian National fishery authority DGPAq. In parallel, 95% of the bycatch mitigation trials were achieved and some still ongoing in Tunisia targeting mainly sea turtles and cartilaginous fishes (Trawlers, longline and gillnets). The results of the Bycatch Monitoring programme as well as the results of the bycatch mitigation measures were presented during 3 main events: the GFCM Working Group on Fishing Technology (WGFiT) held online from 27 to 28 September 2022, the MedBycatch project final meeting held in Malaga on 3 October 2022 and the International Bycatch meeting, held in Malaga on 4-6 October 2022.

48. Under the MAVA MedByatch, Co-managed No-Take Zones (NTZ)/MPA, and Marine Turtles projects SPA/RAC provided support to the Agricultural Extension and Training Agency (AVFA) in Tunisia to include bycatch topic as a module within several fishing schools in Tunisia; several fishers had and will continue to benefit from it.

49. Within the framework of the MedBycatch project, SPA/RAC participated during the BirdLife Ocean Week event organised in Brussels by Birdlife ECA on 14 June 2022 to tackle and raise awareness about bycatch issue for European Parliament representatives and general public. Within the same framework, SPA/RAC contributed to the Know-how Webinar "*Monitoring Bycatch of Vulnerable Marine Species and Dolphin Depredation*" co-organized with IUCN Med (16 May 2022) and, in collaboration with ACCOBAMS, supported the replication from Tunisia to Morocco of a mitigation measure: trawler equipped with a vulnerable species excluder grid (Al Houceima, Morocco, 22 to 27 May 2022)

50. Within the framework of the Bilateral Cooperation Agreement signed Between UNEP/MAP and the Italian Ministry of Ecological Transition (MiTE), SPA/RAC started discussions with the beneficial countries of the planned twinning programme of marine turtles rescue centers, in order to identify the needs in term of their reinforcement and functioning.

51. Under the MAVA marine turtles project, SPA/RAC, as lead of this project, is elaborating a study on Marine turtle's partnership for the post-MAVA period, a fundraising communication strategy and the report on the impact measures of the project. The 6th steering committee of the project has been organised in Denizli, Türkiye, on 15-18 March 2022. The final Project technical report will be finalised during a steering committee to be held in Tunisia from 15 to 17 November 2022. The project national component has mainly focused on the elaboration of the NAP for the conservation of marine turtles in Algeria and Morocco; nesting monitoring programme implementation in Libya; stranding national network progress activities report in Libya, Algeria Lebanon and Tunisia.

52. SPA/RAC contributed to the organisation of the 7th Mediterranean marine turtles conference (Tetouan, Morocco, 18- 21 October 2022) where more than 140 participants participated and is supporting the 2022 study "*Enhancing place-based conservation efforts for fin whales in the North-Western Mediterranean Sea using satellite transmitters to assess habitat use and movements*" achieved by Tethys Research Institute.

53. Within the EU-funded Marine Litter MED II Project, SPA/RAC is supporting the implementation of the national programme for the monitoring of the CI 24 in Lebanon and Tunisia; Data Standards (DS) and Data Dictionaries (DD) for IMAP Ecological Objective 10 (EO10) Common Indicator 24 (Ingestion and Entanglement on Marine Turtles) has been prepared in close collaboration with MEDPOL and Info/RAC.

54. As planned by the 2022-2023 POW, SPA/RAC is proceeding with the assessment and the update of the Action Plan for the conservation of bird species listed in annexes II to SPA/BD Protocol and with the preparation of the Midterm evaluation of the regional Monk seal conservation strategy.

55. The analysis of the species project data related to the distribution of cartilaginous fishes, sea bird, marine turtles and cetacean in some Mediterranean areas has been presented during the regional workshop organized in Izmir (29- 30 July 2022). A photo identification exercise of dolphin population is ongoing in the northern area of Tunisia within the INTERMED Project.

56. Within the framework of the depredation project, the report "*Towards solutions to the interactions between fishing communities and Tursiops truncatus in Tunisian waters*" has been finalized; A pilot activity on the implementation of pescatourism has been carried out in Monastir (Tunisia) with the support of the NGO NGB.

57. In the framework of the QuietSEA project, funded by DG Environment of the European Commission, the first draft of Deliverable 2 "*Options for EU threshold values for D11C1 for impulsive noise*" of the EU MSFD has been delivered to SPA/RAC in July 2022.

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

58. SPA/RAC organized the symposia on marine key habitats (marine vegetation, coralligenous and calcareous bio-concretions and dark habitats) and Non-Indigenous Species in the Mediterranean, held from 19 to 23 September 2022 in Genova, Italy. SPA/RAC also launched the assessment of the implementation and updating of the Regional Action Plan on non-indigenous species and species introduction. The elaboration of the desktop review and the dissemination of the prefilled questionnaire is underway as provided for in the ToR.

59. REMPEC started the process, in consultation with IMO, to support the harmonisation of procedures in the Mediterranean pursuant to the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (BWM Convention), following the adoption of the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027), and to support the development of a resources mobilisation strategy to implement the said Strategy. Logistical arrangements were secured for the back-to-back Regional Workshop on the BWM Convention and the Regional Expert Meeting on the harmonisation of procedures in the Mediterranean pursuant to the BWM Convention (20-23 March 2023, Kappara, Malta).

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.)

60. No activity was reported under this outcome during this reporting period.

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

61. Plan Bleu/RAC and SPA/RAC are working with partners involved in the IUCN Congress's Mediterranean Pavilion, to synthetize and publish the knowledge displayed during the events which have been taking place on this pavilion, with a strong focus on nature-based solutions. A catalogue of Mediterranean Nature-Based solutions is being finalized.

62. Following the signature of the agreement between France and UNEP/MAP, which secured funding for one pilot in one Mediterranean country to mobilise and implement innovative solutions to reduce GHG emissions from ships in selected ports, including energy efficiency and decarbonisation, REMPEC initiated discussions with IMO and France on the prospective of this activity.

63. The restoration plan for Santa Marija Bay wetland on Comino Island, Malta, prepared with SIDA funds in the context of the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, had its immediate follow-up through the implementation of some of the interventions recommended by the Plan, such as the creation of ponds for the retention of the fresh water and plantation of plants that will establish favourable conditions for migratory birds when stopping on the island and re-establish the

water cycle and connectivity between the sea, the dunes and the coastal wetland itself. Restoration of ecosystems such wetlands is considered as one of the model examples of nature-based solutions to combat the effects of climate change in coastal zones.

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

64. MedECC Secretariat laid the ground for the elaboration of the three Special Reports: 1) Climate and environmental coastal risks, 2) Climate-water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus, and 3) Environmental change, conflicts and human migration. The Coordinating Lead Authors meeting was held in June 2022 in Barcelona. The Reports' Coordinators and Coordinating Lead Authors were appointed, as well as most of the Lead Authors. The outlines of the reports have been produced. The first drafts of the full reports are being prepared.

65. Plan Bleu/RAC is a partner in the successful consortium which applied to the European Environment Agency's call for the European Topic Center on Climate Adaptation. Plan Bleu contributes to the task related to drafting the report on challenges and solutions related to climate change in Europe's seas.

66. The Mediterranean Pavilion to be organized during the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Egypt in November 2022 would be an important forum to exchange knowledge and information on measures, solutions and status with regard to climate change. Six side-events will be led by the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system and two by MedECC. MedECC plays a role of the scientific advisory council of the Mediterranean Pavilion.

67. Sea'ties Ocean and Climate Platform is an initiative that analyzes cities' responses to sea-level rise and facilitates the exchange of knowledge and concrete returns on experience globally, to highlight good practices and overcome common challenges. In April 2022, Plan Bleu and MedeCC participated in the online workshop: "Adapting coastal cities to sea level rise in the Mediterranean Region" organized in the frame of the Sea'ties project. As the outcome of this workshop the report: "Adapting coastal cities and territories to sea level rise in the Mediterranean Basin - Challenges and best practices" is being prepared by the Ocean and Climate Platform. Plan Bleu and the MedECC Secretariat reviewed this report in August 2022.

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

68. No activity was reported under this outcome during this reporting period.

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)

69. On 13 March 2022, in Tangier, PAP/RAC and Plan Bleu/RAC held the inception meeting for the preparation of regional Coastal plan (Schéma régional du littoral) for the region Tanger-Tetouan-Al Hoceima in Morocco. It was an inception meeting and Climagine workshop organised in the framework of the GEF MEDProgramme's Child Projects 2.1. and SCCF. The workshop was attended by representatives of national and regional governments and relevant institutions. It brought out the priority topics that SRL-Coastal Plan will cover, and agreement on further actions. The second workshop, held on 4 July 2022 in Kotor, presented PAP/RAC's Diagnostic of the priority topics of the Plan, and was followed by the second Climagine workshop on the elaboration of sustainability indicators for the Plan. On 5 July, Plan Bleu/RAC organised a back-to-back MedProgramme SCCF Project participatory workshop to identify potential coastal adaptation solutions for Kotor Bay, to be submitted to economic analyses moving forward.

70. The annual Mediterranean Coast Day celebration and the second stakeholder workshop on the coastal plan (SRL), were successfully held in Tangier on 29 and 30 September 2022. PAP/RAC, in collaboration with Moroccan partners - Regional Direction of Environment, and with international partners - Plan Bleu and GWP-Med, organized this workshop to discuss priority themes identified during the first workshop and to identify a set of sustainability indicators using the participatory Climagine method. The workshop, which brought together more than 80 stakeholders, representatives of national and regional governments and relevant institutions, is a milestone in the preparation of the plan, which promotes ICZM values, works for a sustainable future for the region and represents an important step in Morocco's implementation of the ICZM Protocol.

71. In the context of the MedProgramme's Child Project 2.1, PAP/RAC and Plan Bleu/RAC organised the first Scoping and Climagine workshop in Tanger on 16 March 2022, following the same logic as in Kotor Bay. The second Coastal Plan Diagnostic/Climagine 2 workshop took place on 29-30 September 2022, and also integrated Child Project 2.2 elements on the WEFE Nexus in collaboration with GWP-Med. The MedProgramme SCCF Project participatory workshop to identify potential coastal adaptation solutions for the Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima Region is foreseen in December 2022.

72. A PAP/RAC delegation visited Kotor on 17 June 2022 in order to meet with the local experts included in the preparation of the Coastal Management Plan for Boka Kotorska Bay, which is being designed within the frame of the GEF MEDProgramme. The team agreed upon the envisaged structure of the Coastal Management Plan presented by PAP/RAC; the experts presented their initial findings on 4-5July 2022 during the 2nd Coastal Management Plan meeting with the local stakeholders in Kotor, as an opportunity to address the main challenges in the region - with special focus on climate variability and change. This second workshop was organised with the with the support of Plan Bleu, using the "*Climagine*" participatory method. A lively discussion on priority challenges in the area ensued among more than 40 stakeholders present, with the specific focus on the climate change adaptation. On the second day of the workshop, a discussion on potential adaptation measures took place, bringing up the initial ideas for adaptation in the area. Knowing the expected climate change impacts in Boka Kotorska Bay, such as coastal and flash floods, heat waves, droughts and forest fires, these discussions were of great importance.

73. Work is ongoing by Plan Bleu/RAC, under GEF MedProgramme CP 2.1 to implement two activities aimed at identifying parameters and indicators to be monitored to reach good environmental status on the Mediterranean coastal zone and at drafting a regional conceptual framework for coastal observation. A meeting has been organised in Plan Bleu's headquarters on 7 July 2022.

74. In the framework of the MedProgramme SCCF Project, Plan Bleu/RAC led production of two gender-sensitive climate risk assessments of Kotor Bay and the Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima Region to be published by Plan Bleu/RAC in November 2022. Two review and capacity-building workshops around these workshops will take place in each of the coastal hotspots.

75. The coastal town of Neum, Bosnia and Herzegovina, hosted the Final conference of the CAMP project on 13 September 2022. This event came as the crown of the two-year activities on the implementation of this project important not only for the Municipality of Neum, being the only coastal region in BiH but for the whole country. Although the project themes were dedicated to solving concrete issues related to sustainable development of tourism, adaptation to climate change, monitoring of marine and coastal environment important for the local level, there were a number of activities relevant for other levels of authorities, such as the legal analysis with a view to support ratification of the ICZM Protocol, proposing the coordination mechanism for ICZM as well as the preparation of the Contingency plan. Participants representing all B&H levels of authorities, as well as the UNEP/MAP Coordinator, Ms. Hema, representatives of RACs involved, members of the project Steering Committee and public in general attended the conference. The afternoon was reserved for the local celebration of the Coast Day.

76. Progress has been made with the other two CAMP projects launched in this biennium: recruitment procedure of the National Project Coordinators of both the Transboundary CAMP Otranto between Albania and Italy and the CAMP Israel were finalised, respective contracts signed and several online meetings held with PAP/RAC to clarify the next steps in the projects' implementation. Moreover, contracts with thematic experts were signed for the Italian side while this procedure is still to be done in Albania as well as in the case of CAMP Israel.

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

77. The Secretariat has continued working on the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy of Sustainable Development (MSSD) 2016-2025 and has initiated the process of MSSD review. In this respect, the 23rd Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee (videoconference, 1-2 June 2022) reviewed the progress of the work of the MCSD and implementation of the MSSD after the 19th Meeting of the MCSD and COP22, including inter alia: Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard and Sustainable Consumption and Production Indicators, MSSD Flagship Initiatives (Sustainability Awards, MedECC, Environmental Governance), and MED 2050 Foresight Study. The MCSD Steering Committee initiated a discussion among its members and with the Secretariat about the MSSD Review Process, which is expected to be launched during the next biennium (2024-2025), the latter corresponding also with the last biennium of implementation of the MSSD 2016-2025. The 24th Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee is planned to be held in Athens, Greece, from 14-15 December 2022, with the main objective to prepare the 20th Meeting of the MCSD to be held in Marseille, France, from 15-16 June 2023 – the discussion with the host country is progressing smoothly for finalizing the Exchange of Letters in lieu et place of the Host Country Agreement, as per practice.

78. An advanced draft of the guiding document to foster Circular Economy within the Blue Economy was prepared, co-produced between the SwitchMed initiative (SCP/RAC) and the Interreg Med Blue Growth Community (Plan Bleu/RAC and Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions/CPMR). A joint conference to share the main findings/recommendations and foster implementation took place on 10-11 May 2022 in Barcelona, Spain.

79. Plan Bleu/RAC continued its activities towards guidelines for sustainable tourism, with a focus on sustainable cruise and leisure boating. Those guidelines have been presented during a side-event of the IUCN World Conservation

Congress, and they have been discussed by French institutions working on the "*Document Stratégique de Façade*" for the French Mediterranean coast.

80. Plan Bleu/RAC and SCP/RAC coordinated for the organization of the Med Forum on the blue economy (Barcelona, Spain, 10-11 May 2022). Plan Bleu/RAC, in the framework of the Interreg Med Sustainable Tourism Community, is co-organizing the II Med Sustainable Tourism Convention, scheduled on 8-9 June in Barcelona, Spain; it also continued its activities towards a Catalogue on Best Practices on Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean Region to showcase concrete examples and good practices of the Interreg Med Sustainable Tourism Community project which have been successfully incorporated into policies (either at the local, regional or state level) in the Mediterranean with concrete results. Plan Bleu/RAC continued its activities towards an updated version of the "*State of Play of the Tourism in the Mediterranean*" and prepared a submission for a follow-up work in the framework of a new Interreg EuroMed project focusing on tourism.

81. In partnership with "*Hautes Etudes Commerciales*" (HEC), a major post-graduate school in France, Plan Bleu/RAC prepared a study on the benefits of digitalization in the context of the blue economy, to be published in December 2022.

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

82. A preliminary report on the assessment of environmentally harmful subsidies in the Mediterranean is under finalization by Plan Bleu/RAC. It is expected to be published by the end of 2022. Work on an exploratory study on conservative easement tools has started in September 2022 and is expected to be finalized by Summer 2023.

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

83. Terms of reference for the three Intersessional Correspondence Groups to prepare i) a draft decision on common criteria, rules and procedures for the removal of installations and the related financial aspects, ii) an Offshore monitoring programme, and iii) a draft decision on amendments to the Annexes to the Offshore Protocol, were prepared in consultation with Members of the Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG). The corresponding ICG leadership has been temporarily defined: i) Decommissioning (Italy subject to confirmation), Offshore Monitoring (Secretariat), Amendment to the Annex to the Protocol (Secretariat). REMPEC and MED POL established contact to ensure integration of previous OFOG work on Offshore Monitoring, within the MedProgramme (GEF TDA) - Offshore Strategy Report. At the time of writing this report, the recruitment for the selection of the Programme Manager was still being processed.

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

84. INFO/RAC started the conceptual analysis of operational annexes to the MAP Data Policy related to different MAP data flows (BCRS, IMAP, NBB, etc.) to start the implementation at regional and, as appropriate, at national levels. A main structure model has been developed and customization is ongoing. The development of specific rules for the different data flows on the basis of the bilateral meeting with Contracting Parties is ongoing.

85. Plan Bleu/RAC is gathering information through internship reports on different aspects of the national legal frameworks (level of fines, methodology to value environmental impacts), as preliminary work to inform the thinking on legal indicators.

86. GEF 8 is open for project proposals, and the Secretariat is considering to participate and take part in the preparation and execution of the relevant child projects related to the following Integrated Programs: (a) Food Systems Integrated Program; (b) Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Program; (c) Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution Integrated Program; and (d) Elimination of Hazardous Chemicals from Supply Chains Integrated Program.

87. The mandate of the COP 22 Programme of Work and Budget 2022-2023 (Decision IG.25/19) require the advancement the implementation of Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) in the Mediterranean and IMAP in coherence with regional and global developments. In this context an independent evaluation of the implementation of the EcAp Roadmap 2008-2021 has been initiated, with the vision of enhancing and strengthening the delivery of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system's EcAp mandate in the future, taking into account the ongoing processes at regional and global levels. The forward-looking evaluation will provide technical and policy proposals on the main elements for a renewed UNEP/MAP Ecosystem Approach policy. It will be presented to MAP Focal Points and COP 23 in 2023 for their consideration on giving a full mandate for elaboration of a renewed EcAp policy in the biennium 2024-2025.

88. The Secretariat, through the EcAp Task Force - composed of representatives of the CU and MAP Components-, updated the terms of reference (TORs) for Correspondence Groups CORMONS, COR ESA and Online Working Groups in relation to the Ecosystem Approach governance mechanism, to align with COP22 Decision IG.25/03. The TORs clarify the flow of work between Correspondence Groups and other decision-making bodies of the MAP system as well as providing clarity on the relationship between MAP Components and the Coordinating Unit for EcAp related products. The 9th EcAp Coordination Group considered and approved the proposal (5 July 2022, Report of the Meeting UNEP/MED WG.521/5).

89. The Secretariat, through the EcAp Task Force, continues to develop the 2023 MED QSR. Progress in the 2023 MED QSR, the draft table of contents of the socio-economic chapter and draft annotated contents of the assessment chapters were presented to the 9th EcAp Coordination Group (UNEP/MED WG.521/Inf.5). The EcAp Task Force has developed draft zero version of the assessment chapters, which will be discussed and developed during a two-day meeting in November 2022. The EU-funded projects IMAP-MPA, EcAp MED III, and Marine Litter MED II projects all have components to support beneficiary countries to implement the IMAP. Whilst Covid has slowed down on-the-ground operations, the Steering Committees of the projects are helping to keep the momentum. In the framework of the EU-funded projects, national monitoring data is being reported by the Contracting Parties, supported by the MAP Components and particularly INFO/RAC. Data submitted to the IMAP Info System by October 2022 will be included in delivery of the 2023 MED QSR to the extent possible.

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

90. The Compliance Committee, in the course of its 18th Meeting (Athens, Greece, 29-30 June 2022), adopted for the first time since its creation findings and recommendations concerning compliance by a Contracting Party with the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols. More information is provided in the Report by the Secretariat on Specific Issues (UNEP/MED BUR.93/6).

91. The MCSD Steering Committee held its 23rd Meeting through teleconference, on 1-2 June 2022. In this meeting the Committee, inter alia, initiated a discussion among its members and with the Secretariat about the MSSD Review Process, which is expected to be launched during the next biennium (2024-2025). The 24th Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee will take place in Athens, Greece, on 14-15 December 2022, and will discuss a number of issues, including the preparations for the 20th Meeting of the MCSD, to be held in Marseille, France, in June 2023.

92. The Project Document and Legal Instruments for the operationalisation of the MAP Programme of Work (PoW) and Budget 2022-2023 have been signed in March 2022 and funds from both sources (MTF and Italian contribution) were disbursed to the RACs. The updated Planning and Priorities Tool was updated for the period January-June 2022 and discussed in the ECP meeting.

93. The Bilateral Cooperation Agreement signed with the Italian Ministry of Ecological Transition (MiTE) on 2 November 2021, which was integrated into the COP 22 Decision on the MAP PoW and Budget 2022-2023 linked with specific PoW activities, as well as in the Project Document and Legal Instruments prepared for its operationalisation is under implementation. A steering committee meeting was held in Athens, Greece, on 21-22 June 2022, which reviewed and approved the progress and financial report, as well as the activity fiches developed under the Bilateral Agreement. A Junior Professional Officer (JPO) is expected to be on board in the Coordinating Unit on 1 November 2022, to support the coordination of the Bilateral Agreement, funded at 50% by the MiTE funds, as well as a UN Volunteer to provide programmatic and financial assistance to the Agreement implementation.

94. The Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France allocated, through an Agreement signed with UNEP, a voluntary contribution of 1,143,000 EUR to support a number of activities of the MAP PoW 2022-2023, in line with the axes of the PAMEx. This contribution, which is fully integrated into the MAP PoW and Budget 2022-2023 will be operationalised and disbursed to the respective Regional Activity Centres through amendment of the Project Document and legal instruments with RACs, that have been submitted to UNEP HQ in early October 2022 with the plan to have the legal instruments signed by τηε end of October. An expert was seconded by France to the Coordinating Unit to coordinate the implementation of PAMEx and ensure synergies with the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention and work under other regional instruments and initiatives. A regional meeting of the PAMEx with the countries and organisations that have endorsed it will be organised in Athens, Greece, in January 2023.

95. The Secretariat has launched the preparation of an updated Resource Mobilisation Strategy (RMS) for the MTS 2022-2027. The current RMS (COP 20 Decision IG.23/5) which has a horizon period of ten years will be reviewed for any necessary update in the main text, while its Appendix, as refined and attached in Annex VII to the COP 21 Decision 24/2 will be fully updated to reflect the outcomes of the new MTS 2022-2027, and resource needs and possible donors and funding opportunities, in coordination with the ECP.

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

96. UNEP/MAP took part in the 2022 UN Ocean Conference (Lisbon, Portugal, 27 June –1 July 2022) to convey the voice of the Mediterranean, and share lessons learned from almost five decades of multilateral ocean governance, including on issues pertaining to plastic pollution where significant progress has been made on the normative front. Three side-events organized/co-organized by UNEP/MAP addressed important elements of the regional response to the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

97. UNECE Ninth Ministerial Conference "*Environment for Europe*" - Sustainable Infrastructure, Circular Tourism and Education for Sustainable Development, Nicosia, Cyprus, 5-7 October 2022: The Environment for Europe (EfE) process has been launched in 1991 to support efforts from UNECE Member States to advance environmental governance. 14 UNECE Member States are also Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, and it was the first time that the EfE Ministerial Conference was organized in a Mediterranean country. This important regional event hosted +700 participants and about 38 side-events and thematic exhibitions. The two themes of the Conference were 1. Greening the economy in the pan-European region: working towards sustainable infrastructure and; 2. Applying principles of circular economy to sustainable tourism. In addition, the Third High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries was organized as part of the Conference, with a strong involvement of MIO-ECSDE (MAP Partner) through the Mediterranean Strategy and Action Plan on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), as an integral part of the MSSD. The UNEP/MAP Coordinator participated in this High-Level Event following a personal invitation by the Ministries of the Environment and of Education of Cyprus (23 June 2022).

98. The UNEP/MAP side event on "*Tourism and Circularity for Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean*" was held on 5 October, co-organized by UNEP/MAP and Plan Bleu/RAC. The event allowed to highlight the work of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system and Plan Bleu/RAC recent publications on sustainable tourism such as the Catalogue of Best Practices on Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean, the Guidelines for the sustainability of the cruising and recreational boating sectors and the forthcoming report on "*State of Play of Tourism in the Mediterranean*". Relevant regional and global initiatives to accelerate the transition towards circular/sustainable tourism were also introduced: the One Planet Network – Sustainable Tourism Programme (UNEP) and the Glasgow Declaration for Tourism Climate Action (UNWTO); the Blue Tourism initiative in three marine regions (IDDRI, eco union); the DestiMED Plus and Mediterranean Ecotourism Consortium (IMC CPRM). On the national level, Greece presented the draft National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism. Finally, the side event reported on local good practices in Balearic Islands, Spain: implementation of the local strategy on circular economy by the private sector, i.e., Garden Hotels group.

99. The UNEP/MAP Coordinator delivered a statement during the High-Level Event of Education and Environment Ministers on the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and its Action Plan towards 2030 (6 October 2022, 15:30 – 19:15). The Action Plan on ESD in the Mediterranean, which is recognized as a Regional Action of the MSSD has been adopted on that occasion. Ministers and representatives of Med countries (Italy, Lebanon, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, and Spain) delivered supporting speeches, some of them making explicit and supportive reference to the work of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system, including the MCSD. The UNEP/MAP Coordinator also participated, as speaker, in the High-Level Event on the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (MSESD) and its Action Plan towards 2030, as well as side events organized by partners on marine litter; ocean literacy; public participation and the Mediterranean accession agenda to the Aarhus Convention.

100. Plan Bleu/RAC has contributed with an expert essay on "*Vision Setting: A Sustainable Coastal and Marine Tourism Sector in 2030 and 2050*" to the "*40 Expert Perspectives on the future of coastal and marine tourism*" that gather and showcase a wide range of perspectives on the future of coastal and marine tourism based on emerging themes and issues selected by the 16 members of the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy. These perspectives accompany the report on "*Opportunities for Transforming Coastal and Marine Tourism: Towards Sustainability, Regeneration and Resilience*". Both documents were presented on 29 June, as part of the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, Portugal, during the Launch of the Sustainable coastal and marine tourism knowledge platform and the Official UNOC Side Event: Building Sustainable and Resilience Ocean Tourism Economies and Coastal Cities on 1 July 2022.

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

101. The Secretariat participated at the 16th Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), which took place in Dubai, UAE, from 9 to 10 March. During the Assembly a ceremony for the signature of the MoU between the two organizations, endorsed by COP 22, was conducted.

102. The Secretariat continued collaboration with key partners which have MoUs with UNEP/MAP, including the Secretariat of the Union of the Mediterranean (UfMS), the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean,

ACCOBAMS, IUCN, etc. The Coordinator had a bilateral meeting with the Senior Deputy Secretary General of UfM for Energy and Climate Action, Mr. Grammenos Mastrojeni, and has planned a bilateral meeting with the new Deputy Secretary General of UfM for Water, Environment and Blue Economy, Mr. Almotaz Abadi, to discuss issues of common interest, including current activities on the implementation of the MoU, the possible update of the Areas of Cooperation of the MoU, major upcoming meetings and events of joint interest, as well as ways to strengthen cooperation in the near future. The Coordinator also met with the Executive Secretary of ACCOBAMS, Mrs. Salvador, to discuss issues of common interest, including the contribution of ACCOBAMS to the 2023 MED QSR, exchange of best practices, cooperation on spatial-based protection and management measures for marine biodiversity, possible future collaboration as well as the renewal of the Agreement between the two organizations. More information is provided in the Report by the Secretariat on Specific Issues (UNEP/MED BUR.93/6).

103. Since the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNEP/MAP and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) in 2012, both Secretariats have significantly increased their interaction, exchange of information, expert knowledge, and cooperation on topics of common concern, including on marine litter, having in the spotlight a healthy Mediterranean including for its living resources. The Secretariat participated at the MAVA-Lex Regional workshop (Luxor, Egypt, 11-12 October 2022) which focused on how to retrieve, analyze and store national legislation on fisheries and aquaculture stemming from recommendations adopted by the GFCM; with this opportunity possibilities of further collaboration between UNEP/MAP and GFCM on related issues were discussed.

104. The Secretariat participated in the IUCN week for nature conservation/Celebration of the 20th anniversary of the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, in the panel discussion/Dialogue on Regional Cooperation and Nature Conservation in the Mediterranean, together with the UfM Secretariat, ACCOBAMS and representatives of national authorities. The event provided an opportunity for exchanges and strengthening of relations with key partners related to nature conservation in the Mediterranean.

105. Collaboration with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has been also promoted, especially in relation to the joint and coordinated proposal on the designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides (Med SOx ECA), submitted on 4 February 2022, by France on behalf of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and the Member States of the European Union, to the 78th Session of the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 78) (London, UK, 6-10 June 2022). MEPC 78 approved the designation of the Med SOx ECA under regulation 14 of Annex VI to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). The draft amendments to formally designate the Med SOx ECA were put forward for adoption at the 79th Session of the IMO's MEPC (MEPC 79) (London, UK, 12-16 December 2022).

106. The Secretariat participated in the 13th InforMEA Initiative Steering Committee Meeting that took place in Montreux, Switzerland, on 11-13 October 2022. The meeting provided an opportunity for Multilateral Environmental Agreements to discuss issues related to collaboration on e-learning courses (hosted by the InforMEA platform), outreach, archiving and creation of digital MEA archives, partnerships, dashboards, reports and online systems, as well as the preparation of InforMEA phase VI.

107. UNEP/MAP participated at the MARLICE 2022 Conference (18-20 May 2022, Seville, Spain). All Directors of the European Regional Seas and the European Union participated to the open session "Connecting Seas" to discuss the way forward after the outcomes of UNEA 5.2 and Global Treaty on Plastics, including the role of the Regional Seas in supporting the implementation of the envisaged actions in the framework of the Global Treaty on Plastics.

108. The Secretariat participated at the second joint technical meeting between representatives of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment and five regional seas conventions and their protocols (Geneva/online, 16 June 2022). The discussions focused on the identification of synergies and possible cooperation activities in marine regions, in relation to Environmental Impact Assessment in a transboundary context as well as Strategic Environmental Assessment. The process is supported by the government of Italy.

109. In preparation for the First Coordination Meeting on the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) (Malta, 29 November-1 December 2022), REMPEC produced an analytical report on the countries' needs and priorities against regional stakeholders' ongoing and future actions as well as projects and available resources, identifying gaps and duplications. The report compiled input from 13 main stakeholders (UfM, OSRL, FEDERCHIMICA, IOI, Cedre, PAM, CLIA, IPIECA, Med Cruise, EMSA, West Med initiative, OceanCare, Sea Alarm and ITOPF) and from the draft National Action Plans (NAP) for the implementation of the said strategy from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Israel, Montenegro, Tunisia and Türkiye. The draft NAP for Morocco is under preparation, whilst the on for Egypt is being initiated. Whilst 8 NAPs will be prepared with the support of REMPEC, all Contracting Parties are encouraged to complete their respective NAPs. A dedicated

website on the Strategy, including monitoring/reporting tools for Contracting Parties and stakeholders, is being developed and will be introduced during the said meeting.

110. The UNEP/MAP – EEA Joint Work Plan (JWP) 2022-2030, concluded at the end of 2021, is expected to contribute to the MAP-Barcelona Convention system responses to the challenges and priorities expressed by the Contracting Parties, including through the Antalya Ministerial Declaration. The JWP was published, and its implementation has been launched with a first meeting between EEA and UNEP/MAP and its Regional Activity Centres held in September 2022 to identify priority areas of common interest, on which cooperation should be focused in 2022. A second online meeting dedicated to assessment work is planned to be held in October 2022.

111. The synergies with the IPPC have been reinforced. One of the MedCC Coordinators, Prof. Wolfgang Cramer, co-led the cross-chapter paper on the Mediterranean Region of the Sixth Assessment Report of the IPCC (Working Group 2) published in 2022.

112. SCP/RAC as regional center of the Stockholm Convention joined the face-to-face segment of the BRS COP (Geneva, Switzerland, 6-17 June 2022). Advocacy and communication actions were planned in coordination with MEDPOL to give visibility to relevant actions developed in the Mediterranean (in particular under the MedProgramme) and to the need to strengthen prevention strategies.

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

113. A series of lectures on ICZM and MSP were held in September-October 2022 for the master's students of the Syrian Virtual University (SVU). This cooperation between the PAP/RAC and the SUV was agreed and defined by an MoU and is related to the Master's Programme of Qualification and Specialization in Integrated Management of Natural Resources. The PAP/RAC team contributed with lectures to the third semester focused on Integrated Management of Natural Resources. Topics of relevance for the students were selected: ICZM Protocol and implementation of the ICZM process; MSP and land-sea interactions; addressing climate change challenges by ICZM/MSP and best adaptation practices in coastal zones; Coast and hydrology cluster of IMAP. The assignments for the students were prepared by the PAP/RAC team using the MedOpen experience.

114. Based on the actions included in the Post-2020 SAPBIO and in the Post-2020 Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs, coherent projects to be implemented at the Mediterranean regional, sub-regional or multinational levels are being identified, conceptualised and drafted. They will be developed through a Fundraising Strategy for the Post-2020 SAPBIO including Post-2020 Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs for the period 2022-2030 and beyond, supported by a donors' conference in Spring 2023.

115. A regional project on ecosystems approach to fisheries in synergy with GFCM has been prepared among UNEP/MAP, with SPA/RAC support, and GFCM. It is now waiting for final GEF clearance. The project includes staffing involvement support for UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit, SPA/RAC and in pilot areas along four years.

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

116. The preparation of the transboundary diagnostic analysis (TDA) is in progress: the first working chapters of the TDA are under preparation, mainly chapters 3 to 9 on Baseline socio-economy (chapter 3), Transboundary issues (chapter 4), Gender (chapter 5), Stakeholders (chapter 6), Governance (chapter 7) by the TDA SC for December 2022, and the Scenario analysis (chapter 8) and Links to SDGs (chapter 9) will follow in January 2023 for the next Regional TDA SC by February 2023. Three joint online sessions have been proposed on 16, 17 and 21 November, between the Regional TDA consultants and the TDA consultant, to undertake the integrated Causal Chain Analysis (CCA) exercise related to Chapter 4 (transboundary issues) resulting from the consultant's work on Pollution (core TDA theme), Biodiversity, Climate change and Environmental Economics.

117. In the framework of the foresight initiative MED 2050, a videoconference workshop organized by Plan Bleu/RAC, with young people from around the Mediterranean took place on 2 March 2022 followed by a workshop held in Montpellier (France) on 30 May to 1 June, to produce sketches of exploratory scenarios. Two MED 2050 Foresight group meetings took place on 5 April 2022 (by videoconference) and on 12 July 2022 (Marseille - France). On 23 and 24 September, MED 2050 scenarios were presented in Bizerte (Tunisia), on the occasion of the World Sea Forum. Module 1 and 2 reports are scheduled to be finalised and published respectively in October and November 2022.

118. The Study on trends an outlook of marine pollution from ships and activities and maritime traffic and offshore activities in the Mediterranean prepared by REMPEC was published online.

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

119. The activities within IMAP Pollution Cluster continue, aiming to deliver outputs as defined within 7 processes and milestones of the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap. The outputs at IMAP Pollution Cluster Common Indicators level are under the preparation for 4 Mediterranean sub-regions by considering data reported into IMAP IS by each Contracting Party. Given the lack of data reporting from the Contracting Parties for all IMAP Common Indicators related to pollution and eutrophication, the alternative sources were also explored and put in use, as appropriate and feasible. Further to new and/or updated assessment criteria for Common Indicators 13, 17 and 20 as well as the assessment methodologies set for IMAP Common Indicators 13, 14, 17 and 21, as well as the proposed use of the literature sources for IMAP Common Indicators 18 and 20, the work is ongoing to deliver the assessment findings per sub-divisions integrated and aggregated into the assessment findings for Mediterranean sub-regions. The lack of data reported by the Contracting Parties, as defined in Decisions IG.23/6 and IG.24/64, makes it challenging to deliver the assessment findings in line with the 2023 MED QSR roadmap and needs assessment as endorsed in Annex V of Decision IG.24/64.

120. The CORMON Pollution Meeting was held on 27 and 30 May 2022, via videoconference. The Meeting participants provided their feedback regarding the progress related to the IMAP Pollution Cluster within the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR, along with their review and approval of the proposed assessment criteria for IMAP Common Indicator 17; new reference and boundary values for IMAP Common Indicator 13; application of NEAT tool to support GES assessment in the Adriatic Sea; methodologies proposed for assessing the status of the marine environment in the areas with insufficient data; and Data Standards and Data Dictionaries for IMAP Common Indicators 18 and 20.

121. The EU-funded projects EcAp Med III, IMAP-MPA and Marine Litter Med II are progressing well. Joint communication products were prepared and dispatched for these three projects, with a brochure translated in four languages (ENG, FR, SP, AR), a video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTdQIID-8B0) and a joint article published on the UNEP/MAP website (https://www.unep.org/unepmap/news/news/how-unepmap-eu-funded-projects-achieving-good-environmental-status-Mediterranean). The conclusion of legal agreements with the remaining beneficiary countries is ongoing, enabling the implementation of the activities and data collection. Under EcAp Med III, the Secretariat has legal agreements with agencies in Israel and Morocco, and agreements with agencies in Algeria, Lebanon and Tunisia are anticipated for signature during October 2022. EcAp Med III legal agreements are in place between SPA/RAC and Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. Under IMAP-MPA, legal agreements were signed with Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

122. Meetings of the IMAP Task Force continue to be held monthly, addressing key issues of implementation of the EcAp Roadmap, the organization of CORMONs and implementation of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR) Roadmap. A template for the MED QSR has been further developed, based on the outline and annotated contents agreed by the 8th EcAp Coordination Group meeting (9 September 2021), which will be presented to the CORMONs meetings (February/March 2023). INFO/RAC started the work on the collection and analysis of monitoring data available for the purposes of cartographic representation of 2023 MED QSR. Plan Bleu/RAC prepared a set of five "*Pressure – Response*" cartographic illustrations, as a contribution to 2023 MED QSR.

123. MAP Components and especially INFO/RAC have been supporting Contracting Parties in data submission to the IMAP Info System. However, the level of data reporting is behind the collectively agreed commitment, putting in jeopardy the delivery of the 2023 MED QSR. Considering the primary importance of reporting monitoring data in line with several decisions of COP 19, 20, 21 and the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap milestones, the 9th EcAp Coordination Group (5 July 2022) reiterated the urgency of Contracting Parties responding to the data calls (June 2020, October 2021, and September 2022) and to prioritise their data submission and/or completion of the IMAP Information System validation process as a matter of urgency.

124. SSFAs with 10 countries are in progress to operationalize national monitoring programmes on marine litter, with the aim of generating data and building national technical/capacity for local authorities.

125. To support implementation of the Integrated National Monitoring Programe of Montenegro which is based on IMAP, the SSFA was signed between national Counterparts and UNEP/MAP-MED POL in order to implement monitoring of IMAP CIs 13&14, 17, 18, 22 and 23 and contribute to the assessment of the marine environment of the Adriatic Sea Sub-region. The activities in Montenegro are supported by the means allocated within the implementation of the Bilateral Cooperation Agreement with the Italian Ministry of Ecological Transition (MiTE). The request of Bosnia and Herzegovina related to implementation of IMAP Pollution and ML Cluster at national level is under consideration of the Secretariat.

126. Plan Bleu/RAC has started work in the framework of the EU-funded MSFD support-project ABIOMMED to elaborate methodological guidance on ex-post socio-economic analysis of measures aiming at achieving GES in the

Mediterranean. In this framework, a socio-economic analysis of one regional biodiversity measure will be conducted. Results are expected by mid-2023.

127. SCP/RAC collaborated with Plan Bleu/RAC to make available to the public the set of SCP indicators in MapX, the cartographic component of the UNEP World Environment Situation Room – Mediterranean (Med WESR). In 2021, SCP/RAC published 30 SCP factsheets, with updated data on the progress made towards sustainable development by Mediterranean countries, as part of the SCP Regional Action Plan implementation. In 2022, time sliders have been developed for the indicators, both regarding SCP's and Plan Bleu's factsheets.

128. The elaboration of the assessment programme on Non-Indigenous Species (NIS) is elaborated within the EU funded IMAP-MPA and EcAp MEDIII projects. Draft regional baseline on NIS was discussed by the CORMON meeting (28-29 March 2022) and endorsed by the EcAp CG meeting (videoconference, 5 July 2022) to be used for the purpose of the 2023 MED QSR.

129. Monitoring and assessment scales, assessment criteria, baseline and thresholds values of the IMAP common indicators related to non-indigenous species (CI6) developed and discussed by the CORMON meeting (June 2021) and was approved for its use for the elaboration of the 2023 MED QSR. Monitoring and assessment scales, assessment criteria, baseline and thresholds values of the IMAP common indicators related to seabirds as well as NIS baseline at the national, sub-regional and regional scales were approved by the CORMON (March 2022) and endorsed by the 9th EcAp Coordination Group meeting on 5 July 2022.

130. Updated Baseline Values (BV) and Threshold Values (TV) have been adopted for IMAP EO10 CI22 by COP22. Relevant values are under elaboration also for IMAP EO10 CI23 (seafloor macrolitter and floating microplastics) and will be presented during the next CORMON Marine Litter Meeting in 2023 (March 2023). Work has been also initiated for updating the BV and establishing TV for IMAP EO10 Candidate Indicator 24 (ingestion and entanglement on marine turtles).

131. The development of the monitoring and assessment scales, assessment criteria, thresholds and baseline values for the IMAP common indicators related to sea birds are discussed by the Online Working Group (OWG), presented to the CORMON meeting on biodiversity and fisheries (videoconference, 28-29 March 2022) and endorsed by the EcAp Coordination Group meeting (videoconference, 5 July 2022) for their use for the purpose of the 2023 MED QSR. The monitoring and assessment scales, assessment criteria, thresholds and baseline values for the IMAP common indicators related to benthic habitats are being developed in close collaboration with the OWG on benthic habitats. Draft report was elaborated, and it will be presented to the CORMON meeting on biodiversity and fisheries (February 2023, tbc).

132. Assessment elements of habitats and non-indigenous species were presented to the Mediterranean symposia on marine vegetation, coralligenous, dark habitats and non-indigenous species (19-23 September 2022, Genoa, Italy).

133. Progress is made in the implementation of the second phase of IMAP within the EU funded EcAp Med III project. Desk review analysis on available data sources, best practices and methodologies in the Mediterranean for the monitoring and assessment of seafloor damage is ongoing. The draft report is under revision by SPA/RAC and will be shared with GFCM. This deliverable will be discussed by the CORMON (February 2023, tbc) and is used for the development of the Ecological Objective 6 on sea floor integrity to be elaborated within the ABIOMMED Project. A first draft was developed and will be discussed with the OWG (November 2022) and the CORMON meeting on biodiversity and fisheries.

134. The MedProgramme will develop an offshore monitoring strategy based on the assessment of comparative experiences with offshore monitoring in the Mediterranean and the needs of the GEF eligible countries, laying out rational and methodology for selection of offshore monitoring stations. The agreed methodology will then be applied to assist participating countries to expand their national IMAPs to the marine areas not directly impacted by land-based sources. The project will also support up to 5 pilots to put in place IMAP for selected indictors in offshore areas.

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.

135. To support implementation of the national activities, renegotiation of the UN to UN Agreement for 2022 and 2023 between the UNEP/MAP – MED POL and the Marine Environmental Studies Laboratory (MESL) of the International Atomic Energy Agency took place in the period from June to October 2022. Upon expected signature of this Agreement, the Proficiency Tests (PTs) will be organized, along with the preparation of related Training Courses on the analysis of trace elements and organic pollutants in marine samples.

136. REMPEC prepared the best practice review of Descriptor 8 (D08C04, 2018 Reporting) of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and the revised draft Data Standard and Data Dictionaries for Common Indicator 19, and is expected to deliver the methodology for GES assessment related to IMAP CI 19, by 31 October 2022, and the initial assessment findings related to IMAP CI 19 to contribute to the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR, by 10 December 2022.

137. Guidelines for monitoring microplastics deriving from wastewater treatment plants and riverine inputs of marine litter (under Marine Litter MED II project) are being developed. Concepts are developed to expand and improve the monitoring and forecasting capacities in the marine environment through integrating networks of observing and forecasting systems (oceanographic observatories) across the Mediterranean and other Europe surrounding Seas, for which a conceptual map of key relevant policies and institutions in the EU, nationally, regionally, and internationally related to Digital Strategies was elaborated by SPA/RAC in collaboration with the ILIAD Consortium. An assessment of cross-sectoral needs for capacity development, including training and workshops planning/design is under way.

138. INFO/RAC has started the annual upgrade and vulnerability analysis of InfoMAP and the Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS) and its functionalities in view of evaluating needs for further improvement. The terms of reference for the MAP Data Management Task Force have been developed and the kick-off meeting held. The integration of available databases and integrated data coming from the other MAP Components has started in line with the work carried out by the Data Management Task Force. The maintenance and repower of the InfoMAP platform have been ensured as well as the integration of their modules. Data management tasks for CAMP BiH and CAMP Transboundary Otranto have been carried out toward a full integration with infoMAP System.

139. The IMAP Info System of Data Standards and Data Dictionaries for indicators 3, 4, 5, 18 and 20 have progressed by INFO/RAC in close cooperation with the competent MAP Components. Development of new Data Standards and Data Dictionaries for IMAP Common Indicators 19 and 7-11 has started. Ongoing support to Contracting Parties for IMAP reporting has been provided by INFO/RAC Help Desk and further Assistance/Training Meetings have been planned (two workshops for assistance and training have been organized with Türkiye and Israel). Moreover, the Data Standards (DS) and Data Dictionaries (DD) for IMAP EO10 Candidate Indicator 24 (ingestion and entanglement on marine turtles) have been approved by the CORMON Marine Litter Meeting held in May 2022.

140. REMPEC's Mediterranean Integrated Geographical Information System on Marine Pollution Risk Assessment and Response (MEDGIS-MAR) has been integrated by INFO/RAC in the Info-MAP Data management system.

141. A technical workshop on the implementation of IMAP has jointly been organised by PAP/RAC and INFO/RAC with the responsible IMAP users dealing with monitoring of common indicators in Ankara, Türkiye, 17 and 18 May 2022. The workshop started with a general overview of IMAP, the 2023 QSR preparation and in particular on common indicators related to coast and hydrography, namely the CI 16 on coastline. The second part was related to the practical exercise with the GIS experts and details were provided for monitoring the CI 16. All open issues were covered, and the Turkish participants will provide monitoring data by autumn; approximately 5000 km of the coastline will be monitored.

142. Within the EcAp Med III project, all national reports were completed for CI 15 and CI 16, and data collected will be included in the draft of the 2023 MED QSR (EO 7) as appropriate. The report on lessons learned was also prepared that will be used for the preparation of the 2023 QSR and presented at the related CORMON meeting in 2023.

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

143. UNEP/MAP took part in two important gatherings to advocate for swifter action on the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols as the shortest path to securing a resilient and sustainable future in the Mediterranean region:

- The Secretariat has proactively prepared, including through exchanges with the Contracting Parties, and participated in the 2022 UN Ocean Conference (27 June-1 July 2022). Three side-events organized/co-organized by UNEP/MAP addressed important elements of the regional response to the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The highlights of the UNEP/MAP participation are captured in this special web page: https://bit.ly/Med-UNOC22.
- The UNECE Ninth Environment for Europe (EfE) Ministerial Conference (Nicosia, Cyprus, 5-7 October 2022). UNEP/MAP joined forces with several MAP Partners to promote sustainable tourism and advance ocean literacy. The highlights of the UNEP/MAP participation are captured in this special news article (dated 20 September 2022): https://bit.ly/MAP-EfE.

144. An ongoing collaboration with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), a MAP Partner, will deliver the Parliamentarian's Guide to protecting the Mediterranean Sea and coast during the biennium in progress. This will serve as a practical manual for parliamentarians around the Mediterranean, harnessing their role for a greater implementation of, and compliance with, the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols through adequate national laws and by holding governmental actors to account.

145. The Secretariat has developed the Draft Roadmap for the fourth edition of the Istanbul Environment Friendly City

Award (2022-2023). At its 23rd Meeting, the MCSD Steering Committee welcomed the Roadmap and encouraged the Secretariat to implement the activities accordingly, in cooperation with relevant partners, reviewing the process and its methodology in view of simplifying them, launching the call for applicants in due time, and further strengthening communication along the way to reach more interest from Mediterranean coastal cities. It was recommended to undertake brainstorming with MCSD Members and relevant partners on how to further facilitate the whole selection and nomination process, while maintaining high sustainability standards in the methodology, assessment framework, and key performance indicators.

146. In the period June-September 2022, the Secretariat continued implementing the above-mentioned roadmap, with the in-kind support of the International Initiative for Sustainable Built Environment (iiSBE-Italy) in the context of the ENI CBC MED Sustainable Mediterranean Cities. On 20 of July 2022, the Secretariat organized an online consultation meeting, which gathered Members of the MCSD Steering Committee, networks of municipalities and local authorities, applicant cities' representatives, individual experts, and colleagues from UNEP/MAP Components/Regional Activity Centres. During that meeting, the draft updated methodology of the fourth edition of the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award (2022-2023), including the indicator assessment framework and the application form, was presented and discussed in-depth. Then, the application form, the indicator assessment framework and the guide for indicators calculation were completed, with continuous support from iiSBE-Italy. Technical practicalities were addressed by INFO/RAC in view of launching the call for applicant cities through a dedicated webpage, with an application available online for the first time.

147. The Coordinating Unit and SPA/RAC organized, in collaboration with the Pelagos Agreement Permanent Secretariat, the 2022 and the first-ever edition of the SPAMI Day. It started with a digital campaign launched on 15 April 2022 on the web and social media under the slogan "*Together to protect the Mediterranean biodiversity*", followed by a special event celebrating the SPAMIs as a cooperation tool for biodiversity conservation in the Mediterranean (Oceanographic Museum of Monaco, 20 May 2022). The event was attended by SPAMI managers, key partners and representatives of the environmental authorities of the countries having SPAMIs. A high-level segment as well as the SPAMI Certificates' award ceremony was honoured by the presence of H.S.H. the Prince Albert II of Monaco. A press briefing attended by the UNEP/MAP Coordinator and the SPA/RAC Director took place on the sidelines of the event.

148. Morocco and the City of Tangier were chosen to host the 2022 edition of the regional celebration of the Mediterranean Coast Day. Held on 28 September 2022, the event was an opportunity to solicit policy makers, planners, local authorities and the entire civil society to join efforts and tackle the challenges of climate change. The 2022 celebration was opened by the General Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Transition and Sustainable Development of Morocco; the opening session was followed by two panels: the first dedicated to the issues, challenges and solutions for the sustainable development at the Mediterranean level and the second one on the local level i.e. the particularities of the Tanger-Tétouan-Al Hoceima region which is currently developing the regional Coastal plan (Schéma régional du littoral) in the framework of the GEF MEDProgramme's Child Projects 2.1. and SCCF. As highlighted by the panellists, the elaboration of such plan will enhance the sustainable development of the region and it represents an important step in the Morocco's implementation of the ICZM Protocol. Various awareness raising activities were organized by the Moroccan Association for Sustainable Environment - on the Malabata beach of Tangier, in which approximately 200 schoolchildren of Tangier showed their knowledge and enthusiasm to keep the environment clean.

149. During this period the Secretariat worked closely with Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) to enhance collaboration and outreach. To this end, UNEP/MAP will take part in the Mediterranean Pavilion at UNFCCC COP 27 (6-18 November 2022, Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt); the MedPavilion is the first of its kind to be set up at a UN Climate Change Conference. It is an initiative led by UfM together with UNEP/MAP and the PRIMA Foundation, along with a coalition of institutions dealing with climate action in the region. The Secretariat issued a media advisory (dated 13 September 2022) presenting the rationale and the purpose of the participation in the Mediterranean Pavilion in COP 27 of UNFCCC: https://bit.ly/MedPavilion.

150. Several local Coast Day celebrations took place with the support and the participation of PAP/RAC: in Croatia (at three different locations on the coast), in Slovenia (where the Coast Week has become a tradition for more than 10 years now), in Bosnia-Herzegovina (back-to-back with the Final CAMP BiH Conference), while online events were organised by our Greek colleagues from HELMEPA and the Syrian Virtual University (SUV).

151. The digital campaign organized by UNEP/MAP with support from the MAP communication taskforce secured visibility for the 2022 edition of Mediterranean Coast Day with several institutional partners and individuals sharing the material and messages prepared with the support of INFO/RAC, which provided support on graphic design and was instrumental in the delivery of an updated website dedicated to this regional observance: https://bit.ly/Med-Coast-Day2022. Evidence of engagement is provided by the use of the #MedCoastDay hashtag on Twitter (https://twitter.com/hashtag/MedCoastDay) and other platforms.

152. A joint effort at the MAP system level is on-going regarding gender mainstreaming and for potential better inclusion of gender aspects in the PoW 2024-2025. Gender focal points were identified by the RACs and together with the Coordinating Unit, a potential MAP Gender Strategy is under discussion, in order to support and coordinate efforts made at the MAP level to reach the objectives of the SDG 5.

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

153. The "*Young Person's Guide to the Mediterranean Action Plan and the Barcelona Convention*", produced by the Coordinating Unit's communication team and released on 8 February 2021, has been translated into Italian by INFO/RAC to serve as an outreach product at the Festival of Mediterranean Citizens (2-5 June 2022, Catania, Italy). The publication will also be made available in Arabic during this biennium. SCP/RAC recently designed and prepared a downloadable poster with a QR code to offer the Guide for download. The Guide offers a simplified introduction to the legal framework of UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention, covering a wide range of themes pertaining to the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment as well as sustainable development. This communication product and outreach tool is aimed at MAP Partners, ocean literacy practitioners, educators and young readers aged 11-17 in the Mediterranean region and beyond: https://bit.ly/334k92q.

154. The Coordinating Unit delivered a suite of communication products for the EU-funded projects being implemented by UNEP/MAP, including a video clip (https://youtu.be/oTdQIID-8B0) and a brochure titled "Bright spots in the Mediterranean" (https://bit.ly/BrightSpotsMed). The brochure is offered in the four official languages. Both products are accessible from the project pages on the UNEP/MAP website and have been disseminated widely with the support of the Regional Activity Centres. The EU-funded projects have also benefited from other forms of communication support, including web stories (example: https://bit.ly/3PJZcMo) and topical posts on social media. A similar effort is being undertaken in support of the MedProgramme's work programme on communication (Example: https://bit.ly/3D3JYPv).

155. Plan Bleu/RAC launched a new communication initiative "*Les Rendez-vous du Plan Bleu*", with a first event on 22 February 2022 focusing on the Med SOx ECA process, in coordination with the Coordinating Unit and REMPEC. This first edition brought together 57 participants, out of 110 registered. The conference was broadcasted on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHtytl8JTG0. The second edition took place on 7 June with 39 attendees and focused on the recent publication of the Guidelines for Sustainable Cruising and Recreational Boating in the Mediterranean. Plan Bleu invited Port of Sète-Sud de France, Marseille Provence Cruise Club and Northern Light Composite to feature in this conference. During the third edition, on October 27, experts and specialists from Plan Bleu, but also from its partners MedECC and the platform Océan Climat will explain coastal risks linked to climate change in the Mediterranean basin. For this edition, 100 persons are expected.

156. A new film "*salt in the eyes*" is produced within the project Experiences and knowledge sharing funded by MAVA. The film aims to share learnings from the bycatch Observers' Programme, while promoting the role of observers and fishers as part of the solution to the bycatch issue. The film was launched during the International Bycatch Meeting held in Malaga 4-6 October 2022.

157. Several reportages (National GEO, CNN et DW) have been filmed in Tunisia to showcase the solutions being developed on the bycatch issue for a more sustainable fishery. The CNN Greece reportage won the first price as "*Best International Reportage*". A film is being produced to share learnings from the bycatch Observers' Programme and promote the role of observers and fishers as part of the solution to the bycatch issue.

158. Workshops and scientific events have been streamed online (events related to SPAMIs, bycatch, sustainable fishing, ILIAD Digital twins, biodiversity conservation (UNOC 2022), Pinna nobilis restoration, and more recently the Mediterranean Symposia on marine vegetation, coralligenous, dark habitats and non-indigenous species). The meetings organized by SPA/RAC are recorded on YouTube SPA/RAC account.

159. SPA/RAC participated in a radio programme to raise awareness on marine biodiversity conservation and present SPA/RAC activities in Tunisia. So far SPA/RAC has participated in 5 programmes from June to August 2022 which are available online (l'univers marin/Radio IFM). Furthermore, support to EnviroFest in Tunisia and collaboration with local NGOs have been renewed to organize film screenings and raising awareness activities in 8 coastal areas from May to December 2022.

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

160. SPA/RAC is partner in a Consortium (56 Partners led by INTRASOFT International S.A, Greece) which achieved European Commission funding for the 3 years project "*Integrated digital twins for marine and maritime data and information services*" (ILIAD), answering to a call for applications in the framework of the EU H2020 work programme

"*Transparent & Accessible Seas and Oceans: Towards a Digital Twin of the Ocean*". SPA/RAC budget as end users' partner within the Consortium is 235,000 Euros. It started on 1 February 2022, and is dealing with capacity building, impact towards policy makers, especially with respect to the European Green Deal (EGD) and Digital Strategy commitments, as well as outreach, citizen and multi-stakeholder participation and dissemination.

161. The content of the SPAMI Collaborative Platform is being updated. A webpage on the SPAMI Day has been created, information on SPAMIs were updated with the support of the managers; News items, press release, articles, statement, published on the platform since 14 April 2022. Other contents will be published when/as needed.

162. INFO/RAC has started the process to individuate the priorities in the framework of the Digital Transformation Strategy.