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Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points

Athens, Greece, 17-19 June 2025

Agenda item 3: Status of implementation activities by MED POL during 2024-2025 biennium

Progress achieved regarding implementation of the Programme of Work 2024-2025, including MedProgramme and other Projects (ML MED PLUS Project and EcAp MED PLUS Project)

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. This report covers the activities and outputs carried out between January 2024 and June 2025, within the framework of the Programme of Work and Budget 2024–2025, as approved by the 23rd Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 23) to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols (Portorož, Slovenia, 5–8 December 2023), through the adoption of Decision IG.26/14. The report is composed of a narrative part and one Annex.

B. The narrative part highlights the progress on the implementation of the Programme of Work (PoW) activities carried out during the 2024-2025 biennium, along with the status of implementation of the pollution-related Protocols of the Barcelona Convention and its monitoring and assessment aspects under Programme 1: "Pollution and Litter Free Mediterranean Programme,", Programme 5: "Governance", and Programme 6: "Shared Vision of the Mediterranean Programme" of the Mid-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2027, including their related "Governance" elements executed by MED POL.

C. Annex I presents a summary of the status of the information provided in the Reports on Measures taken by the Contracting Parties for the implementation of the technical aspects of Pollution related Protocols and respective Regional Plans in line with Article 26 of the Barcelona Convention and Article 13 of the LBS Protocol, for the period 2022-2023.

II. KEY HIGHLIGHTS

1) Preparation of Draft National Baseline Budget Reports (NBB) (2020-2025) and their submission to the NBB-Infosystem.
2) Development of the lists of potential measures by Contracting Parties for integration into the consolidated National Action Plans/Programmes of Measures.
3) Proposal for revising IMAP Pollution and Marine Litter Ecological Objectives (i.e., EOs 5, 9, 10, 11), mandated by Decision IG.26/3.
4) Consolidated proposal for updating IMAP Ecological Objective 10 (EO), including a tentative proposal for adding a new Common Indicator on riverine marine litter, as well as converting IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 into a Common Indicator.
5) Development of new environmental targets for IMAP EO10 Common Indicators 22 and 23, and a proposal to establish Threshold Values for IMAP Common Indicator 24.
6) Support for the implementation of the updated Regional Plan on Marine Litter, particularly through the EU-funded ML MED PLUS project, which began in March 2024. This project aims to assist targeted Beneficiary Countries in:
    a. Implementing and developing/updating National Programmes of Measures addressing Marine Litter in line with the updated Marine Litter Regional Plan and ongoing negotiations for the Global Treaty on Plastic Pollution.
    b. Expanding the implementation of key prevention and reduction measures.
    c. Advancing the implementation and supporting the update of IMAP Ecological Objective 10 (EO10) on Marine Litter.
    d. Enhancing Regional Cooperation, Partnerships, and Synergies on Marine Litter.
7) Completion of Phase 1 PCB removal in Algeria (378 tons) planned for January 2025, with Phase 2 (613 tons) expected in May 2025. Substantial progress made in Lebanon with 271 tons of PCB collected and packaged. Meanwhile, UNOPS is advancing Phase 2 contract management in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro.
8) Analysis of existing regulatory measures, drivers, and impacts on the marine and coastal environment from marine renewable installations, identifying the necessary actions to prevent, combat, and eliminate pollution in the Mediterranean Sea.
9) Ongoing awareness-raising efforts on sustainable desalination and circular water use in the Mediterranean region.

10) Strengthen collaboration with key partners and projects (ACCOBAMS, BSC, GEF, GFCM, GPML IMO, and WES).

III. PROGRAMME 1. TOWARDS A POLLUTION AND LITTER FREE MEDITERRANEAN SEA AND COAST EMBRACING CIRCULAR ECONOMY

A. Undertake national, subregional, regional actions to boost the implementation of the Marine Litter Regional Plan in the Mediterranean:

1. The 23rd Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP-23) to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols (Portoroz, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023) adopted Decision IG.26/14 which called for undertaking national, subregional, regional actions to boost the implementation of the Updated Marine Litter Regional Plan in the Mediterranean.

2. Since March 2024, MED POL is executing the EU funded "Marine Litter MED PLUS project" with the aim to further support and expand the implementation of the updated Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean, the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme for Marine Litter (EO10) including its upgrade, as well as to enhance interregional cooperation for enhanced and effective marine litter management across the seas. The progress made so far is as follows:

a. Small Scale Funding Agreements (SSFAs) have been prepared for the 5 eligible countries (Algeria, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia) to support the implementation of Adopt-a-Beach (AaB) and Fishing-for-Litter (FfL) pilots (i.e. Output 1.2 of the project). The SSFAs with Lebanon and Morocco are signed and operational, and the SSFAs with Tunisia and Libya are in the final stage of approval, expected to be signed during Q2-2025. Additional negotiations are needed with Algeria and Egypt towards setting the ground for having the agreements signed.

b. An SSFA is signed and operational with MedWaves-SCP/RAC (i.e. Output 1.3 of the project) and work has been initiated in 3 countries (i.e., Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon).

c. An UN-to-UN Agreement is signed and operational with REMPEC-IMO (i.e. Output 1.4 of the project). 3 regional experts are on board (i.e., management of sea-based litter in ports and marinas; loss of containers at sea in the Mediterranean; enhanced management of marine litter from sea-based sources in ports and marinas) and relevant work has been initiated.

d. With regards to supporting monitoring activities for IMAP Common Indicator 23 (i.e. Output 2.1 of the project), Small Scale Funding Agreements (SSFAs) have been prepared with the 4 eligible countries (Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia). The SSFAs with Lebanon and Morocco are signed and operational, the SSFA with Tunisia is under the final stage of signatures, whereas the SSFA with Egypt requires for additional time and negotiations.

e. With regards to supporting monitoring activities and advancing on IMAP Common Indicator 24 (i.e. Output 2.1 of the project), an SSFA has been signed with SPA/RAC, who promptly launched consultations with the SPA/BD Focal Points of Algeria, Libya and Egypt where detailed information has been shared regarding this project's component. the implementation of the related activities has been initiated in Libya and Egypt since January 2025 , through establishment of contracts with national

coordinators.With regards to supporting the update of IMAP Ecological Objective (10) (i.e. Output 2.2 of the project), a proposal for converting Candidate Indicator 24 into a Common Indicator as well as introducing a new indicator on riverine litter was submitted to the 11th Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group Meeting (Online, 2 October 2024), and was reviewed by the CORMON ML Meeting (online, 29 January 2025), which endorsed this proposal. The next step is for this proposal to be submitted to the upcoming Joint CORMON Pollution-Marine Litter (27-28 May 2025) and the MED POL Focal Points (17-19 June 2025), and finally to the 12th EcAp CG (15 Sept. 2025, tbc) Meetings.

f. An SSFA has been prepared and shared with BSC-PS since May 2024, detailing the activities and budget (i.e. Output 3.1 of the project), however without succeeding yet with its signature.

g. A regional expert funded by the project is on board since Oct. 2024 assigned with the task to analyze the global and regional policies and legally binding measures relevant to LBS Protocol. The analysis focuses on identifying measures on marine litter and plastic pollution that can be adapted and extended to project eligible countries. Relevant work was presented during the 3rd NAP/NBB Meeting (23-24 April 2025).

h. The draft version of Terms of Reference for a Regional Consultant to Conduct an Assessment on Inputs of Marine Litter Generated from Aquaculture and Fisheries (i.e. Output 3.2 of the project), has been prepared by MED POL and was shared with GFCM for comments and an updated version will be made available in Feb. 2025. The advertisement of the ToR is completed, and the selection process is ongoing.

i. The Meeting “Enhancing Interregional Cooperation for Monitoring and Assessing Riverine Input of Marine Litter” (i.e. Output 3.3 of the project), was jointly organized with BSC, HELCOM, and OSPAR, in the framework of MARLICE 2024, in Valencia, Spain, on 23 May 2024, at the kind invitation of Spain. The UNEP/MAP guidelines for monitoring riverine input of marine litter have been shared with the 3 RSs (i.e., BSC, HELCOM, OSPAR). HELCOM and OSPAR have initiated the review of the guidelines among their experts’ networks.

B. Develop new regulatory measures in line with article 15 of the LBS Protocol for priority sectors:

3. The “Programme of Work and Budget for 2024-2025,” adopted by COP 23 (Portorož, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023), mandated MED POL in close collaboration with other RACs, to undertake a full analysis on existing regulatory measures, and impacts on marine and coastal environment from marine renewable energies.

4. MED POL prepared the report that evaluated existing regulatory measures, identified potential environmental impacts associated with Marine Renewable Energies, and proposed measures to reduce and, where possible, eliminate pollution in the Mediterranean Sea. The report highlights notable gaps in the current regulatory framework, particularly in relation to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) requirements and emphasizes the importance of enhanced regional cooperation to establish a dedicated legal framework aimed at preventing and mitigating environmental impacts, while fostering innovation and sustainability.

C. Take national and regional actions including enabling investments, to implement the adopted Regional Plans:

5. The “Programme of Work and Budget for 2024-2025,” adopted by COP 23 (Portorož, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023), mandated MED POL to take national and regional actions including

enabling investments, to implement the adopted Regional Plans.

6. MED POL prepared, negotiated, finalized, and signed eight legal agreements/ToRs with the countries (Albania, BiH, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia) to support them in the preparation of the NBB and NAP reports.

7. The Contracting Parties are making steady progress in identifying a comprehensive list of potential measures to be incorporated into their National Action Plans (NAPs) and Programmes of Measures (PoMs). This process takes into account the obligations and priorities outlined in the six newly adopted Regional Plans, ensuring alignment with regional objectives and enhancing the effectiveness of national efforts to address pollution and achieve sustainable environmental outcomes.

8. MED POL organized a two day "Regional Meeting for the Development of the new NAPs (2025-2035) on June 25 and 26 June 2024 in Athens, Greece. The Meeting presented the main elements for the development of the new National Action Plans (2025-2035); discussed and took note of the criteria and methodology to assess hot spots and sensitive areas in the Mediterranean; exchanged information for the formulation of priority measures and cost-effective analysis and cost-benefit analysis, as well as share lessons learned from national experiences on the NAP implementation.

9. MED POL organized another two day "Regional Meeting for the Development of the new NAPs (2025-2035) on 23-24 April 2025 in Loutraki, Greece. The Meeting took note of the progress achieved by the Contracting Parties in identifying the list of potential measures, before and during the meeting, and acknowledged the need to accelerate the ongoing work for finalizing the first consolidated NAPs reports (including the list of measures and indicators Document UNEP/MED WG.613/Inf. 4) for submission to the upcoming Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points, to be held in June 2025.

10. As part of the activities initiated under the EcAp MED PLUS project, a consultant was recruited to provide targeted assistance in developing simplified methodologies for Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) and to support data review efforts linked to the revision of the National Action Plans (NAPs) 2025–2035. This contribution aims to strengthen the analytical basis of the NAPs and ensure a more effective integration of economic and environmental considerations in national planning processes.

11. MED POL conducted a comprehensive analysis of global and regional policies, including legally binding measures relevant to the LBS Protocol, to support the development of a regionally agreed shortlist of key prevention and reduction measures for inclusion in the updated National Action Plans (NAPs) for the 2025–2035 period, including those addressing marine litter. As part of this effort, MED POL prepared policy analyses with the following objectives:

a. To identify and assess key global resolutions and regional decisions, focusing on UNEA resolutions and Barcelona Convention COP decisions adopted since 2015, particularly those addressing pollution prevention, eutrophication, marine litter, and plastic pollution. The analysis prioritized items most relevant to the Mediterranean context and those contributing to IMAP Ecological Objectives 5 (Eutrophication), 9 (Contaminants), and 10 (Marine Litter).
b. To analyze policy provisions at global and regional levels, identifying alignments and policy gaps, and providing a brief overview of recent European policy developments in the areas of marine litter, eutrophication, and plastic pollution that may inform the formulation of future NAP measures.
c. To propose potential measures for the updated NAPs and the Mid-Term Strategy (MTS) by suggesting targeted pollution prevention and reduction actions to address identified gaps, while also supporting the development of corresponding regional measures within the framework of the MTS.

D. Promote sustainable Desalination Sector in the Mediterranean:

12. In line with the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget 2024–2025, adopted under Decision IG.26/14 by COP 23 (Portorož, Slovenia, 5–8 December 2023), MED POL was mandated to implement "Activity 1.2.3: Promote Sustainable Desalination Sector in the Mediterranean." In this context, MED POL organized, the "Regional Meeting for the Implementation of Desalination Guidelines and Application of State-of-the-Art Technologies," scheduled for 7–8 November 2024 in Nicosia, Cyprus. The meeting recognized the existing gap at the regional level, particularly with regard to the establishment of regional Emission Limit Values (ELVs) and the appropriate classification of the sector within the Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community (NACE). MED POL was required to continue its effort towards sector's proper classification and development of legally binding regional ELVs.

13. MED POL has been invited to participate in the "Congress on Sustainable Desalination," scheduled to take place in Rotterdam, Netherlands, on 27–28 May 2025. This congress will offer an important platform to advance policy dialogue, particularly regarding the inclusion of the desalination sector in the NACE classification system, as well as its integration into the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (e-PRTR), to ensure public access to data and effective monitoring of large-scale installations.

E. Enhance the implementation of MED POL reporting tools developed to assess pollution loads from land-based sources and activities:

14. In line with the "Programme of Work and Budget for 2024-2025," MED POL was mandated to enhance the implementation of MED POL reporting tools to assess pollution loads from land-based sources and activities.

15. MED POL is providing support to Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, and Morocco in preparing the 5th cycle of the NBB reports. Additional agreements are under negotiation with Egypt, and Tunisia.

16. The preparation of the NBB reports began in September 2024, with seven online working group meetings held, involving 10 NBB experts from various Contracting Parties. During these meetings, calculation methodologies and emission factors were discussed. To facilitate reporting, temporary credentials for the NBB-Info System were granted to NBB experts from six Contracting Parties, allowing them to submit data prior to validation by MED POL Focal Points. As of the report's preparation date, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Malta have submitted their quantitative data to the NBB-Info System. Reports from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Morocco, Montenegro, Türkiye, Lebanon, Libya, and Albania are at varying stages, with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Morocco, and Türkiye having submitted final draft reports, and the others providing advanced drafts.

17. In light of the recent adoption of six Regional Plans endorsed at COP 22 (Urban Wastewater Treatment, Sewage Sludge Management, and the amended Marine Litter Regional Plan) and COP 23 (Agriculture Management, Aquaculture Management, and Urban Stormwater Management), MED POL proposed a revision to the LBS Protocol reporting format. Specifically, Table III was updated to reflect these new obligations. Additionally, the development of the new NAPs (2025–2035) prompted revisions to Table IV. These changes, prepared by MED POL, in collaboration with the Coordinating Unit, were presented and discussed during the Third Regional Meeting on NAPs and NBBs (April 2025, Loutraki, Greece) and will be further reviewed at the upcoming MED POL Focal Points Meeting (17–19 June 2025).

F. Undertake national and regional action to enhance the implementation of the Dumping Protocol:

18. The Regional Meeting on Best practices of implementation of the Dumping Protocol focusing

on uncontaminated inorganic geological materials is planned to be held in November 2025, subject to budget availability, in close coordination with IMO.

G. Undertake pilot actions to prevent, eliminate and dispose in an environmentally sound manner obsolete chemicals. (Consultancies, SSFAs, Meetings, Implementation Contracts):

19. Under the framework of GEF Funded Child Project CP 1.1 "Reducing Pollution from Chemicals and Harmful Wastes in Mediterranean Hotspots and Measuring Progress on Impacts", MedPol is implementing Component 1 of the project aiming to reduce POPs and mercury wastes and hazardous chemicals in coastal hotspots and catchment areas.

20. The range of activities under Component 1 focuses on the reduction of hazardous chemicals pollution, namely Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) banned under the Stockholm Convention, and mercury banned under the Minamata Convention. It covers national activities in eight countries, as well as regional activities to share lessons learned. The Child Project aims to remove 2,000 tons of POPs and 50 tons of mercury wastes from the coastal zones of the project countries. This is achieved through a two-phased activity for the identification, safe storage and disposal of PCBs and POPs; an activity dedicated to the disposal of mercury; as well as pilot projects aimed at the prevention of the generation of waste containing new POPs and mercury.

21. Good progress has been achieved in terms of implementation of activities related to Mercury and PCBs disposal. Key highlights include:

a. Management and disposal of 2,000 tons of POPs
   i. In Algeria, 378 tons of contaminated equipment including PCB contaminated oil, 244 electrical transformers and 11 tons of capacitors contaminated with PCB were packaged and are currently being shipped to France for final destruction.
   An amendment at cost for a Phase 2 disposal of an additional 613 tons of PCB is in the final stages. It consists of 480 transformers, 105 capacitors and 189 drums. The Phase 2 contract with Tredi will be signed in May 2025 further to clearance from the Headquarters Committee on Contracts (HCC). The contract specifies the completion of disposal activities by 31 March 2026.
   ii. In Lebanon, 271 tons of contaminated oil, soil and electrical transformers contaminated with PCB will be disposed. These consist of 241 transformers to be drained/ packed to be exported and shipped to be treated outside of Lebanon; 151 transformers located at Baouchrieh Site; 6 transformers at Qartaba Depot; 2 transformers at Zahrani Depot; 2 transformers at Litani Depot; 80 transformers and 2 PCB contaminated oil barrels located at Hraiche Facility (Kadisha Electricity).
   iii. The drainage, labelling, packaging, transportation, shipment and sound disposal of PCB oil, PCB contaminated oil and PCB equipment from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Tunisia are planned under Phase 2 of the project. To this aim, the Implementing Partner Services (IPS) Agreement was signed in January 2025 between the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

b. Management and safe storage of 50 tons of mercury wastes
   i. An Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for sites containing metallic mercury was completed for Algeria in April 2025. The EMP provided information on legislation, locations, technical data on sites and equipment contaminated with mercury addressing also environmental and health considerations.
   ii. In December 2024, a new Small-Scale Funding Agreement (SSFA) was signed between UNEP/MAP and the Centre for Ecotoxicological Research (CETI). This SSFA, which builds on the results of a previous assessment undertaken in the framework of this project, aims to carry out further assessment of the contamination of the harbor beds of Tivat Bay contaminated with mercury (Hg), and their risks, as well

as preparation of an environmental sound management (ESM) plan for the Tivat Bay. The SSFA aims also to carry out a contaminants' assessment at the Port of Bar where results of the shell analysis show certain accumulations in the marine life and sediments. The activities deadline was set to 30 June 2025, but due to administrative delays at CETI, the SSFA will be extended for an additional 6 months till end of 2025.

iii. Further to the inventory of mercury carried out in the framework of an EMP for the Kasserine site in Tunisia, approximately 389 tons of mercury waste were identified. UNEP/MAP entered into negotiations with UNOPS, Serbia Regional Office, in April 2024 to engage their services for removal of this mercury waste. To this aim, an Implementing Partner Services (IPS) Agreement was signed in January 2025 between UNEP and UNOPS for the removal of this mercury waste.

iv. The Center for Energy, Environment and Technology Research (CIEMAT), in collaboration with TAUW (consulting firm) prepared an Environmental Management Plan for removal of mercury impacted wastes at the "Société Nationale de Cellulose et de Papier Alfa (SNCPA)" in Kasserine, Tunisia in May 2024.

v. 31. UNDP completed a socio-economic assessment for mercury (in support of the ratification of the Minamata Convention). An advocacy workshop for the ratification of the Minamata Convention was organized on July 17, 2024. An overview of the results of the socio-economic assessment was presented. The workshop aimed to raise awareness about the Minamata Convention and its multiple benefits as well as about the hazards of mercury and the importance of ratifying the Convention. The workshop provided also an opportunity to present the draft law for ratification of the Convention by garnering broad support and preparing a strong case based on the socio-economic assessment results.

vi. 32. In April 2025, UNEP/MAP prepared and published ToR for the recruitment of a National Consultant to support the implementation of activities for mercury removal in Tunisia. Final selection of candidates is in progress.

IV. MTS PROGRAMME 5: GOVERNANCE

A. Deliver successfully the main institutional meetings of MAP (Bureau, Consultation FP Meeting, MAP Focal Point, EcAp Coordination Group and Thematic/Components Focal Points):

22. MED POL supported the organization of the Meeting "Enhancing Interregional Cooperation for Monitoring and Assessing Riverine Input of Marine Litter" (i.e. Output 3.3 of the project), was jointly organized with BSC, HELCOM, and OSPAR, in the framework of MARLICE 2024, in Valencia, Spain, on 23 May 2024, at the kind invitation of Spain. The UNEP/MAP guidelines for monitoring riverine input of marine litter have been shared with the 3 RSs (i.e., BSC, HELCOM, OSPAR). HELCOM and OSPAR have initiated the review of the guidelines among their experts' networks.

23. MED POL organized the Meetings of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Monitoring (CORMONs) Marine Litter and Pollution, held on 29-30 January 2025 (via videoconference) and 27-28 May 2025 (Anavyssos, Greece).

24. MED POL supported the organization of the "11th Informal Coordination Meeting of the Regional Seas surrounding Europe on the Implementation of Regional Action Plans on Marine Litter", held online on 15 January 2025. The meeting saw participation from BSC-PS, HELCOM, OSPAR, UNEP/MAP, UNEP, UNEP-INC, EU, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, and Spain. The following priorities were supported: i) Identifying common elements for the INC process, ii) Addressing transboundary effects of pollution, iii) Holding a dedicated session on plastic pellets at the January 2026 meeting, and iv) Exploring the possibility of a joint side-event at the UNOC-3 Conference in June 2025.

25. MED POL participated in the Global Round Table on PRTRs (Geneva, 20-21 November

2024) alongside the 11th meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs (Geneva, 22 November 2024), organized by UNECE and co-organized with the OECD. MED POL shared its progress on the 5th cycle of the NBB update, focusing on the desalination sector and presenting the outcomes and conclusions from the meeting on desalination.

V. MTS PROGRAMME 6. TOWARDS MONITORING, ASSESSMENT, KNOWLEDGE AND VISION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA AND COAST FOR INFORMED DECISION-MAKING

A. Strengthen the implementation of national IMAP-based monitoring programmes for Pollution and ML clusters and deliver quality assured data:

26. Decision IG.26/14 on the Programme of Work and Budget for 2024–2025 (COP 23, 2023) mandated MED POL to deliver "IMAP Pollution and Marine Cluster Common Indicators (CIs) Guidance" under Activity 6.2.2. The ongoing work focuses on revising IMAP Pollution and Marine Litter, through the preparation of the revised Guidance Factsheets for Common Indicators 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, and 21, for Candidate Common Indicators 26 and 27, as well as proposing new Indicators for Marine Litter.

27. This revision incorporates achievements in monitoring and assessment practices, methodologies, Good Environmental Status (GES) targets, and environmental criteria, as approved for the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR by the Meetings of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Pollution, MED POL Focal Points, and Ecosystem Approach Coordination Groups held in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.

28. The IMAP Pollution – Marine Litter Clusters revision aims to establish a foundation for implementation within a preliminarily proposed updated timeline for the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) and IMAP implementation spanning 2026–2035. The proposals for revising IMAP Pollution and Marine Litter have been submitted to the Joint Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Pollution and Marine Litter Monitoring (Anavyssos, Greece, 27–28 May 2025). Following their endorsement, these proposals will be submitted to the Meeting of MED POL Focal Points (Athens, Greece, 17–18 June 2025).

29. With regard to IMAP Ecological Objectives (EOs) 5 and 9, the ongoing IMAP revision includes several key aspects:

a) A proposal to revise IMAP Ecological Objective 5 on Eutrophication, Ecological Objective 9 on Contaminants and Ecological Objective 11 on Noise which was tentatively endorsed by the CorMon Pollution Meeting held on 30 January. The additional evise includes several updates to targets to fully reflect the relevant decisions taken on Good Environmental Status (GES) targets in the framework of the 2023 MED QSR preparation. The updated proposal has been re-submitted by the Secretariat for further review at the upcoming CorMon Pollution Meeting, scheduled for 27–28 May.
b) The IMAP Pollution revision related to EOs 5, 9 and 11 which are aligned with decisions made by the Contracting Parties (EcAp Coordination Group, MAP, and COP) concerning monitoring and assessment methodologies and criteria which build on the methodologies tested and validated during the preparation of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (2023 MED QSR). This follows the initial efforts presented in Document UNEP/MED WG.595/Inf.4, "Revised Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria," prepared for the 11th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group (held via videoconference on 2 October 2024).
c) Proposals for updating the Indicator Guidance Factsheets for Common Indicators 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, and 21—as well as for candidate Common Indicators 26 and 27— which incorporate advancements in monitoring and assessment practices, methodologies, and environmental criteria which are based on work endorsed in the preparation for the 2023 MED QSR.

d) These above updates have been submitted for review and endorsement at the CorMon Pollution Meeting (27–28 May), with a view to their subsequent submission to the MED POL Focal Points Meeting scheduled for 17–18 June.

30. With regards to IMAP EO10 Marine Litter, a number of updates can be reported:

a. A proposal for revising IMAP Ecological Objective 10 (EO 10) on Marine Litter has been tentatively endorsed including a new Common Indicator on riverine litter and updating Candidate Indicator 24 into a Common Indicator.
b. A proposal for updating the Baseline Values (BV) and establishing Threshold Values (TV) for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 (i.e., for ingestion and entanglement) is under final review and approval is expected during Q3-2025.
c. Updated Environmental Targets were agreed for IMAP EO10 Common Indicators on Marine Litter, including interim and final environmental targets.

31. Under the framework of the GEF-funded Mediterranean Sea Programme (MedProgramme) and Child Project 1.1, aimed at reducing pollution from harmful chemicals and wastes in Mediterranean hotspots, Component 2 supports the extension of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) to offshore areas in GEF-eligible countries. MEDPOL oversees offshore monitoring activities, and 20 proposed offshore monitoring stations were identified across Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, and Tunisia.

32. The selection of the offshore sites was based on factors such as geographical coverage, seawater circulation, pollution sources, bathymetry, and distance from shore. These locations, relevant to various IMAP Common Indicators, include six pristine areas and 14 hotspot areas. Five of the 20 sites were selected to serve as pilot stations, with countries receiving assistance to implement selected IMAP pollution clusters and biodiversity indicators. Two SSFAs with Lebanon and Morocco have been already signed, another SSFA was negotiated and agreed with Montenegro, and an additional SSFA is under preparation with SPA/RAC to support the implementation of the offshore monitoring plan in two sites in Libya and Tunisia.

33. The EU-funded EcAp MED PLUS Project, building on the outcomes of EcAp MED III, was officially launched on 6-7 February 2024. It aims to achieve four principal outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Support the South Mediterranean Contracting Parties in the revision process of the IMAP at regional and national level and IMAP Info System update;
- Outcome 2: Strengthen and stabilise the capacities and ownership that the South Mediterranean Contracting Parties have progressively developed in delivering national IMAP and quality assured data;
- Outcome 3: Support the South Mediterranean Contracting Parties in the revision/development/upgrade of Programmes of Measures (PoM) at national level and of National Action Plans (NAPs);
- Outcome 4: Reinforce and streamline regional governance, synergies and SPI on Ecosystem Approach implementation and GES achievement in the Mediterranean.

34. This project, in particular, aims to support the revision of the IMAP National Monitoring Programmes by the Beneficiary Countries. Current activities under MED POL focus on initiating the implementation of the SSFA with one country and finalizing negotiations with another.

B. Upgrade the assessment component of IMAP including possible integrated assessment for all IMAP clusters. Focus on assessment criteria and thresholds (CI 1, 2, 6, 13, 14, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23, CI 25) (In-house expertise, consultancies, meetings)

35. Within the implementation of the IMAP Pollution Cluster, ongoing activities are focused on launching development of databases and methodologies to advance the establishment of Environmental Assessment Criteria (EACs) for IMAP Common Indicator 17 (concentration of key harmful contaminants measured in relevant matrices). This work also encompasses the development of databases and methodologies to advance the establishment of Background Assessment Criteria (BACs) and EACs for IMAP Common Indicator 18 (level of pollution effects of key contaminants where a cause-and-effect relationship has been established) both at the sub-regional and regional level.

36. Efforts are underway to continue establishing new reference and boundary values for IMAP Common Indicator 13, which pertains to the concentration of key nutrients in the water column—specifically Total Phosphorus (TP) and Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (DIN). Parallel work is being conducted to update reference and boundary values for IMAP Common Indicator 14, related to Chlorophyll-a (Chl-a) concentrations, within selected pilot sub-regions or subdivisions, contingent upon data availability. This builds upon the achievements over the past three biennia in monitoring and assessment practices, methodologies, GES targets, and environmental criteria as used for the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR.

C. Strengthen national capacities to apply harmonized and standardized monitoring and assessment practices related to pollution and marine litter in line with IMAP (Consultancies, UN-UN agreement)

37. In collaboration with the IAEA/MESL and UNEP/MAP – MED POL, progress is being made in implementing the UN-to-UN agreement for the biennium 2024–2025. The focus is on three groups of activities:

a. Organizing two proficiency tests (PTs) and related training programmes for the analysis of trace elements and organic contaminants under IMAP Common Indicators 17 and 20.
b. Conducting mission visits to individual laboratories for gap analysis and capacity building.
c. Organizing, with the support of QUASIMEME, pilot proficiency testing for inorganic nutrients in high salinity seawater, estuarine and low salinity seawater, as well as chlorophyll a, and phaeopigments in seawater under Common Indicators 13 and 14.

38. Given the significant issues encountered regarding the quality of data for EO5, the organization of related pilot proficiency testing is of relevance. The nominated participants for the pilot PTs for the Determination of Nutrients in a Water Column Sample (CI13) and for the Determination of Chlorophyll a in a Water Column Sample (CI14) are from the following Contracting Parties:

a. Nutrients in the Water Column PTs (IMAP CI13): Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Israel, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia, and Türkiye.
b. Chlorophyll a in the Water Column PT (IMAP CI14): Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Israel, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia, and Türkiye.
c. Pilot proficiency testing was also initiated for IMAP Common Indicator 20, given that no

39. data were reported for the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR. The testing comprises the following three pilot PT exercises: i) Determination of Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) in seafood; ii) Determination of Dioxins and PCBs in seafood; iii) Determination of Heavy Metals in seafood (the material for Heavy Metals in seafood is the same as that used for Trace Elements (TE) in marine biota under Common Indicator 17). The nominated participants for this PTs are from the following Contracting Parties:

a. PAHs in seafood PT: Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Montenegro, Morocco, Spain, Tunisia, and Türkiye.

b. Dioxins and PCBs in seafood PT: Greece, Israel, Morocco, Spain, and Türkiye.
c. Heavy Metals in seafood PT: Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Montenegro, Morocco, Spain, Tunisia, and Türkiye.
d. Training courses on the determination of trace elements and organic contaminants in seafood

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

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

Annex I

Status of level of information provided in the Reports for the biennium 2022-2023 on measures taken by the Contracting Parties for the implementation of the technical aspects of Pollution related Protocols in line with Article 26 of the Barcelona Convention and Article 13 of the Land Based Sources Protocol

(as of the 14th of May 2025)

Status of level of the information provided in the Reports on measures taken by the Contracting Parties for the implementation of the technical aspects of Pollution related Protocols in line with Article 26 of the Barcelona Convention and Article 13 of the LBS Protocol (+) information provided; (-) information not provided, (+-) information not complete, (NA) data not available/Report not submitted or at draft stage

Countries	Dumping Protocol							LBS Protocol						Hazardous Waste Protocol					
	Table 1	Table 2a	Table 2b	Table 3	Table 4	Table 5	Table 6	Table I	Table II	Table III	Table IV	Table V	Table VI	Table I	Table II	Table III	Table V	Table VII	Table VI
Albania	N/A (Not submitted)							N/A (Not submitted)						N/A (Not submitted)					
Algeria	N/A (Not submitted)							N/A (Not submitted)						N/A (Not submitted)					
Bosnia and Herzegovina	N/A (Report at Draft Stage)							N/A (Report at Draft Stage)						N/A (Report at Draft Stage)					
Croatia	+	-/+	+	+	+	+	NA	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Cyprus	+	+	+	N/A		+	+	+	-/+	+	+	+	+	N/A (Not submitted)					
Egypt	+	+	-	N/A	N/A	+	N/A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
EU	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
France	N/A (Report at Draft Stage)							N/A (Report at Draft Stage)						N/A (Not submitted)					
Greece	N/A (Report at Draft Stage)							N/A (Report at Draft Stage)						N/A (Not submitted)					
Israel	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+/-	+	+	+	+	N/A (Not submitted)					
Italy	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+/-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Lebanon	N/A (Report at Draft Stage)							N/A (Report at Draft Stage)						N/A (Report at Draft Stage)					
Libya	N/A (Not submitted)							N/A (Not submitted)						N/A (Not submitted)					
Malta	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	N/A (Report at Draft Stage)						+	+	+	+	+	+
Monaco	N/A (Not submitted)							N/A (Report at Draft Stage)						N/A (Not submitted)					

Countries	Dumping Protocol							LBS Protocol						Hazardous Waste Protocol					
	Table 1	Table 2a	Table 2b	Table 3	Table 4	Table 5	Table 6	Table I	Table II	Table III	Table IV	Table V	Table VI	Table I	Table II	Table III	Table V	Table VII	Table VI
Montenegro	**N/A (Not submitted)**							**N/A (Report at Draft Stage)**						**N/A (Report at Draft Stage)**					
Morocco	**N/A (Not submitted)**							**N/A (Not submitted)**						**N/A (Not submitted)**					
Slovenia	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+/-	+	-	+/-	-	**N/A (Not submitted)**					
Spain	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	**N/A (Report at Draft Stage)**						+	+	+	+	+	+
Syria	**N/A (Not submitted)**							**N/A (Not submitted)**						**N/A (Not submitted)**					
Tunisia	**N/A (Not submitted)**							**N/A (Not submitted)**						**N/A (Not submitted)**					
Türkiye	+	-	-	-	-	+	N/A	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	-	+/-	+	N/A	-